The Blessing

by meguminiwa

Summary

Zero thought that night was the end of it but when five children appeared out of nowhere claiming to be his children and Kaname’s? The hunter was forced to realize feelings he didn't want to put name to. KanameXZero

Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Vampire Knight. It’s the work of Hino Matsuri. The characters are borrowed to give life to this fanfiction that was made for pure entertainment and no money is being generated from this.

Hi! Thank you for taking the challenge of reading the very first fan made story I've ever made. I hope I've put in enough tags to warn you of the possible things you'll encounter but hopefully you'll enjoy it. (✧ลมลม конкурсิ้ง)。

By the way, it doesn't have any relation with my other work 'The Vow of Two worlds' though they have the same circumstances (For the Kiryuu and children). You'll know what I mean if you read both.) (˚ ˘∀˘ *) ゚”

Hope you enjoy this as much as I did! ✨(*✧ ω✧)ﾉ
The (Un)pleasant Surprise

The Blessing

By Meguminiwa

Prologue 1

Part I

“How many are they?”

Said the little girl that looks about eight years old with flowing dark brown wavy locks and stunning reddish-violet eyes to the two identical young boys of six walking next to her, both are also with dark brown but with straight hair and sienna eyes. Her voice was light with no hint of fear despite the serious predicament that she and her siblings found themselves at.

“Hmmm… about 30 I think…some are nobles but the majority is only level C by their smell. What do you think Akira?” Drawl one of the boys who wore a serious face. His eyes also fearless but with the hint of irritation. He hated how their innocent plan turned quite troublesome. He sighed.

“Yup, that’s about right. What do we do nee-chan?” Akira said then turning to his older sister. “Should we run or fight? I think Kohaku and I can handle it, ne~?” This time turning to his serious twin brother who only looked at him with a tired and irritated expression. Akira’s tone and eyes brimming with excitement. Evidently, he’s the only one who found their current situation amusing.

“And what are you going to do with Nao and Sui-chan?” The older girl asked, this time motioning to the silver haired kids of four who are peacefully sleeping on each of the boys’ back. It’s her turn to sigh. She’s going to get the nagging of her life once they returned to the castle. She closed her eyes and sighed again. ‘Why did it turn out like this?’ she mused silently.

She has been formulating a plan to get her and her siblings out of the current situation. While she’s more than confident that they can handle their would-be attackers (who thought they cleverly masked out their presence from the children and gravely underestimating them just because they look too young to be able to put up any decent struggle) knowing they are the strongest vampire children ever born with the purest blood running through their veins, she’s not confident with handling it without any casualty from the innocent humans around them who will undoubtedly get mixed up with the fight if ever they start one. No, she’ll avoid fighting at all cost. She had been thinking of all possible paths that don’t include any fighting lest any innocent people get caught up with the squabble. Her parents had spent decades of their life protecting humans and she will make sure that no life is going to be sacrificed for their sake.

She glanced at their youngest twin siblings slumbering without a care in the world, exhausted from playing too much the entire day. As the oldest of the five and the one who thought of the clever idea of sneaking up from their guards and their uncle Ichiru who took up supervising them while both their parents attend the Royal Gala in Europe and to secretly go to the amusement park and have the time of their lives, she will have to bear the responsibility for whatever the outcome of today will be. Being royalties means most of their time was spent on studying and training but it didn’t mean they didn’t get to have fun, of course not. Their parents made sure they have a balance of serious studying and fun activities but sometimes, one just loves the idea of rebelliousness once in a while and without the parents to scold them and with only poor uncle Ichiru who’s really too soft on them to guard them, the idea was too tempting.
‘Oh dear, I’ll get it later… I just know I will.’ Just thinking of the possibility of punishment especially from their Father sent shivers down her spine. Chichiue will never hurt them nor will he ask them to do menial and embarrassing errands as punishment like what he’ll normally do to punish uncle Hana (as they were often told by uncle Takuma) still the thought of standing in the quiet study facing their father to take in his quiet scrutiny that spoke of disappointment has always been unnerving what with the dark aura, while will never really oppress them, will be hovering over them. Suddenly, she didn’t want to go home. Their parents will be returning in the evening and she’ll have no time to plead their case to their uncle considering the seriousness of the outcome of their innocent little excursion. She has long been aware that because of their status as royalty and the power they hold, there have been too many attempts of kidnapping made only to be thwarted by their parents. Now she felt extremely foolish.

“We’ll just put up a barrier around them!” Akira answered her question earlier and shook her out of her internal turmoil. Almost too eager to fight and teach the insolent vampires a painful lesson.

“Akira, it’s not as simple as that. People will get caught up in the fight. Where do you think we are?” It’s Kohaku who spoke. Patiently trying to get across how grave their situation actually is to his hyperactive twin.

“Then what do we do?” Akira asked while pouting.

“Nee-chan?” Kohaku turned to her then suggested, “What about flying to the castle?”

“It’s too early out. We’ll be spotted. Hmmm…. ah!” Suddenly, she thought of the most perfect option. A way for her to get them out of the problem at hand, to avoid their impending AND unavoidable scolding and as a bonus, it will be an additional fun for them. LOTS of fun, she just knew it but before laying out the grand plan to her brothers who are looking at her expectantly, the air shifted and the thick tension was now more evident than ever. She could almost smell the intent in the air. Their annoying visitors will be making their move any moment now. She quickened her pace. Leading her brothers who’re carrying their still sleeping youngest siblings on their back to a less crowded place to perform the most powerful spell she has been studying and working on for about a year now. It’s tricky to use it when she has never even tested it before. Oh well, she know it will work but where they will land afterwards and what will happen is a mystery even to her but she’s ready to bet everything she owned that it’s going to be an adventure.

Finding a narrow alley containing only a sleeping cat on top of a trash bin, she quickly bit her palm drawing her blood then dip her finger and with it draw a peculiar looking pentagram while muttering a spell under her breath. Not breaking concentration and summoning all her power.

Suddenly a bright circle made of light with a pentagram in the center appeared beneath the children’s feet generating a surprise exclamation from both her brothers and the vampires who were closing in on them. The light emanating from the symbol grew brighter and stronger and then there was only light. A slight tremor followed. When the vampires who looked away from the blinding light came to, they were greeted by the empty space where the children they were tailing stood just seconds ago with only the pentagram mark and residue of the powerful spell left, engraved on the ground…. Their presence nowhere to be felt…
‘Shit.’

That was the thought currently going through the head of a certain silver-haired hunter. His lilac eyes mixed with silver currently eyeing the storm brewing in the sky with the promise of heavy rain and cold night ahead. The air was damp and cold inside the small and abandoned shack in a middle of the island where he is at now.

‘Fuck.’ He cursed again as he wondered how he ended up in the situation he is currently in right now. Like everything in his life nothing seems to go according to plan, not that he really bothered to make one but everything is a fucking mess and unlike all the crisis he managed to get tangled with, the quandary at hand top it all.

He looked at the body currently spread on the floor with labored breathing caused by the horrible wound made from a sword piercing through his chest. It narrowly missed the heart of the dark haired man who took the attack that was meant for Zero. Though it will not kill him as pureblood vampires can only be killed by a fellow pureblood and the attacker had only been a noble who put up a last attempt to take Zero with him before fully disintegrating to nothing but ash, pureblood or not, the pain will be the same for him as it will be for anyone and because of too much blood lost from the wound and too much power already spent from the fight, regeneration is not working fast enough. The ex-human valiantly tried to suppress his bloodlust that shamefully tried to surface as the smell of intoxicating pure blood permeated the air.

Zero looked back on the accident. It shocked him that Kaname had blocked the attack that would have killed him on the spot knowing that the noble intended to pierce Zero’s heart. He thought his heart stopped beating nevertheless when he smelled his pure blood in the air. He’d been careless thinking that the fight was already over. “Shit!” he cursed again, this time aloud. Why did his damn mind fly at the most crucial time? He gritted his teeth. Ironically, the very reason for his wandering mind is currently lying a few feet from him.

Agh! He is slowly losing his mind. The Moon dorm president stole his mind most of the time and he found himself thinking about the vampire, lost in the unidentified feelings towards the said man, much to his chagrin. That’s why he was more than willing to accept the mission that came from the Association to annihilate the small group of Level Es spotted in this island. He could use the distraction because he didn’t like the conclusion he was drawing up whenever he’s trying to identify the unknown feelings he has towards the brunette.

He didn’t even care or worry that the particular mission already killed two hunters previously sent out by the association to smoothen out the situation on the island. Fearless as ever, he set out alone only to be followed by Kaname afterwards much to his annoyance and irritation. When asked, Kaname just shrugged and explained that the Chairman sent him out of worry for his son and as a personal favor for his longtime friend; he was resigned to help him out. He couldn’t stop the irritation he felt and the need to punch his guardian at that very moment for his over protectiveness has unknowingly caused him torture instead. ‘Great’, there goes his time alone. His distraction just followed him to further torture him seemingly not wanting to let go of him and to persistently try to coerce from him the realization he REALLY didn’t want to even consider.

And his carelessness resulted to the current situation. Had this happen a few months back, he wouldn’t even care if all purebloods were to perish. No, he would even take delight in being the one to carry out their deaths. Not only was he born from the most prestigious line of hunter family that kills vampires, his life was irrevocably changed by one crazed pureblood and took Zero’s beloved parents away to an unreachable place. On that fateful night, when his parents were killed, sparing
only Zero and Ichiru from the slaughter and then being damned to become one of the creatures he was trained to hunt all his life, he swore vengeance and death of the entire vampire community. It’s a shame though that he’s restricted to a list the hunter association have, still he took all he can and killed all the vampires he’s allowed to kill. His hate would never waver; it shouldn’t have but for some reason his feelings are shifting when it comes to this man. He still hates vampires and wishes to kill his kind but why is he feeling like this then?

He looked back to the previous months when he was in the most danger of falling to the bottom, when his thirst almost blinded him to any and all reason, when he could hear the beating pulse of everyone around him and his sanity almost taken away by bloodlust. It was this man who saved him by offering his pure blood to avoid him from drinking from Yuki or his twin brother who both selflessly offered their blood to him, and by drinking his blood he was spared from fully becoming a mindless demon that only cared to kill and sate their thirst by preying on the innocent.

He didn’t want to admit that he was saved by a pureblood nor did he want to feel thankful to him. He didn’t want to be affected by the feeding session that the pureblood insisted on having afterwards which he only grudgingly accepted to protect Yuki and Ichiru. He tried to keep indifferent to anything and everything that was happening between them but he was kidding himself. He couldn’t. No matter how many times he said he wasn’t affected, he was and greatly at that. And the more he ran away from it, the more the realization comes back to him, slamming him down to submission and forcing him to realize his fast changing feelings towards the pureblood.

And seeing him like this, in pain and with labored breathing, he can’t help but be in pain himself. Feeling guilt and regret (and other things…) he didn’t want to feel knowing his momentary lapse from reality has caused this grave situation had him thinking of ways to make the pureblood better. Hunter spells for healing won’t work on a vampire and frankly he didn’t know what will work really, after all, he had spent time training how to put vampires to excruciating pain not comfort.

He was slumped against the wall trying to bully his brain on conjuring a way out of the situation, then it hit him… of course, what a vampire needs is… blood… He almost hit himself both for his stupidity because the answer was too simple and because the idea of offering his own blood to a vampire to help him out of his misery is outrageous to his hunter instinct. He can’t… the nightmare of that night was fast becoming fresh in his mind… but when he heard the soft and painful grunt Kaname made, he was reminded that again it was his fault. He has to man up and take responsibility for his inattention. He didn’t want to owe anything to the brunette. He slowly stood up and walk towards the wounded vampire.

“Kuran.” He started but not knowing what to say next also wondering if he it’s safe to go near a bloody Kaname who he might attack because of bloodlust. Suddenly, his determination wavered slightly. He never thought that there would come a time that he, Zero Kiryū, would offer his own blood to help a pureblood.

Kaname’s lashes fluttered as he slowly opened his eyes to look up at the hunter who’s trying to hide his worry behind the ever so present scowl, his eyes trying to stay as lilac orbs as he tried to hide his own shameful hunger. The pureblood tried to hide how much pain he’s in though it’s unknowingly reflected in russet pools and from the sweat that danced on his forehead. He didn’t say anything and only waited for the hunter to speak again.

Zero not knowing what to say anymore; never been good with words from the start, did what he thought would make his intent evident by slashing his wrist and placing it over Kaname’s lips.

Kaname’s eyes widened with shock as the smell of the silverette’s blood seduced his senses. He slapped Zero’s hand away from him and abruptly sat up sending a wave of pain caused by the
sudden movement from his wound.

“What do you think you’re doing, Kiryū?” Kaname quietly asked, wincing from pain while clutching his own shirt.

“What the hell do you think? You need to drink to heal that fucking wound.”

“No. I’ll be fine. I will heal after a few more hours” He forced the words out of his mouth. It was hard to stay away especially when the scent of blood was thick in the air. He didn’t know Zero’s blood could smell this intoxicating but he can’t take it, no matter how tempting it is. It makes him lose his composure but valiantly, he fought for sanity and clarity.

“No shit. I know that but this is my fault and I don’t want to owe you anything. Hurry and drink, before I shove it down your throat.”

Kaname smirked. “Quite eager, aren’t we? I never thought I would hear this from you, Kiryū.”

“Count yourself lucky then, Kuran.” Zero sneered.

He held his already healed wrist up again in front of Kaname but instead of drinking, the vampire just stared at the silverette, more sweat ran down from his forehead, and with a serious voice said, “You don’t know what you’re doing or the consequences, Kiryū… so take my advice and get away from me… now… while I’m still letting you…. before you regret this.” He needed to end this conversation early…. he was fast losing grip of the reason he was fighting hard to keep.

The hunter was perplexed at that. There was something in Kaname’s tone that hinted that being bitten by him will undoubtedly result to something unexpected. The silverette of course knows that a pureblood’s bite contains poison powerful enough to change a normal human to a completely different creature but Zero is already a vampire, what more could the bite do? So Zero pushed again, pissed off that Kaname is throwing away his offer twice already after swallowing his pride and silencing his hunter side’s voice who’s shouting indignantly inside his mind.

“Kiryū… no…” Kaname almost pleaded. His voice was barely a whisper. He’s losing the will to deny himself what his body so achingly desire.

“Shit Kuran, just take it while I’m still offering it to you nicely!” Amethyst eyes flashed in annoyance. Gritting his teeth, he continued. “Fuck if I’ll ever owe a vampire! Drink so I can consider my debt repaid.”

Kaname’s mind went blank. If only he was in a more coherent state of mind, he would have never allowed himself to take Zero on his offer. There was so much to be properly explained first but he couldn’t contain his own bloodlust. His need was great. He has already spent much of his power even before the blade pierced him. He didn’t even know why he did that for Zero in the first place but when he saw the strike coming towards the hunter, his body moved on its own. He must be becoming insane. He blamed it on the incomplete bond that the hunter unknowingly made with him. A bite from him will complete it and seal their fate. He wanted to explain this to the hunter but lost in his hunger and blood lust, he did what his instinct and body told him and sated himself with the hunter’s blood.

The brunette reached out but instead of grabbing his wrist, he gripped the hunter’s shirt and pulled him forward. Before Zero could even grasp what was happening, without words, slender fangs slid into the tender flesh of his neck…

He didn’t expect it or the actions that came with passion that soon followed after feeding the vampire
his blood….

End of Prologue

Chapter 01

The (Un)pleasant Surprise

Outside the gates of Cross Academy stood the familiar built of a scowling silver haired hunter. A couple of minutes have already passed and Zero still made no attempt to go inside. He’s being stupid and cowardly. After that night with Kaname where in the silverette uncharacteristically offered his blood to the vampire king to save him from the agony that he had caused him and the blurred happening that followed soon after that, which was what he’s been running away from, he hasn’t set foot in the academy. It’s been three months….

To be honest, he’s still wondering what in the world happened or why it happened. One moment it was a simple feeding and then the next thing he knew, he was under the pureblood fighting the moan that was trying to erupt from his throat. Normally pale skin burned from the memory so he willed away the images taunting his mind.

Immediately after that incident, Zero went to Yagari first, asking his old master to take him in for the summer and let him tag along with his missions. He didn’t want to face Kaname after that and would like to avoid him at all cost so taking advantage of the fact that summer vacation was a week after that, he had the perfect opportunity to get away from the Academy which houses Yuki, Ichiru and the vampire. He didn’t even went home and only called the chairman to tell him his early vacation plans. Though there was a strange painful tug of an invisible string at the back of his neck where Kaname bit him, like it was screaming at him for going away for so long, he managed for three months.

Even after three weeks to the start of new term, he made up all sorts of reason so Yagari won’t send him back. He was actually surprised that Yagari had let him considering how upright his sensei was (and because he is a teacher of the academy as well). Perhaps it’s the desperate tone in his voice that convinced his master that whatever reason he has for not wanting to go back to the academy is grave but his master didn’t press.

The blue-eyed hunter knew Zero is a smart kid who (most of the time) knows what he’s doing and there’s nothing to worry about because he knows his pupil does study well enough to pass his classes (even without much effort from the boy) so he let him. However, because of the silverette’s untimely sickness - he caught a flu and a serious one at that, one that didn’t go away even after several weeks - he was forced to bring the boy back.

The silver hunter will feel lethargic and dizzy and his body will constantly feel heavy. That started about four weeks ago and won’t go away though it got better so he didn’t need to keep to his bed all
day. Still, since he will not see a doctor (because ordinary doctors can do nothing for him and he’ll die of that sickness first before consulting a vampire doctor) they were left with the only option of consulting the chairman and a hunter doctor and which resulted to apprehensive lilac orbs surveying the large academy gates.

Just minutes ago, his master dropped him off in front of the academy and left immediately for he was needed because of an emergency mission from the Association. ‘Stupid flu’. But it’s also not just that, his hunger kept on getting worse and worse. Miraculously, his body didn’t reject the blood tablets when he attempted to drink it. It’s still as disgusting as ever but they’re manageable now. Perhaps his body was too hungry and tired of fight it off but still it’s only a matter of time before he needed to drink from the vampire again. He couldn’t feel his thirst being sated no matter how many times he took the pills. So he was also forced to accept going back to the academy.

Zero couldn’t stop the sigh that escaped from him again. He really wanted to run away but he has nowhere to go and Yuki and Ichiru has been pestering him to go back home since the new term started. They’ve been harassing him with phone calls every single night demanding that he get his ass home already. But he didn’t want to go home and face them. He was also wondering… How will he face Yuki? Or Ichiru? And of course, what face should he make towards Kaname? He groaned inwardly.

There’s no way around it, sooner or later, he must face the vampire again. He told himself that he’s overreacting and that Kaname might have even already forgotten that little incident already. At the thought of the vampire, his neck gave another painful throb. ‘It’s getting worse and worse’, he thought. It only started as an irritating itch then became like a stab on his neck after a while. ‘What the hell is happening to me? Does it have a connection with this damn flu?’ Then came Kaname’s warning just before he drank his blood. Something about consequences…

“Fuck.” He muttered before taking a deep breath and then finally taking a step towards the Academy.

Long, elegant fingers loosely caressed the white knight in his hand, the smoothness of the material of the chess piece or his action not really registering in his mind. As his burgundy eyes watch the water changed into pink then red color after dumping a blood pill in his drink with disinterest, his consciousness sported thoughts about a certain vampire hunter. He closed his eyes and sigh for the nth time that evening. Clearly, the hunter is avoiding him. It’s been three months and he has not seen the silver-haired hunter. He then looked back at what followed after that night.

When he woke up after that night, he found himself healed and alone inside the small cottage the hunter brought him to after he collapse from blood lost because of the horrible wound. He immediately went in search for the silverette but even after combing the forest and looking all over the island, he found no sign of the other vampire. There was also no sign of the boat that the hunter took to get to the island from the mainland. He took a deep breath and calmed the irritation that immediately bubbled inside him after concluding that the hunter ran away and left him behind.

With no boat to use to get back to the mainland, he opted to using his own means and just flew. He didn’t stop anywhere and went home directly to the academy. After a quick shower and slipping into
clean and comfortable clothes, he went directly to see the chairman and then Zero. He was only still in the hall approaching the door to the chairman’s office when he heard his friend’s distressed voice.

“What? What do you mean you’ll be going with Toga-chan?” He stopped seemingly listening to the answer from the other line, “But there’re still weeks before that!” a pause again. “But son wait! Zero? Zero?” Clearly, the person on the other line hanged up.

The ex-hunter was about to call back but then a knock came from the door. He was then greeted by the handsome face of Kaname Kuran. “Kaname-kun! Please, come in!” The Chairman greeted cheerfully carefully placing the handset back. He’ll just call Zero later, knowing that by now the teen must have already killed his phone’s power.

“Good afternoon, chairman.” He greeted his friend and then sat on the couch. “I came to give a report regarding the mission from the island though I take it you already received a report from Kiryū as well?”

“Ah, yes, thank you, Kaname-kun...” He paused and then asked. “Kaname-kun, did anything unusual happen during the mission on the island?”

“Unusual?” Kaname flinched inwardly but kept a composed face as usual and asked innocently. “Nothing out of the ordinary. The mission itself was easily accomplished but why do you ask?”

“Oh, it’s nothing. Thank goodness both of you are safe. Thank you, Kaname-kun.” Kaien gave him one of his warm smiles but then sigh. “It’s just that Zero-kun said that he’ll be away starting today until the end of the summer.” Then he sighed again. “I must have angered him when I asked you to follow him to the mission but I was just worried that he might get reckless again. That child has no fear of death... sometimes I feel like he’s even seeking it.” Kaien stopped at that and then gave him an overly cheerful smile to shake the awkward air that was starting to form. “Ah, Kaname-kun, to repay you for your kindness, would you like some of the sweets that I baked myself?”

Despite the mild surprise that he felt at what the chairman imparted regarding Zero, his face betrayed nothing of what he felt. He merely smiled quietly at the chairman’s offer and politely refused the offer saying that he’s not hungry.

After that, he gave a brief report to the chairman and went back. He can’t believe, but perhaps he can, that the hunter would go to such lengths just to avoid him. But maybe, it’s for the better. Though he was looking for the hunter, he himself didn’t know what to say or why he’s even looking for the silver prefect in the first place and so with the time he was given, he freely pondered on why he kept on chasing after the ex-human. His feelings clearly are different now from when he first met Zero.

The insolent and fearless hunter who dared attack him in their first meeting and even continuously challenged him even after knowing full well of his power and authority. With eyes that always looked at him with contempt and distrust. It amused him; it was a first after being alive for all those years that someone would treat him like Zero did. Of course, all hunters were suspicious of all vampires but the hunters, while not bowing down to him, never openly challenged or mocked him. After all, HE is the king of vampires and there’s a treaty between the Hunter’s Association and Vampire Council. All, grudgingly, even Yagari (though he’s sure that one toe out of line and the famous hunter will be the first to shoot him but only if and when he goes out of line which is unlikely for Kaname), will at least give him proper civility. All, except Zero. He’ll never bow down, not to anyone, nor will he ask for his help for anything. A small smile played on his lips. He wondered about Zero and his undying stubbornness. Will there be a time that he’ll be able to make the ferocious silverette submit? He mused.
Indeed, what he felt towards Zero is a mystery for him as well. It’s unlikely, but it’s possible that his heart had long taken fancy on the hunter even without his permission and knowing. It’s highly unlikely but the evidence is there, currently acting rebellious from the disregard it had experienced for the past months - the bond that was formed. Its completeness was evidence of his feelings for the hunter for a bond can’t be created through just feeding. One must have feelings towards the other person which begs the question - what feelings exactly?

Again, he felt the now familiar tug from his neck and drew his hand to touch its base. The pull of the bond is getting stronger, upset at being neglected for a whole three months. It also reminded Kaname that he hasn’t fed Zero for three months now. He was again reminded of the silver prefect and his well-being, wondering how he was coping with his thirst without Kaname feeding him. His thoughts were abruptly cut off by a knock on his door. The friendly face of his vice-president and best confidant greeted him with a smile as warm as the sun. “Kaname, it’s time.”

He put down the white knight back on the chess board and finished his drink before standing up, taking his white blazer with him. The pureblood followed Takuma to lead the Night class again, unaware that he unconsciously put the chess piece on the space meant for the queen.

As soon as the door of the chairman’s house opened to let in a very tired looking hunter, shouts of longing and scolding erupted from Ichiru, Yuki and Kaien (“Nii-san!!” / “Zero!!” / “Son!!”). And the next thing he knew, he already collapsed under the weight of the three adults who were hugging him all at the same time.

He struggled and using his hands to push away Ichiru’s and Yuki’s face (and one of his feet to push the chairman’s) while shouting threats of slow murder to the lot of them. “Get. Off. me! Get off my face! Seriously, I’ll shoot you three! Now!” He growled. He really wanted to lie down and rest. He was still feeling lethargic.

“Son, aren’t you being a little too cold? It’s been three months!”

“Yeah, nii-san! Where have you been?”

“Yeah, Zero, and where’s the souvenir? Didn’t you go to a nice vacation? Stingy!!!”

Zero just closed his eyes, willing all his patience, not that there’s many, to not give up as he tried to drown the complaints of the three childish adults in front of him. He’s tired and all he wanted to do is to hop into the bath and have a nice rest. He’ll have hell to face tomorrow onwards after all. So he marched to his room, drowning the still talking trio, and had his much needed rest.

It was already late into the night yet there’ll still be sightings of the dutiful silver haired prefect inside the academy grounds diligently patrolling the grounds to make sure that not even one blade of a grass or a root of a tree was out of line. Everything seems to be in order and so he allowed his mind to wander off to a certain part of the school where a certain pureblood should be seen taking his class
After three months, he finally saw Kaname again at the hellish Night class march led by the very pureblood currently tormenting his every thought. Their eyes met for a brief moment and if the vampire was surprised to see him after his long absence, he saw none of it.

Then it was over.

Zero was both relieved and pissed off. He felt extremely stupid to have feared the meeting that was over even before he knew already started, but at least everything should be fine now. And they can continue to ignore each other at this point. While he was still in doubt at the simplicity of the outcome and conclusion of the otherwise delicate situation, he didn’t thought of it anymore. He’s tired and he didn’t want to over think things again only to feel stupid all over again. As they say, Ignorance is bliss.

For the first time in a long while, he let relief and peace fill him. He was having a pleasant evening, which was a first after many nights of distress and then nausea. Even the dizziness he was feeling then wasn’t enough to shake him out of the rare peace he was feeling but then, very suddenly and out of nowhere, a bright light came from the woods that successfully captured his attention. Then a slight tremble followed and then a shift in the air was felt. Like something suddenly changed. Around him and inside him. It felt like something has fallen inside his belly. It felt heavy. He didn’t know what the change was but it can be felt in the air. Power and a sweet smell of roses permeated in the air and awash him like a warm blanket. Somehow, he knew that his life just changed. He was shaken. His heart started beating faster. After the shock, he took several deep breaths (unaware that he was hugging himself) and when he has regained himself after a moment, he quickly run over to the source of the light which was then gone.

While Zero was running, he heard a cry. Cry of a small child. It was followed by the soothing sound by another child. Threading his path carefully, he followed the sound and sure enough he found two children sitting on the ground. He stood still as he watched a little boy pat the back of the crying girl (both about three or four by the look of them) while giving ‘shhh’-ing sounds for comfort. Then he shook himself and took Bloody Rose from its holster. Now Zero is not the type to bully children nor to point his gun at just anyone no matter how trigger-happy others has claimed him to be, but he has good reason for taking out Rose because even from where he stood (which is still a good deal of distance) and even without any need to concentrate, he can already identify the children as vampires. And purebloods at that. Powerful purebloods.

He heard several hurried footsteps and then came the familiar group of the Night class from between the bushes a bit away from his side led by Kaname. He inwardly flinched at the sight of him and ignored his still thundering heart which, if possible, started to beat even faster. Another batch of hurried steps resounded and the sight of the other two prefects, Yuki and Ichiru, came from his other side (relief at the sight of flesh and blood creatures evident on their faces. Zero was sure that they must have thought it’s a ghost’s laments when they heard the little girl’s cry carried by the wind. He can’t blame them though because it will surely creep out anyone who’ll hear a muffled cry of a child in the middle of the night where no child was supposed to wander).

The children lifted their faces at the sound. He watched them jump on their feet and their worried
faces was replaced by relief and happiness as they suddenly came charging at him. He was about to point his gun at the two creatures who were running to him with outstretched hands but was stopped at the exclamation they made.

“Daddy!!” They then jumped to hug his waist. Zero was frozen, shocked. *No, no, no, he must have imagined that...*

Apparently, he didn’t because a shocked sound of every person, except Kaname’s, Shiki’s and Kain’s, can be heard resounding throughout Cross Academy. “EEEEHHHHHHHH???”

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“*Ow, ow, ow...*”

The words came painfully from the young lady as she sat up while rubbing her battered head. That was definitely unexpected. Surely, her siblings did not appreciate her for this unannounced roller coaster ride. She sheepishly turned behind her, “hahaha... Great landing, ne? Kohaku, Akira, are you two-...” She didn’t finish her question for when she turned around, she found herself alone in middle of the woods.

Her initial discomfort was instantly forgotten as she immediately stood up, suddenly panicking at the thought of her lost siblings. *Oh gosh, what the hell? I know I transported all of us...* She anxiously thought, now doubting herself and feeling fear for if she made a mistake of somehow leaving her little brothers and sister then that would mean she has left them in the hands of the kidnappers! Not even knowing that they were strong enough to fend for themselves eased her mind. She worried and tried to perform the same spell to transport her back.

She waited and then stood horrified for a moment.

“.............”

She can’t summon her power at all...

Nothing...

She can’t feel the same power!

While she felt she’s not entirely powerless, she didn’t have enough to perform that great feat again... at least not now... She has seemed to have spent her all at the last spell she performed. She cursed herself as panic and fear started to kick in inside her. She’s trapped in a time she herself is not sure about while her siblings could be fighting for their lives! (She obviously forgot to simply concentrate or to feel if there were any familiar aura near her that would have given her comfort and answers.)

To her luck, her self-hatred was short-lived as she saw the familiar faces of her two younger brothers emerge between the bushes. “Kohaku!! Akira!!” She yelled in relief as she run to hug the twins. Never in her life was she happiest than now at the sight of the troublemakers but then something hit her. Her happiness was as short-lived as her panic and fear came running back to smack her. “Suiren!! Naoto!! Where are they?” Her lilac eyes went wild with panic while both her hands held her face depicting utter horror.

“Calm down, nee-chan....Uhm, we don’t know... We were trying to find them when we came
across you…” and immediately added, “But don’t worry, nee-chan, seeing that both of us made it here then surely they’re also here… somewhere. We’ll find them.” Kohaku soothed her almost-in-tears older sister. If only he’s not feeling the same fear for their two youngest then he would have laughed at their panicked-stricken older sister. She always made it a point to plan everything and remain calm at all times but guess it’s a different matter when it concerns the disappearance of your youngest siblings in who-knows-where when they were last seen peacefully slumbering and utterly defenseless. But now that he thought about it….

“Nee-chan where are we anyway?” it was Akira who asked the question.

“Eh?... Ah,” she caught and composed herself before answering, “I brought us to the past.” She explained simply.


“Yup, I don’t know what year or where we ended up exactly, but I made it a point to send us to the time when I’m already alive and to the place we all know by heart or an important place so we won’t have any problem!” She added proudly, suddenly growing bright and positive. She’s very proud of the fact that she thought of a quick and very (almost) detailed plan in a short time which saved them and will also fulfill a great personal goal of hers which was the initial reason why she took up the great challenge of learning the complicated spell and as a bonus, they’ll be surprising their parents! She wondered how old their parents should be right now… and how surprised they’ll be! Now, she’s starting to glow with glee at the thought.

The twins were about to say something regarding their sister’s impulsive decision when they heard the familiar sound of their crying little sister. All heads turned to the general direction of the alarming sound.

“Suiren!!” The three immediately ran to the source.

-Ichiru managed to say. He was the first to speak after the initial outbreak caused by the happy bouncing balls now snuggly wrapped around his brother’s legs (they slid from Zero’s waist down to his legs). “Wha-why didn’t you tell me?” Zero looked at him with a frown. “Why didn’t you tell me that you have gotten laid already?!” Zero blushed at this. “And here I thought you’re still innocent… You said you weren’t interested in anyone. By the looks of it, ‘it’ got up relatively early… too early…” Ichiru covered his face with his hands, shamelessly imitating an embarrassed teenage girl.

“Ichiru, shut up! They’re not mine!” Zero growled waving away his embarrassment caused by his shameless twin.

“How can you even say that? How could you even deny that they’re not yours when the evidence is there?” Ichiru countered.

Zero didn’t say anything at that. (While he could easily have countered it by saying it can be Ichiru’s instead) Ichiru was right. The resemblance with him is great (why to him and not Ichiru’s, he didn’t know why, he just knows it’s his features, not his twin’s…) Because after overcoming his initial shock, with the proximity and looking closely, the children have the Kiryū’s unique silver hair and
lilac eyes (but theirs have more of a wine colored tinge than silver) and while he can see himself in them, there was a mixed in their trait which looked somehow familiar. He calmed himself and then turned to speak to the two Koalas whose arms were still snaked around his legs. “Ummhh, hey bra-kids, who in the he-I mean, who-who are you two? Where’re your parents and where did the both of you come from?” speaking carefully, Zero started asking.

At this, the two little heads looked up to him. With little frowns on their cute little faces. “Otou-chan (Daddy)? Why?” The little boy confusedly asked then he stopped to sniff him. Afterwards, he looked relieved again as if he doubted himself for a while then after confirming something by smelling him, he looked up again and beamed, “Zero-touchan!”

“See?!!” Ichiru said.

“I said shut up, Ichiru!” He snarled at his twin then turning to the boy again. “Fine, then who’s your mother? Where’s your other parent then?” He asked while trying not to erupt like an angry volcano. His irritation clearly building up by the minute. He’ll really scold – older or not – the irresponsible parents of these children (even forgoing the fact that considering the children’s nature, their parents could very well be purebloods as well). His headache was becoming more prominent by the minute that he unconsciously massaged his forehead.

The little boy turned his head at the question. He looked around as if trying to find a specific person (the little girl contentedly snuggled against Zero’s leg and wouldn’t move an inch) then when he spotted Kaname, he detached his arms from Zero’s leg and immediately ran, again with outstretched arms forward, shouting joyously, “Chichiue (Father)!!!”

There was another resounding ‘EHHHHHHHHHH?!” but this time it came only from the two noisy prefects. The Night class stood in shocked silence as the young pureblood vampire, though very young radiated with power, ran to their leader who stood like a statue in front of them.

‘What the fuck?’ Zero thought.
Enlightenment

When the parade of the Night class started, Kaname never had the idea or the inkling that the night will turn as it did for it started relatively normal except for the few changes especially in his state of mind and feelings. When the door of the Moon dorm opened and the march started, he was welcomed by the sight of the cheering mortals who were foolishly and unknowingly endangering their lives by coming close to them and the prefects who valiantly fought the wild crowd of girls dying to touch them.

*Three* prefects to be exact.

Kaname had felt Zero even before they have left the dorms. He had to fight the urge to stare at the prefect who was missing for the last months and the desire to come directly at him and drag him to a more private place to confront him, to what, he was not yet decided. He contented himself with the thought that he was back at last. Though Kaname was getting impatient, he stopped himself. He was feeling too relieved to be angry right then. Yes, he admitted being relieved seeing Zero relatively well, feeling more than seeing, the ever familiar scowl he wore on his handsome face as he glared and dared any of the Day class girls to cross the line and reach out for the Night class members.

He only allowed himself to glimpse at the hunter who coincidentally turned to him as well at the exact moment so their eyes met. It was brief but very impactful. Something has changed in Zero. He knows it. What exactly, he couldn’t pinpoint and as he walked pass the hunter, after giving acknowledgement to Yuki’s and even Ichiru’s efforts, he caught a small whiff of the silverette. Kaname almost stopped as he asked himself if the hunter has always smelled so lovely. He knew he wasn’t imagining it as he felt other members of the Night class turning towards Zero’s way. He even later caught Hanabusa Aido’s frown while deep in thought and he was sure that it was regarding Zero’s change he had notice. He was strangely annoyed at the blonde’s curiosity towards the hunter but waived away the feeling. He did not want to ask himself further questions like the reason for his irritation.

All these silent contemplation done as the class progress was suddenly broken by the tremor followed by a blinding light that came from the academy forest. He immediately rose from his seat and hurried towards the forest, the Night class hot on his heels.

He felt the unknown auras inside the academy grounds that suddenly sprang out of nowhere. He immediately turned to the glaring presence of two purebloods he felt nearby. There are others as well but there was something odd with them. Mighty as he is, he couldn’t point what exactly are they and this worried the pureblood for there was, at this point, nothing that was completely unknown to him as far as species’ auras goes. This meant that there was something that was completely different about them and if they are enemies then it will surely not turn out pretty. So he first went to address the presence of those creatures whose nature was at least known to him as he needed to have a foothold of what was going on.

The silver-haired hunter was at the site when they have arrived and they were followed by the remaining guardians only shortly after. They were greeted at the sight of two purebloods children. A young boy and girl that are about three or four years old. They have silver hair that glittered beneath the moonlight and power that seeped unknowingly that seemed to have been designed to scare and intimidate all possible attackers. The sight of them stopped Kaname from moving forward. He was by now seriously baffled at the sudden appearance of these unknown visitors and only their pitiful situation prevented the pureblood from doing anything drastic as the measure of their power will prove to be a problem had they turned out to be enemies, though he could feel that they meant no
harm and are honestly scared and lost as they appeared to be.

He would have never imagined that these were all only icing on the cake. Only drizzles before a huge storm violent enough to tear one’s house from the ground comes. NO, as the bizarre happenings became so confusing, it was chaos.

When the children tackled Zero and exclaimed that the hunter was their father, it made something in Kaname stir. He felt like someone just knotted his innards together too tightly that he can’t breathe. His heart was too heavy he felt like leaning forward. He can’t help but feel angry. Towards the hunter and that *woman,* whoever she was that ensnared the hunter but before he can even react violently, the little boy ran from Zero to him and called him. He had lived for many years, for very long years, and was called many things by his loyal subjects and affectionate family but that was a word that was never used on him.

“Chichiue!”

To say that he was surprised was an understatement. He was completely shocked and all thoughts and feelings flew away from him. He can only stand as the said child attacked his waist and wrap his little arms around him. That this child looked almost like the perfect imitation of the hunter, smiling at him and calling him his father, felt so bizarre Kaname decided that that was the strangest thing that ever happened to him in the course of his life.

They were so preoccupied that they didn’t notice the three pairs of eyes intently watching and observing the situation and whose auras now carefully concealed.

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When they arrived at the site where their youngest siblings are, after quickly enveloping them inside a dimension she has created as they run to avoid detection, they were greeted by the sight of Suiren and Naoto running to their daddy. Akira was about to jump out of the bush to join the fray but Kohaku stopped him immediately after getting their older sister’s sign to stop the hyperactive younger twin. It’s basic to watch and observe the situation first if one didn’t know what is happening, and aside from that, they were sure that their nee-chan just find it amusing and would like to watch a bit more.

But in all honesty, she would really like to get a foothold of their situation and idea of the time they landed on as the questions and confusion already popping out at the sight of their parents.

Why is her daddy wearing black Day class uniform? Oh dear, she did hear about their otou-chan being part of the human’s class together with Yuki-bachan and Ichiji back when their parents still hated each other.

*Gosh, we’re doomed. Why?!

And she was so sure they landed at the time she’s already alive? What happened? It couldn’t be, she refused to even think about it, that she actually failed... Well, true, nobody’s perfect but it was something she really put effort to. She made sure, that’s why she’s so confident about it... And so the question now came to her, how will they convince their parents’ of their lineage and connection? It’s important that they’ll be able to get their parent’s approval or else, God forbid; they’ll be sleeping on the street.
No! She can’t do it to her siblings. She won’t allow it!

She also has a very bad feeling that her power is not just at the moment snuffed but will take a long time to recover. Based on the amount and her previous records, it will even be longer than normal.

Oh my, *I take it back, let me be scolded, I’m so sorry!*

She can only repent internally. No, no, no, she must stay strong to protect her siblings! What’s done is done and the only way is forward! Yes, she must steel herself, and so taking a deep breath, continued on to watch the exchanges.

But when the situation turned a bit dangerous and attacks were directed to their otou-chan, they moved in without a second thought, and sprang from their hiding place.

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The first to give their disapproval was unsurprisingly the blond boy and honey haired woman that were beside Kain Akatsuki. His blue orbs suspiciously shifted its gaze from the two children but hers was intently throwing daggers at the hunter.

“Is this a joke, Kiryū?” Spat out one Hanabusa Aido.

“How dare you make a fool out of Kaname-sama?” said Ruka Souen venomously.

Before Zero could even retaliate and deny the accusation, the two, having already lost their composure believing that the hunter was no doubt trying to make a fool out of their beloved pureblood, moved in to attack the prefect. Though the actions of the two vampires were not unexpected, none of them was really able to react on time, not even Kaname or Akatsuki. They were trapped in their own musings as the strange happening took out all composure and rationality.

And what happened next threw them all in more confusion, if that was possible.

As before Kaname could order the two to stop, Hanabusa already made a sword out of his ice as both he and Ruka closed in on to the hunter who was in the act of drawing out his gun which he put back in the holster when he talked to the children earlier, a wave of brown locks as dark as his own obscured his view of the hunter.

And three older children appeared.

Even before Hanabusa or Ruka can get close to the hunter, the presence that Kaname didn’t realize have vanished all of a sudden, instantly sprang up out of nowhere. Like a door suddenly being opened and it revealed the strange auras he had never felt before in his life and coupled with power he never imagined existed. The presence was so great that more than the surprise attack; the auras alone stopped everyone from moving, including him.

And three older children appeared.

A young girl, much older than the two silver heads, stepped out of nowhere, almost staying midair as she balanced herself on one foot at the edge of the blonde’s sword. Her eyes was shielded by her bangs but a smile can be clearly seen playing on her lips and hindering Ruka was two boys, who look exactly like each other, twins also older than the silver heads but younger than the little girl. There was politeness in their countenance as they stepped in between the male vampire hunter and the female vampire but there’s warning in their deep burgundy eyes.
“Ah, ah, you are indeed impulsive as Takuji said. You must have earned lots of reprimand but if you touch this person, you’ll find your head separated from your body instead, Hana-jiji.” Said the female child in an amused tone as she bent down to face the wide-eyed blonde who stood frozen, in fear. For even though this was said in a light tone, her aura says otherwise. It crashed upon them in a violent wave but not in rage, Kaname noted (if he’s not wrong), rather, in anxiousness. This child is extremely agitated. Though the aura didn’t hurt, not him at least and as he observed further neither was Zero, he can see that the rest of the Night class felt the pressure greatly, even Ichiru and Yuki though both are humans, as he can see evident by their troubled faces.

“Nee-chan…” quietly hinted one of the younger, dark-haired children. When Kaname has finally gotten a good look at one of the twin boys, he was shocked. He knows that face. He watched it in the mirror everyday as he grew up. It was his face. The exact copy of his visage.

“hmmm?” She asked in a confused tone after she did a back-flip, leaving her place on Aido’s sword to land soundlessly on the ground. When she looked around, she finally understood what Kohaku was trying to say. “I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to!” She said flustered as she retracted her aura. No sooner than she did, Ruka and Hanabusa collapsed on the ground, sweat running down their faces.

“Are you quite alright Hana-jiji?” then turning to Ruka who was clearly very pale by then, “Ruka-bachan?”

Kaname’s bafflement has gone up a completely different level. The children’s aura, class, power, familiarity greatly astonished him and countless questions kept coming up, one after the other even before the first ones were answered as he stared at the now visible lilac eyes of the girl, who he assumed was the oldest of the five. When he has finally seen the little girl’s face, he’s once again amazed. The little girl looks a lot like his mother, Juri Kuran but with eyes that has been in his mind for the last months, the hunter’s lilac eyes.

He was about to begin questioning the little girl now leaning towards the still shell-shock blond when the little silver-haired child who he has completely forgotten about and was still dangling around his waist suddenly spoke. “Nee-chan!” He jumped down and run pass the blond to the little girl.

“Oh, yes, yes, Nao. Please behave now and stay still.” She said while patting, obviously, her little brother’s head. Then facing him finally, “Greetings, chichiue. We apologize for the suddenness, I believe you want an explanation?” she politely addressed after giving him a small curtsey.

“Yes please, if you could.” He quietly answered, internally fighting for calm. His heart beat even faster as anticipation for answers to his long list of questions grew.

“Then should we move in to a much more comfortable place? It is now deep into the night and I would rather do this in comfort.”

“By all means.” He gestured to the Moon dorm. “Seiren, get the chairman and guide him to the Moon dorm, in the lounge.” He instructed his guard who appeared out of nowhere as usual.

Before they left though, Kain gathered his cousins who were still flopped on the ground as the rest of the Night class shuddered and tried to gain their footing at the fast paced situation while the little girl turned to the hunter for the first time.

She walked slowly to the silent and obviously confused hunter. His initial irritation now replaced with confusion. “Good evening, otou-chan.” She greeted with a smile as she stood in front of the hunter. The older twins followed behind her while one held the hand of the younger silver haired child. One of the boys, the one who spoke earlier, held the other back with his other hand, as he looked like he also wanted to tackle the hunter. “Akira, stay back, we don’t need to cause any more confusion. Wait till we have explained.” She mildly warned as if sensing her little brother’s
“Eh? No fair, Suiren and Naoto got to do it!” The boy named Akira started whining only to be silenced by his twin’s look and resorted to merely pouting. The hunter stared. His silver-lavender eyes wild with confusion as he stared at the same eyes he has inherited from his parent’s on the face of the girl who calls him daddy -- The very same child who called Kaname ‘father’.

“Please come with us, otou-chan. I believe you would want to hear this after all. Ichiji and Yuki-bachan too.” She added as she spotted the two speechless prefects behind the hunter. Then she moved in to gather the now sleeping silver-haired girl whose arms were still tightly wrapped around his leg. “Mou-, Sui-chan, let go of otou-chan.” After a quiet one-sided battle, she finally managed to untangle her little sister’s arms and carried her in her arms.

When everyone has found their strength to move their feet, they started to move to the comfort of the Moon dormitory. It was led by Kaname then followed by the mysterious children, the prefects then the rest of the Night class. They were met by the chairman who was seen running in their direction with Seiren also sprinting behind him, anxiousness on his ageless face.

“Kaname-kun! What’s happening? I was told there were intruders. Who-?” He stopped as he spotted the children.

“Ah, grandpa!” beamed the excited hyperactive dark-haired boy. This time, Kohaku was unable to prevent his twin in tackling down the surprised ex-hunter who was also caught off guard by the epithet.

“Eh? Eh? Eh?!"

“Akira!” scolded the eldest in exasperation, “I said to wait. Mou!” She sighed, shaking her head. “I’m sorry grandpa, can you carry that idiot so we can enter the dorm?” She implored with a smile, trying valiantly to lighten the mood. “I promise to give you a good explanation and answers to all your questions.”

The chairman then turned to Kaname. His eyes asking questions as his face too became overcome with confusion. Kaname only nodded so the hunter picked up the dark haired child who smiled brightly at him. He almost stopped as the familiar face of the child struck him.

Only the promise of answers enabled him to continue on to the dorm.

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“So,” Clearing her throat before she spoke again. “Where do I start?” she began after depositing their sleeping sister on one of the couches in the lounge of the Moon dorm together with Naoto who began to yawn and also lie down beside his twin. She was seated on the floor in front of the couch, Kohaku and Akira, who she demanded to go to their side, were seated on the floor on either side of her. The Night class stood behind the arm chair, besides the couch the children chose, where Kaname seated himself and Kaien chose to sit on the couch opposite the mysterious children together with Ichiru and Yuki, Zero stood leaning against the wall besides the window.

“Ah, perhaps, of course, an introduction.” She continued. “Forgive my manners, I have completely
forgotten it at the swirl of events. Oh my, how my etiquette teacher shall scold me…” She still opted in using a light and easy tone though she felt it lost to most of the people inside the room. “Ehem, my name,” she paused for but a moment before continuing. “My name is Anne Kuran, future daughter and first born of Zero and Kaname Kuran.”

At the violent reaction of everyone inside the room, they didn’t notice the frown that the dark-haired twin male gave their older sister. “What?!?” was the general exclamation.

“Maa, maa, please do calm down. These two are my younger brothers, Kohaku and Akira Kuran and as for these two sleeping angels, the girl is Suiren and the boy is Naoto. It’s a pleasure to meet you!” She said beaming.

“Wait please! Alright, so…so you’re Kaname-kun and Zero-kun’s children…from the future?” Kaien asked trying to understand and calmly review what he believe he heard which by now he was starting to doubt. He must be turning deaf but when the little girl nodded, he immediately asked the most obvious question. “But little miss, hmmm Anne right? Okay, Anne-chan, you must know that Zero-kun and Kaname-kun are both males. Conceiving is impossible between them.”

“Oh yes! That is of course true for normal vampires and mortals but otou-chan is different of course.” Then she paused. “Oh okay, so I take it you do not know otou-chan’s family history…oh dear me, it will take a lot more explaining than just saying we came from the future, oh my…” she sighed before continuing and looking up to the astonished crowd. This will be a very long night for all of them.

“Of course, it is known that men can’t conceive with another man but otou-chan is different, or rather, the Kiryūs are. Have you heard of the legend of the Suzaku family?”

“Suzaku family? Did you mean the mortal family with the unique blood?” Kaname asked.

“That legend?” Aido chimed in.

“Yes! Oh good! As expected of Father and uncle!” Now it’s going to be a lot easier.

“What was that Hana?” His cousin Akatsuki asked him.

“You know that legend that said that once upon a time there was a human family that has very delicious blood that vampires will even hunt. According to the book I once read, their blood is so sought after that vampires from all over the world hunted every last family member for their blood as it was not only delectable but also gave vampires power and because of this, the family was annihilated by power hungry or gluttonous vampires, but there was no record of it being true.”

“Oh, but it’s true!” Anne now continued and the attention was back to her. “But of course, they were smart enough to change their family name and there was also the matter of marriage. Through the years, they have lost their last name and came by many other names but their blood is special because of many things you know. One is that no matter how much foreign blood is mixed, a Suzaku will not lose their blood’s power or characteristic. It refuses to be affected by any other blood; rather, it normally consumes it so as to remain pure but if the foreign blood is the stronger one, it will be consumed instead. In such cases, it will transform and enhance the foreign blood’s characteristic but will still retain their own. Secondly, it is the only mortal blood that holds power. It’s for this reason that despite their strong scent, they were able to hide their presence or masked the smell of their blood which will be distinguishable only once shed. The Suzakus were known to hold power in their own right, some people labeled them as witches during the olden times which sadly got them into trouble even with humans. And thirdly, because of the dwindling family members carrying this blood, the survival instincts of the members or the blood itself that wants to survive, I’m also not sure which, surfaced thus giving fort to another trait which is the ability to conceive despite the gender.
Their blood’s power was so great that this was not impossible for them though because of both vampires who hunt them and humans who persecute them for witchcraft, their numbers continued to diminish as this trait continued to get stronger that’s why there’s a high chance of conceiving especially now that there are only two members left.” She then turned to Zero. “The last of the Suzaku’s descendant are otou-chan and Ichiji.” She finished and when no one spoke, she added to supply the silence, “And we’re the product! How wonderful was that?” while clapping her hands together.

“So you’re saying that it was nii-san that carried you to full terms?” Ichiru recovered first.

“Yes, is there a problem with that?”

Zero grimaced at this, one hand covering half of his face. Though it was not stated, there was the indirect hint of him ‘taking it’, now everyone knows. God, this evening couldn’t get any worse.

“Where will you even pop up from?” The younger Kiryū asked, seriously curious, disregarding the fact that he was just indirectly told that his brother will be the bottom in the relationship. “Don’t tell me you’ll come from his ass?”

Zero glared at Ichiru at this while Anne, Akira and Kohaku burst out laughing. “Of course not, there will be a cut that will appear below otou-chan’s navel, like caesarian, but it will appear naturally once the time of birth has come so it’s impossible to miss.” She explained while giggling from time to time.

“Ugh, that must hurt; it might take a while to heal.” Yuki grimaced at the thought.

“Yuki-chan, you forget that Kiryū is a vampire, it might heal within the day itself.” Aido reminded, stopping too late.

There were numerous gasps that came from the Night class. Aido paled as Kaname and Zero glared at the blond. Shoot, he forgot!

“You’re a vampire Kiryū-kun? Who bit you?” Ichijou asked but then paused. “Ah of course…” He knew something was weird about the hunter and as he remembered the tragedy of the Kiryū hunters, he came to a heady conclusion that it was Shizuka Hio who bit him.

“An ex-human? For Kaname-sama?” Ruka was incredulous. Disbelief coloring her voice.

“Eh, was that a secret otou-chan? Why?” but before Zero could even say anything, Kaname changed the subject.

“Enough, leave Kiryū’s business alone. Anne, answer this, what are you exactly? I can feel strong pureblood aura from those two young ones but you three excludes a different aura.” Kaname started, successfully diverting everyone’s attention. He will deal with Aido’s loose tongue later on.

“Oh, we’re called hybrids for obvious reasons; we are a mix of vampire, human and hunter. It’s still being studied though as we are a special case. They said that our blood is still as pure, that’s because chichiue’s pure blood is stronger than otou-chan’s. It transformed the blood into vampire pureblood but still enhanced and strengthened it like it always does so we can still be considered purebloods but not quite, as we were granted powers and abilities that other vampires do not have, hunter’s abilities strong enough that we’re also mistaken as hunters. The mix gave us very distinct auras and smell though Suiren and Naoto only excludes pureblood aura as a defense mechanism. It’s by instinct as to intimidate possible attackers but as they grew up, they’ll be able to hide their pureblood aura. We’re the strongest creatures in existence, according to chichiue anyway.” She shrugged.
“Oh? How so? Enlighten me.”

“Let me show you.” She then scrambled to her feet and stretched out her right hand in front of her with her palm facing the floor. A small circular light appeared on the carpeted floor; from there a white hilt of a sword appeared followed by the long line of white scabbard. Slowly, a pure white katana still inside the scabbard appeared. When the tip of the hilt hit her palm, she wound her fingers around the hilt and drew the sword revealing also a crystal white blade. “This is my anti-vampire weapon, my white night, Byakuya.”

There was another wave of gasps before silence permeated in the room. It was becoming normal to her ears by now. She then returned Byakuya in its scabbard.


“Ah, it’s one of my abilities. I can control, open or create dimensions and I sometimes create one where I can put my stuff in so I don’t need to carry them! It’s very convenient!” She explained proudly. “Do you want one, grandpa?”

“Eh?”

“Here.” She held out her palm again, on its surface appeared the same white light where a ring adorned by a single small ruby came out. “It’s a ring that has a blood stone that I created.”

“A blood stone? You can create blood stones?” Kaname asked in quiet amazement.

“What’s a blood stone?” Yuki asked eyeing the ring that was presented to her adopted father.

“Blood stones are like crystallized blood that contains the maker’s power. It has strong properties as it can only be made by purebloods.” Kaien explained, bewildered.

“That right! This one contains a small space where one can store things, hmmm, like a locker you can carry with you!” She perked up by the wonderful example.

“Wow, that is so cool. Can I have one?” Ichiru asked. It will be great if he can also store his katana. This way, he won’t be detained every single time by teachers and other bothersome authority and he will be ready for emergencies. He didn’t notice the incredulous stares of the Night class. Asking for a blood stone is the same as asking for pure blood which is an unforgivable crime in the vampire society but they were more surprised as the child readily agreed to it.

“Of course! Perhaps uncle would like a necklace or a bracelet…how about an earring?” She offered, happy that her uncle is being so friendly, but then again, her uncle Ichiru has always been easy to get along with. She really loves her uncle, always making her feel at ease.

“An earring then please.” Ichiru answered, smiling. How very amiable this child is. He would love it if she’s really his niece. Anne immediately conjured a stud earring with a small circular red stone and gave it to Ichiru.

“What are your other abilities?” Kaname inquired further after the exchange. He has grown extremely curious of these children. They’re giving out evidences of them being purebloods and he’s starting to believe that there is truth in what they’re saying. There’s also something in them that he cannot resist and there was an unacknowledged part of him that greatly wished that what they are saying is the truth. That they are his….

“We’ll there are a lot… hmmm… like elemental?” She said as she holds out her palm creating a mini tornado on its surface before closing it. “Of course, the ability to kill purebloods and have incredibly
“Long life.” She added a bit sadly.

“Nee-chan has the unique ability of controlling or rather manipulating time.” Kohaku helpfully supplied so as to ward off any awkward tension that would have sprung from her last statement.

“Time? Not one has that ability; even the notion of controlling time is ridiculous. It’s impossible.”

“The very fact that we stand before you father is the evidence that it has become possible. It was hard of course, I lost most of my stamina and power after that spell, and it will take a while before I can transport us back…” She said while bowing her head, eyeing the floor. “I hope that you’ll be kind to us and let us stay…”

Kaname paused only for a second before saying, “But of course, I will not let my children wander in the streets. Feel free to stay for as long as you like, ah, will it be alright with you chairman?” This made Anne perk up, almost sighing in relief; she didn’t know what she will do if they were refused shelter because it’s obvious how suspicious they look right now.

“But Kaname-sama! How can you even be sure that they’re saying the truth? They could be spies for all we know!” Ruka hastily disagreed, still not believing it.

“Ruka-chan, look carefully. I think that even without the evidences, it is quite clear that they’re indeed Kaname’s children, look at them.” Ichijou need not add the especially the older ones part as it is quite clear already. Even the silver-haired children, though not having Kaname’s eyes or hair color, still have something in them that screams Kuran!

“This might help.” Kohaku stood and made his way in front of Kaname while pulling out the necklace he’s wearing that was hidden under his clothes. He took it off and gave it to Kaname.

“Ah.” Kaname whispered after staring at the necklace with small, elongated hexagonal ruby red crystal for a pendant.

“What is it, Kaname?” Ichijou asked, eyeing the necklace.

“A blood stone,” he smiled slightly, “my blood stone, with the Kuran insignia inside it. Of course, it’s an old custom within pureblood families though only a few practices it nowadays.” He gave it back to the boy. He stared first before touching his son’s cheek and allowing him to feel the child’s face. His initial confusion started to ebb away and now replaced by a light feeling. He can’t help but feel happy; he’s looking at his son, his heir, and his progeny. How he dreamt of this.

Anne was floored at this. Goodness!! How stupid! Of course, their father gave each of them a necklace with his blood stone as proof of their bloodline, of their lineage! How can she be so stupid as to forget!? She was ashamed of how slow her mind worked this time.

Kohaku spotted this so he bent down to pat his sister’s head and comforted her as best as he could.

“Maa, maa, nee-chan. You were flustered, far more than you allowed yourself to believe so you just didn’t remember fast enough. I know given time, you would have remembered so it’s alright.” Though this only succeeded in embarrassing her even more. She blushed at her own stupidity and glared when she heard Akira snicker.

Kaname laugh at them. Everyone in the room stared and marvel at this. Kaname rarely laugh or rather, display his emotions and to hear this unrestrained genuine laugh was a sight to behold indeed. He then bent down, offering his hand to his daughter who’s bowing her head in shame. “It’s alright Anne, your explanation was very helpful and this only strengthened your point. Though I do wonder what made you travel back in time.”
They then explained how they were followed by some nobles while having fun and to escape their would-be captors, she opted to using her magic thinking that she’ll be able to do it again to travel back to their own time after only a while. Kaname listened to it in silence, feeling fury at the thought of the dangers his children were forced to face, his protective instincts surfacing.

“But that was very thoughtless of you Anne. What if we didn’t believe you even after all the explanation? You will find yourselves out in the street or worse, killed.” By me, he was horrified to add. Considering the outrageous facts, it could have been likely had he been with a more impulsive nature. He forcibly tampered his growing rage as he saw the guilt and regret on his daughter’s face. He brushed her bangs using his hand. “Don’t look like that; I am merely worried about you.” cupping her face.

“I know chichiue.” pressing on the hand that’s currently holding her cheek. “I don’t know why as well, but I did consider it… I made sure I’m already alive at this time to save myself a world of explanation…” a frown decorated her lovely face.

Kaname blinked at this then his eyes immediately shot to the hunter who blanched upon hearing this. Zero’s heartbeat became so erratic as panic and fear settled. Suddenly, memories of that night and his condition weeks after that came back to him. His nausea, lethargy and morning spells he assumed was only flu now became signs of a condition that was supposed to be completely beyond him. One of his hands shot up to cover his mouth while the other was drawn on his stomach, reminded of the odd sensation he felt earlier that night. Oh shit, the night could still get worse.

“Kiryū?”

Zero’s eyes were immediately met with questioning burgundy ones. When Kaname saw the panic swimming in his darkened purple eyes, it was like being given confirmation.

“Are you pregnant?” He asked, slightly coloring.

“Eh?!? What?!!” The sound was so violent that Anne, Akira and Kohaku jumped in surprise.

“But-but, for him to be pregnant, you first have to have se-,” The chairman wonderfully supplied that made the hunter’s blood, which just rushed out, came rushing back at mach speed with a vengeance. When he spotted his son’s furious blush which was like a blaring affirmative answer, he, unknowingly the rest as well, also blushed... “Ah, ha, ha, ha. I- I see, so- so that’s how it is…” Then he cleared his throat and let out another awkward laugh. The children were now looking at the comical blushing faces of everyone in the room, finding it quite amusing. They rarely see their adults flustered like this.

Zero, more than once today, contemplated his death and perhaps the slow murder of his guardian before that. He wanted, more than ever, to bolt from this very room or jump into a hole to never be seen again. Damn it! How will he live from this day on? He regretted not saying anything in response to the pureblood’s question and cursed his own reflexive blush; it’s too late, now not even his most venomous voice or any form of retaliation will save him from eminent shame that coupled with having sex with a vampire and a male at that. His blush was a dead giveaway; he might as well have confirmed it using words. Fuck, kill me now.

His eyes stayed trained on the floor, wishing more than ever that the world just blows out at this very moment, not daring to meet anyone’s eyes which he can feel were currently drilling holes on his head. The silence was so unbearable; it felt like centuries before Kaname spoke again.

“Zero, I’m asking you. Did you know?” Kaname repeated and opting to use the hunter’s name because of his lack of response. He saw the panic in the hunter’s eyes but he still wanted to make
sure. What if the hunter knew and he just didn’t want to tell him? Anger suddenly bubbled up inside him at the thought though he immediately put a stop to it. It’s clear the silverette was also confused and it was confirmed by Zero’s next words.

The hunter glared at the pureblood. He didn’t know what to feel after hearing his name spoken so familiarly by Kaname. “Fuck if I know. It’s normal to think of flu if you’re suddenly nauseous or dizzy because it’s common sense that men don’t get pregnant, Kuran.”

“Oh right! That. That illness that Toga-chan explained over the phone! The one that’s been going on for weeks! Of course! Now, it makes sense!” the ex-hunter exclaimed, finally making sense of things as he looked at his still-flushed adopted son. Toga phoned him shortly after Zero’s return to inform him of his son’s present condition, right at not trusting his pupil to actually volunteer the information.

“But when? Nii-san?” Zero glared at his brother this time. He scowled, though he really wanted to cry, as his brother now asked the question. He felt like the world stood still for a moment. That’s it; he’ll pack his clothes and go on a very, very long journey.

“None of your business, Ichiru.” He spat. The cat is out of the bag so there’s no use denying it anymore. Whatever, he’ll sleep today and hope he’ll never wake up.

“So, is it true then?” Kaname asked again. Looking at Kaien and then back to Zero.

“Shit Kuran, I said I don’t know!” He almost screamed at the vampire who’s continuously pushing him. He’s feeling extremely dizzy and the stress of the conversation just added to his growing nausea.

“Well, Kaname-kun, Zero-kun was having morning spells where he kept on vomiting, getting dizzy and drowsy since a couple of few weeks ago,” it was Kaien who gave the information. “But I believe, to make sure, we’ll need a specialist to check him.”

“I can arrange that.” The vampire generously offered. If Zero’s pregnant with his child, he needed to know so new arrangements can be made.

“Thank you, Kaname-kun.”

Then silence again.

“So…, are you going to marry my brother?”

Die. Die Ichiru. Die. Zero mentally cursed as he, luckily, tumbled into the darkness and escaped further embarrassment by slipping into unconsciousness. The last thing that registered to him was the warm arms that caught him just in time before he kissed the floor and the wonderful smell of roses.

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He carried Naoto in his arms after instructing Akatsuki to carry Suiren then proceeded up the stairs. They gently laid the sleeping children on one of the two beds inside the room, careful not to wake them then turned to the others who followed them up.

“If you need anything, don’t hesitate to ask anyone in this dorm, okay? Oh by the way, are you hungry? Will you be sleeping already? It’s still quite early…” Ichijou said after checking his clock to see that it’s only 1 am in the morning. It felt like many things happened to them in those short hours.

“Um! I’m hungry!” gladly accepted the overzealous Akira. He even raised his hand while volunteering the information.

“May we please have something to eat, uncle?” said the more reserve Kohaku.

Takuma smiled at the twins, marveling at how much they look like the Moon dorm president.

“Of course, how about you Anne-chan?”

“Yes, me too please, but may I also take a bath first? I rolled on the dirt before this.” She shyly admitted before giving him quite an embarrassed smile.

“Sure, you can use the bath. There should be towels in there already and bath essentials though I must ask someone to buy your personal things first, oh and clothes too, of course.”

“It’s okay uncle, we have this,” Akira pointed to his ears that are adorned with four, two on each ear, red stud earrings. “Nee-chan was quite the grandma type; we have one blood stone each only containing clothes for all season, one containing preserve food and blood tablets, the other, emergency supply and one for our weapons and some other things.”

“Which will now serve you well,” Anne glared at Akira, “and don’t call me a grandma, I didn’t remember raising you to be rude to ladies.” She barely stopped herself from sticking out her tongue. No, that will be unsightly.

Takuma laughed at the exchange with a chuckling Kain behind him. “Wow, that’s really convenient.”

“Would you like one? I’ve made plenty for everyone!” again, Anne offered.

“Oh no, I can’t ask you that.”

“It’s okay since you’ll be my uncle! We’ll be family.” She smiled at him.

“Eh?” Green eyes widen slightly in confusion and he would have asked more if only Kaname didn’t at that moment arrive to check on his children.

“Father!” greeted the children at the pureblood. Akira freely tackled his parent joyously.

“How is otou-chan? Is he alright?” asked the eldest.

“He’ll be fine, I assure you. The chairman gave his permission to let you visit him tomorrow.” The pureblood convinced them while he wrapped his arms around Akira. “You should eat before retiring. I have already asked the cook for supper.”

“Yes, chichiue, we’ll go down as soon as I have washed myself and these two. Let go now, Akira, you must smell like dirt.” She said while yanking her dangling brother.
“Ah yes, I will send for clothes immediately.”

“Oh it’s okay, chichiue.” Pointing at their ears and Kaname immediately understood.

“Very well, go down as soon as you’re ready.” He smiled before closing the door and taking the other two vampires out of the room.

As soon as they were gone, Akira turned and asked his sister. “So, nee-chan, who’s Anne?” At this, his twin also turned to their older sister.

“Ah, that’s right! Good, you two didn’t slip. My name is Anne. Don’t make any mistake of calling my name, is that clear?”

“Well, don’t worry about that since we do call you nee-chan, right?” assured Akira as he put his hands together behind his head. “But are you sure you want to do this? You have a very beautiful and meaningful name…”

“I don’t think it will change anything, nee-chan. You should know more than anyone that the future cannot be changed. You cannot cheat fate.” Kohaku voiced in a worried tone. They know the reason behind the name, what his sister is planning and that it will fail miserably resulting to his sister’s pain, no doubt.

“But… but it’s worth a try!” she tried to reason, looking down. She also didn’t want to do it. Her name was a beautiful present from her parents and she wanted to keep it badly but, “You’ll never know, it might be fate that’s cheating me… I need to at least do something or I’ll regret it for as long as I live… So just… just let me do it.”

“Well, if you’re sure nee-chan.” Kohaku sighed in resignation, catching Akira’s nod.

“Thanks.” She smiled a bit sadly. “Let’s take a bath now so we can go down. I’m starving.”
What they left behind

When they reached the castle, they were able to feel the tension even before they took their first step inside the entrance, fear immediately sprang up inside his chest making his steps a little too fast. The castle was too quiet considering that they just returned back home. Ah that’s right, he knows what’s missing. It’s the sound of hurried footsteps that were normally heard every time they go back home after a while. It’s the sound of their children’s speedy steps as they go welcome them home. He immediately searched for the familiar aura of their beloved children and panicked when he found none. None of the gentle and wonderful presence that never failed to take his fatigue or irritation away. It can’t be, not again. He shot his husband a look, unable to utter a single sound, as something painfully squeezed his heart.

“Shhhh, Zero.” It was the only sound Kaname managed as he also felt the same pain his mate is currently feeling but he refused to succumb to panic as it will not help them. Without a single more word, they ran fast deep inside the castle in record speed to the familiar presence to inquire about the whereabouts of their children.

“Ichiru!” He shouted the moment he entered the study where several of their friends are currently holding an intense meeting.

“Nii-san…” Ichiru breathed with relief but was immediately replaced with fear at the sight of his twin. He's a dead man, he just knows it. “I’m so sorry.”

Those three words almost spelled Zero’s death. God, what happened? “What the fuck? Where are the kids? Ichiru!” he repeated when his twin didn’t respond.

“Nii-san, I didn’t realize it…They snuck out… They were gone before I knew it. I had them searched for immediately as soon as I realized but Hana, Kain and Ruka are not back yet so… I still don’t know what happened.” He explained but didn’t meet his brother’s eyes. He felt so guilty at his failure to watch over the little ones.

Zero wasn’t able to respond. His vision began to cloud as horrible suppositions began building up inside his mind. He wanted to scream and be angry with Ichiru but he also can’t blame his twin. He knew those children. He watched over them and knew very well the little mischievousness lain beneath their sweet and obedient countenance. He admitted they could be a handful sometimes, not to him, but to those who will have the misfortune of watching over them. It was not the first time they snuck outside the castle without escort. It was their favorite play and though they were reprimanded several times, it was still repeated nonetheless. He can’t blame them for that as well; he himself will not be locked down inside the walls of this castle no matter how many times his husband tried to. He will go out, whenever he wanted, to hunt. But still, not one of the reasons was enough to extinguish the frustration and anger he was currently feeling.

There have been too many, far too many attempts in kidnapping their children. People who wanted their powers and/or blood, those who were opposed to his and Kaname’s union, those that are angry with him, Kaname, royalty or purebloods in general and the sickos who wanted to know more about the secret of the Suzaku’s, purebloods’ or hybrids’ blood.

Reason was telling him that they’ll be fine as they were trained enough to ward off any attack and to stand their fair chance in a fight as they are the strongest creatures in existence but his heart cannot rest and be given peace unless he can embrace his angels again. His husband hugged him tightly as he cooed him in an attempt to sooth his nerve-wrecked mind. He was calmed but only for a bit.
“Kaname, if something were to happen to them, I—…”

“Shhhhhh, nothing will happen to them, trust me.” The pureblood gently whispered to his ear.

“How can you be so sure?”

“Because they’re our children.” He answered simply as he pulled away slightly to look at him, smiling despite being just as worried.

Before anything more was said, the hunter felt the presence of the three vampires sent out to search for their children. His heart sank as he felt only those three auras and without his little ones. His anxiety grew yet again.

“Kaname-sama, Zero-sama, you’re back.” It was Kain who greeted them first. He was followed by Hanabusa and Ruka.

“What news?” Kaname began, waving away pleasantries.

“What are they? What did you find out?”

“Kaname-sama, we followed their lingering scent as far as the town. There were scents of about thirty other vampires, no doubt trying to kidnap them…” Zero paled at this but Kain immediately added “Though it’s hard, please don’t worry, we saw no evidence of a struggle. We followed until we found their scents ended at one point; inside an alley way and there was a single mark on the ground. There’s a powerful residue of a spell and the lingering smell of the princess’ blood.” He held out his phone now reflecting an image, obviously taken using the very phone’s camera, of a dark circular mark on the ground. No doubt from one of her spells. The pureblood smiled as he handed over the phone to his agitated hunter. He heard Zero sighed in relief.

The hunter wobbly went and flopped down on one of the couches inside the office where they were at. “I swear they’ll be the death of me.” He felt weak with relief.

“They unfortunately got your stubbornness.” Kaname smiled down at his husband.

“Hmph.” He didn’t answer that, feeling too light to actually retaliate. He turned to his brother instead when he felt another aura approaching them. “Eh? You also called Yuki?”

“I called everyone. Argh, I feel like I aged a hundred more years because of them.” Ichiru grumbled as he also slumped deep into an arm chair. His husband approached him with a glass of cold water in one hand, a small smile on his lips.

“Brother!” Yuki shouted as she entered the room, followed closely by her mate. “Where are they? What happened? Who was it this time? Don’t worry, it’s okay brother, we’ll save them! I will personally search for them!” Then turning to Zero and snatching his hand “It’s okay Zero, we’ll find them.” sincerity burning in her determined sienna eyes.

“Yuki, it’s fine”

“What?! How can it be fine?!” Zero had to cover his ears as it was attacked by her shrill voice. Kaname simply handed her Akatsuki’s phone. “Oh? Oh! So it was that time already! My, I almost forgot.” She giggled, “I remember it now. They must be having fun then, no need to worry.” She conceded as she recalled the jolly arrival of those five at Cross Academy one night. How wonderfully chaotic everything was. She smiled, “so your personal cupid was already there to help you, huh?” she smirked at her brother-in-law.
“Yeah, yeah, whatever. Go away already, you’re annoying.” Zero crassly said as he turned his head away from Yuki.

“Wah? And this is what I get for all my pains and worry? Why you little-!” She huffed but mischievously grinned when she thought of something. She held out her hand and the stone adorning the ring of her pinky brightened as an album materialize on her hand. “I suddenly wanted to look at our old high school pictures, ne~, Darling?” turning to her mate who smiled lovingly at her.

Zero turned at this trying to snatch the album from her hands, scowling at Yuki. “I thought I told you to burn them?”

“Oh, Zero dear, they’re your precious memories. Now, now, everything was in the past. Let’s reminisce together and laugh at them.” She suggested in a melodious voice, clearly having fun seeing the silverette’s discomfort. Ha! That will teach you not to cross me, stupid Zero!

Zero groaned. He didn’t want to be reminded. He caught sight of his husband’s amusement, clearly sharing Yuki’s interest in looking back on their pictures. Their memories.

The memories of the time he fell for his pureblood.
He stirred as morning sunshine attacked his still shut eyes, forcing him to open them to reveal beautiful lilac orbs still darkened by sleep. He blinked away residual sleep as he valiantly tried to finally wake up. He stared dazed at his white ceiling, trying to remember how he fell asleep last night. He felt like he was missing something, something big. He closed his eyes to rummage his memories of last night. Then he suddenly remembered cute little voices calling him *otou-chan*. His eyes shot open at this, giving him a slight headache that also made him remember one of the things he so wanted to forget. He abruptly sat up, his hands instantly on his flat belly.

He can’t be pregnant. Yup, no way. That’s one freaky dream. Yes. That’s it.

But his heart still beat mercilessly inside his chest. He knew that it was all too real to be a dream. His mind now filled with everything that has passed the night before. Both of his hands were tangled in his hair when the door to his room revealed the cheerful face of his guardian who didn’t bother to knock and just entered his room.

“Zero-kun! So you’re up already! Wonderful! Just in time, come, you have a visitor! Come down so you can talk to her before class!” that was all he said and he was left on his own again. Zero groaned. He wanted to deny knowing what that was about but he sadly knew who the chairman was talking about as he can clearly feel the odd and familiar presence of the little girl he met yesterday. Right, Anne. His *daughter*.

He quickly washed his face, brushed his teeth and donned his black day-class uniform. He then stopped just before his door, taking a few deep breaths before finally opening it. He went down to the chairman’s dining room, just now noting that he slept in his room at the chairman’s house and not in his dorm room and vaguely remembering how he passed out because of dizziness. Argh, another embarrassment.

He found the smiling young girl being fussed around by the chairman and being served breakfast. He instinctively looked at the food and mentally sighed in relief. It was one of the rare edible cooking of the chairman, thank goodness. No one’s going to be poisoned this morning though he didn’t think that the child will die because of food poisoning but he bet the pureblood will not be pleased with the chairman giving his daughter a severe stomachache.

He stared at her for a while as he looked for things and characteristics that proved his relation with the young girl but from her long dark brown wavy locks, which he just noticed was incredibly long, to her lips, heart-shaped face to her smile all looked like that irritatingly handsome pureblood. He didn’t see any of him on the girl’s face until he was met with large, beautiful lilac eyes he forgot she possesses which he only just realized was staring at his own. He was jostled out of his reverie by her sweet voice greeting him.

“Good morning otou-chan! Thank goodness you’re looking all better. We’re all very worried about you as you looked really pale last night. How are you feeling this morning?” she politely inquired.

“I’m… I’m feeling… better…thank you. Why are you here so early? Isn’t it too early for you? Aren’t you also a vampire?” He only hoped he didn’t sound unpleasant as he didn’t want to hurt this child with his indifference.

“Eh? Uhm, but I wanted to see you to… check if you’re feeling better. I’m sorry, I… I hope I didn’t bother you too much.” She deflated as she stared at the floor, slightly bowing her head in mortification.
Guilt panged his heart at the sight of shame and regret on her lilac eyes. The silverette mentally kicked himself and would have already apologized if not for the chairman’s interference.

“Nonsense! You’re very welcome anytime here my darling granddaughter!” The headmaster assured as he lowered down some more pancakes, and Zero looked at the other plates containing only pancakes. “Come now, eat! Don’t be shy!”

“Hai, itadakimasu!” She gratefully beamed at him.

“Itadakimasu.” The hunter quietly repeated before eating in silence, feeling greatly irritated and unsettled just like when a sneeze was stopped mid-way. He wanted to apologize but the moment has already passed and now it left him annoyed with himself and the chairman.

 Zero rose from his seat and went to the door after gathering his things for class when he felt a presence just behind him. He turned around to look down at the child who followed him all the way to the door.

“Have a nice trip otou-chan!” he stopped as she stood on tip toe to give him a peck on the cheek but because of the height difference, was only able to kiss his jaw even as she jumped to kiss him. “Ah, well, have a pleasant day otou-chan!”

He looked down on her, smiling slightly at her failed attempt to give him a goodbye kiss. “You too kid,” he returned as he ruffled the top of her head before finally heading out to face a rather beautiful morning.

 Ever since he woke up from his years of slumber, no one dared to cross his personal space especially when he slept so he was surprised to feel more presences in the privacy of his own room but though they’re being intrusive, there was no threat in their actions. Rather, he was even comforted by their strange auras so he allowed himself to languorously wake up. His dark burgundy eyes were met with large lilac orbs and his first thoughts were understandably of one particular lilac eyed hunter. The very person who has been the subject of his thoughts the whole night before and the idea that the grumpy hunter is inside his room out of his own volition was so unbelievable that sleep completely flew from his mind and his head cleared to really take in the owner of the face where the lilac eyes rested.

 He was actually greeted by the sight of two pairs of eyes that were staring at him expectantly like they were waiting for him to do something amusing like suddenly producing all sorts of sweets at any moment. They were beside his bed, directly where his pillows were, their little heads resting on their hands as it lay on the sheets and their faces too close to Kaname’s that when he vaguely registered that it was his fraternal twins, he couldn’t pinpoint which one was the boy and girl as he stared at the identical faces. He was marveling at how beautiful and angel-like they looked, with their silver hair cupping their creamy white skin, that he wasn’t able to say anything for a few moments until he was greeted first.
“Good morning chichiue!” squeaked both of them in perfect unison that Kaname couldn’t stop the amused smile from spreading across his face. Even their expressions were the same on their indistinguishable faces that had they been of the same gender then they’ll be surely classified as identical twins, not fraternal.

“Good morning. My, how early the both of you awoke.” He said as he sat up before plucking them, one after the other, from the side of his bed where they were dangling, to place them on either of his leg. “And so, what were you two up to at this hour?” he inquired after noting that it was only about late morning. He slept for only three hours but he didn’t mind the very early wakeup call from the two silver heads. Their presences were enough to give him energy for the day.

“We’re looking for otou-chan but we can’t find him anywhere!” answered the little girl, a small frown on her pretty little face. Suiren, as he recalled.

“So we’re exploring the house!” The one called Naoto explained while flailing his arms.

“Ah, he simply went to class. Don’t worry; you’ll see him later on.” He assured his young ones as he devised some plans inside his head to lure the hunter to go and see the children in the Moon dorm. He was not sure and he was worried as to where the silver prefect stood regarding the facts at hand. He was still making plans and strategies as to how to bait the hunter to accept them. He’s so afraid that Zero didn’t want them for this will surely hurt the children. He anxiously wanted to talk to the silverette as soon as possible, as there was also the possibility that he is currently pregnant already. He needed to make the special arrangements for him, to ensure his safety and comfort.

“Class?” The twins asked in unison while looking at each other. Then they turned to him again and asked “Like missions?” again, in chorus. How very cute.

“That is… quite right. So wait patiently for him and for the meantime, shall we have some breakfast?” His invitation was received by eager and continuous nods from the two who beamed at him. He quickly prepared himself for the morning and put on fresh and comfortable clothes.

He carried both of them in his arms and after they wrapped their arms around him, they gave him a kiss on his cheeks which he promptly returned. With his hands full, he opened the door using his telekinesis, thinking how very convenient his powers are at these times. As he opened the door of his room, he was greeted by Anne who coincidentally also opened the door of their room. By her expression, she was no doubt searching for the twins in his arms because when she spotted them, there was soundless sigh that escaped from her.

“Good morning chichiue!” she greeted which he answered in kind. She went to him and he bent down so she can place a kiss on his cheek. It was a custom that he actually only knew last night when he sent the older children to bed.

Before he left them to sleep, he was attacked by good night kisses which caught him off guard but he recovered immediately and returned them as he bent down to place a kiss on each foreheads. He’s happy to get a glimpse of the happy household they must have in the future as evident by how easy and comfortable they were with the intimacy. He would have never imagined that he’ll be able to actually create a loving family together with the hunter and he was amazed at how he was actually looking forward to it. A life with a hunter, how unprecedented.

“We’re just about to go down for breakfast, do you want to join us?” Kaname offered but as he noticed that she was still in her night gown, “or would you still rather sleep? It’s still a bit early.”

“Ah yes father, I was also up early to check up on daddy so I went to grandpa’s place. I ate an extremely early breakfast so I am quite full.” She explained, beaming at him but then she noticed his
expression, she added helpfully, “He was doing very well now chichiue, please don’t worry. I saw some color back on otou-chan’s face so I’m relieved; he went to class after eating breakfast with me.” She happily supplied.

He was quite surprised that the hunter actually agreed to eat with her and judging from her tone, it must have been a pleasant enough experience that clearly didn’t involve threats or pointing of Bloody Rose. He’s starting to think that he’ll be able to have a chance in coaxing his stubborn, unknowing mate. “Very well, then rest some more.” He kissed her forehead again before proceeding to the dorm’s dining area.

He was greeted by the dining attendants who were both flustered and surprised at the sight of him as he very rarely eat there and most of the time had his meals inside his room. They were even more surprise at how early he was and he noticed that there was no one but them in the dining area.

When they caught sight of the children wrapped around his neck, they were thrown into confusion but no one voiced any question about them and simply attended to him. He put the twins down on the chairs on either side of him where they stood to reach to the surface of the table before turning to the attendants.

“What would you like to have, Kuran-sama?” Instead of answering right away, Kaname turned to the silver heads to ask their preferences.

“Pancakes!” the twins readily answered in perfect unison yet again. Kaname was starting to think that they have their own inner mind-link to be able to do it all the time. He turned to the cook and gave the order of pancakes, bacon and eggs on toasts, milk and coffee.

While they waited for breakfast to be served, he talked to his children intending to ask them various questions which they look eager to answer to the best of their knowledge. He was extremely curious at how their life was like in the future.

“How old are you two?” he asked as he leaned back on his chair, allowing space for the two to sit on his lap again. They looked up to him, clearly confuse at the question. He noted that they may have not been informed of their current situation. He worried about this so he decided to reveal where they were, it’s better to have them informed so they’ll not do anything reckless and perhaps it will help explained should the hunter ignore them, which he hope will never happen. He was only too sure that it will not be taken well by these two no matter what the reason. He explained everything as gently and simply as he could, and watched as their eyes grew as large as it could get. He was worried for a moment, believing that they’re about to cry so he hugged them and immediately reassured that everything will be fine and there’s no need for worry.

Relieved that their father was not estranged to them, as being hated by their parents were what every children fear the most, they were clearly soothed and calmed though only for a bit.

“Does otou-chan not know us anymore?” Suiren asked, her little hands gripping the fabric over her father’s chest, fear on her little face.

“No worries my darling, he knows you. Rest assured he was informed and you’ll see him soon.” The pureblood promised as he rubbed a thumb on her cheek, smiling encouragingly as he felt her relax, completely believing him. They have absolute faith in their father’s words so they were assured.

As they ate happily, Kaname was able to get the answer to his initial question when he asked again and Naoto raised his hand for him to see four little fingers outstretched while the thumb bent to rest on his palm.
“I see.” He paused for a while thinking of what he would most like to know. “How were your daddy and I? Do we get along well?” He asked carefully and he watched as the two looked at each other again and back to him to nod vigorously.

“Ichiji said that it’s a crime to be too sweet!” Naoto beamingly clarified.

“He said it’s ‘grows’, right?” Suiren wondered then turned to Naoto for confirmation then back to him, “Why is it ‘grows’, isn’t it good?” tilting her head to her side as she asked.

Kaname didn’t know how to answer that as he also didn’t know how to react to the fact that apparently, they’re too sweet on each other that it’s sickeningly gross. Hmmmm, that meant they’re open to it which he never would have imagined doing. Publicly displaying his affections was something he is not keen on showing. Was he so enamored with the hunter that he ignored even his own principle or was his feelings too strong to be restrained? He also didn’t think that the hunter would take it just like that without any threats of murder or attempts to shoot him. “I’m sure your uncle was merely joking with you.” He answered simply in response to Suiren’s question. “What do you often do at home?” He asked to occupy their attention.

“Study and play and sleep and eat and – and play and study and train!”

“Do you study well?” one of his eye brows slightly arching in amusement.

“Um!” they nodded and Suiren added, “Because otou-chan will cook whatever we like if we behave or get 100%!”

“Eh, Zero?”

“Um! Because every week, chichiue and otou-chan always have a day when they don’t go to work! We play outside, or bake with otou-chan or watch movies or read or visit Yukina or ride on horses! I like those days!” He watched as she held her hand in front of her as she enumerated the things they do together during, apparently, their days off work. The pure bliss he saw on their eyes warmed his heart, though he doubted the senate was actually humane enough to give him a time off, what with all the responsibilities he was given even during his time in the academy. No doubt it will only grow in number after he graduated. He pushed that thought at the back of his mind as he basked at the beautiful prospect that at least awaited him, no matter how improbable. He continued his questioning “Yukina? Who is she?”

“Our cousin! Her older brother is Takumi-nii-chan, he’s funny. Ne~?” Suiren answered.

“Um! Just like Fuji-nii-chan, he tells us lots of stories. He likes to read and experiment, ne?” Naoto asked back.

“Um! He’ll tell us stories and legends. We listened with Nobara-chan and Sakura-chan! They’re also twins, ne?”

“Um! Like Aki-nii and Haku-nii but they’re both girls! They have hair like sunflowers! They’re big flowers!!”

“But Fuji-nii-chan also has white, ne? Like us!” Suiren held out her hair.

It caught the Kaname’s interest greatly. He correctly assumed that they’re talking about Yuki’s and Ichiru’s children and was in the act of asking their future spouse when the other occupants of the Moon dorm started to gather to have their breakfast. Some of them stopped at the sight of him chatting very easily with children they never saw before. “Good morning, Kaname-sama!” they greeted the pureblood prince.
“Ah Kaname, you’re finished already? You’re quite early today. Good morning, Suiren-chan and Naoto-kun right? My name is –,” Takuma was interrupted when the two enthusiastically greeted him.

“Good morning Takuji!!” The twins greeted together.

The blond smiled at them. Of course they’ll know him. He forgot that even the older children were not estranged to him. He’s happy at the thought that he was still together with Kaname even after many years. “Good morning, have you both eaten already?”

“Um!” They nodded before they spotted the vampire he was dragging besides him by the arm. His copper head still bent down as he slept where he stood. “Good morning Senriji!” They addressed in a voice loud enough to wake the vampire who turned his head as he tried to pinpoint where the noise came from.

He leaned down to look closely at the two as if trying to see clearly and to register the unfamiliar faces of the children. He rubbed his somnolent grey eyes to shake off the remaining sleep. Clearly, he was still drowsy because he can see double as the memories of last night was slow to register in his sleep muddled mind. Though when he finally realized, he returned the greeting with a yawn, “Um, ‘morning.”

They energetically greeted Akatsuki, Rima, Hanabusa and Ruka a good morning. The last two flinched a bit at the sight them as they were still at odds with the fact of who their other parent was. They still tried to deny the truth of it but as they look so much like the hunter, they’re the living and irrefutable evidence that their beloved pureblood will indeed to be tied to that insufferable ex-human.

Kaname observed their apparent disapproval and was reminded that no one knows that he and the hunter were in fact already mated. As such, he was already in too deep for both Ruka’s and Hanabusa’s liking though he put off revealing the truth as he also reminded himself that not even the hunter himself knew about their bond. Zero must be informed as soon as possible. He wanted to have the hunter know that fact first before anyone else.

While the twins, who’re then standing together on one chair, were talking to Ichijou about how delicious the pancakes were but no match for their otou-chan’s cooking and how simply magnificent every dish he makes is in detail, the pureblood saw a familiar set of eyes stealing a peek inside the dining hall. The young sneak’s body hid behind the wall. When Kaname met the large burgundy eyes of one of the older twins, he nodded to motion him to enter. He walked inside the hall with his brother in tow. Akira was still rubbing his eyes, seemingly in danger of falling asleep again, as Kohaku made his way to where their father is.

“Good morning, chichiue.” The older twin greeted when he reached their father’s table and slightly shook the hand that he’s holding as if to give a hint to his twin but apparently, Akira really managed to fall asleep on his feet. Kohaku spent a moment to shake his twin awake before the sleepyhead managed a, “G-g-good m-morning chichiuee*yawn*ee.”

“Good morning you two. Are you quite awake yet, Akira? You should have stayed in bed to sleep some more.” Kaname chuckled while Akira stared at him with bleary eyes, not understanding what he just said.

“Nii-chan! Good morning!” Addressed the two silver heads, finally distracted from their talk with Ichijou regarding Zero’s cooking.

“Good morning.” Then he turned to their father again. “It’s alright, chichiue. He hates to be the only one left behind and will sulk the entire day if he were to find himself waking up or eating breakfast
alone so I woke him up. He only needs breakfast and he’ll be fine.” Then he addressed his twin who was then fighting the guardians of his sleep, “Akira, what would you like for breakfast?”

“Waffles, please.” He murmured automatically.

Kaname gave the order to the maid, who was staring at the two and giving a sly glance to their king as she wondered about the children’s identity (did she heard that right? Father?), he already motioned earlier while Kohaku was talking.

The older twins proceeded to sit beside their father and Kohaku deposited Akira on the chair that Suiren vacated who tilted to his side and rested his head against his father’s waist. Kaname let it be and began stroking his hair gently. The pureblood watched Akira stir and began stretching his eyes wide as if as a last resort to prevail against the fairies of sleep while Kohaku greeted everyone a lovely morning. Finally, Akira seems to have fully woken up as he looked up to his father who was still caressing his hair and gave another greeting with a toothy grin. “Good morning, chichiue!”

“Good morning.” Kaname returned with a small smile.

Akira proceeded to acknowledging the other vampires in the room, including little Suiren and Naoto, and happily ate his waffle when it has arrived.

“What will you do after this?” Their father asked them while they eat. “Should I arrange for some tutors while you’re here? It’s not good that you’ll stop your education while you stay…” He almost forgot that they’ll need to go to class later on thus leaving the children alone to do nothing. He supposed he should talk to the chairman regarding this and arrange for someone to come every night to teach his children while they’re in class.

“Oh, that is quite alright father. We have finished all the levels of education years ago.”

It caught Kaname and the everyone else’s attention who were slyly watching and listening to them. Kaname already know that Akira and Kohaku are six years old by now but he didn’t know how they could have finished their education early. Of course, he knew that vampire years are not the same like that of normal humans’ but though aging was slow for them, it really only manifests itself during their adulthood. Purebloods though are extremely special, of course, they appear to not age entirely but still, it wouldn’t be apparent up until their teenage years and his children were nowhere near adolescence.

“We are special even among purebloods.” Kohaku started, as if hearing everyone’s thoughts, “We grow very slow. Ten years of the normal human years will first pass before we consider ourselves a year older.”

“Wah?! So you’re already like… sixty years old?! Then, then, they’re about thirty to forty years old?!” Hanabusa exclaimed, incredulous, as it meant that these children were technically older than them right now.

“Yes, that’s about right. We finished our studies when we were officially five years old. We have finished three college level courses by then but continued to review them over the years. You were one of our teachers in different subjects, Hana-jiji, as you finished several courses over the years. You were really incredible.” The smile the young royal gave made the noble blush as he looked so much like their beloved Kaname-sama.

“But why is it that your growth process is so slow? Vampires grow as fast as humans up until they reach adulthood where their appearance would almost not age at all. Were you told why?” Kaname asked.
“Simply because we can afford it.” Was all Akira offered before he continued to munch on his breakfast, filling his cheeks full of waffles.

“Their theory was because otou-chan’s blood in us was already assured of survival being mixed with powerful pureblood, there’s no need for fast growth for survival. We’ll manage as we are children by appearance but our mind processed and developed normally so we can make mature decisions though we are admittedly far more childish in act,” Kohaku further explained while giving sideway glances to the two young silver-heads as if to prove a point, “but that was because of how we were treated and the easy atmosphere we grew up from. We are quite spoiled to be honest.”

“Um! So don’t be fooled by nee-chan’s act, she’s already an old ha-,” Akira wasn’t able to finish as he felt a cold chill ran down his spine.

“Heh~?” Their sister’s voice was heard as cold wind rushed passed him. Before he knew it, Anne was already behind him. She lowered her head to whisper in his ear as she placed a hand on his shoulder which felt oddly heavy and cold. “Good morning dearest Akira, would you mind sharing with me what you were about say?” she cooed in an extremely sweet voice that made Akira’s eyes water.

“Nee-nee-nee-chan,” Akira stuttered. Something was blocking his throat and he can’t seem to say any more than that.

“Nee-chan, I’m sure Akira was just joking, as always.” Kohaku was torn between laughter and pity for his younger twin as he watched his twin brother turn paler faster than blinking and almost in tears. He chose the latter and immediately attempted to rescue his twin since the room also started to turn cold. He felt bad for the other occupants in the room who were also feeling the same scary chill down their spines. He caught sight of his father who, if he judged correctly, must be having the same inner struggle of feeling amusement and pity towards Akira. Luckily for his twin, they have strong familial ties in the Kuran household and the two proceeded to rescuing poor Akira.

“That’s right, Anne. He was merely jesting for how can you even be compared to a hag when you’re as beautiful as an angel?” Kohaku had to marvel at their father’s smooth words.

Anne looked at the pureblood sulkily as she knew this method of distraction by heart. How many times had she bought this over the decades? Though she was never able to win against their father still, she felt cheated but Kaname was hardly lying. She knew this too. Only blind people or foolish ones, like Akira and her cousin Fuu, would call her visage ugly or old. Nonetheless, she wanted to sulk away in a corner no matter how unsightly it is for a lady as she was both beguiled and charmed by their chichiue but she forced the unattractive feeling away and stepped in to the role of the mature older sister that she is.

She still pouted as the temperature inside the room returned to normal, making breathing easy for everyone and turned to Kaname to greet him a good morning before giving a quick peck on his cheek. Akira immediately flopped on his chair, feeling his limbs turn to jelly.

“Really, Akira, how many time does this make already? You just never learn.” Kohaku shook his head. “Why do you insists on baiting nee-chan like this every time you get the chance when you can hardly stand your ground?” He never shared Akira’s behavior towards their sister as he knows full well how scary she can get when seriously angered and he never wanted to have it directed to him. He does tease her sometimes but he knew her sore spots that are never to be poked and Akira, bravely or foolishly, always seem to want to test it although they both know that the subject of time and age and height always seem to bother her.

“Foot in mouth disease…” was all Akira said as wiped the sweat that built up on his forehead.
“You’re so scary nee-chan! You know I was just kidding!” He pouted in indignation.

“Akira, don’t test a woman’s patience or jest about their age for you’ll surely find yourself brutally murdered in the future.” Anne warned as she waved her head away in a snobbish fashion. “I believe I have not taught you enough of gentlemen’s etiquette. Fortunately for you, we have plenty of time here.”

“I promise I’ll never do it again, my dear darling beautiful sister.” The younger brunette instantly vowed with a comically serious face as he suddenly straightened his back at this threat. He even raised his right hand as if solemnly pledging. Anything but that, he didn’t want to spend his time here wallowing in endless lessons on how to behave in front of a woman. He wouldn’t even need it for about a century and he personally believed that it’s only his sister’s own personal brand of torture for little devil Akira.

She looked at him severely, “That’s better.” She conceded with a resigned smile. She of course knew that it won’t be the last time, it will never be the last time, but she let Akira be. This was already like their modus operandi but she would appreciate it if he let off the matter regarding their age. It has always been a touchy subject to her since she realized that she had the same un-aging face for the first thirty years of her existence…

“Would you like anything to eat?” Kaname asked her when he saw the odd look on his daughter’s face. There seemed to be a more complex reason why Anne hated the subject about age. Women, mostly human women, didn’t want the subject of age broached as they didn’t want to be called old or acknowledge the wrinkles that are starting to show as they age but it obviously didn’t apply to his daughter. He decided that he’ll talk to her next time but he first needed to get to know more about them to have better understanding of their countenance.

“Just some milk father as I’m not hungry.” Anne answered in a rather forcefully brightened tone.

Akira spotted this. Crap, he did it. He turned to Kohaku who eyed him in a scolding manner. He decided that he’ll apologize for real later on.

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No one was really surprised when the grumpy lilac eyed prefect was late for their first class. There’s nothing new in that but what caught their attention so strongly, that some couldn’t help but stare at the forever cranky silver head, was that something positively changed in him. First, he came without the signature scowl on his face. He looked almost… happy…? Secondly, there was a slight glow in him that made his gorgeous features, only unappreciated by the rest of the school because of his always annoyed look and aura coupled with his favorite expression which happens to be a glower, magnified and became greatly noticeable. This sudden burst of sex appeal made the entire class slyly follow him with their eyes and as he passed by, some couldn’t help but greedily inhale the sweet and flowery scent he carried, their hearts unknowingly beat faster.

He looked out the window as soon as he took his seat, not even bothering to take out, let alone open any of his reference material as his mind got occupied with other things which were far from the formulas their teacher was currently spouting. He let his mind freely take in the reality he was keeping at bay since last night. Everything happened so fast that he wasn’t even able to decide how he felt regarding the matter of his pregnancy (he shivered slightly at how weird and awkward it sounded), his future relationship with the vampire king, his future children that were also vampires,
everyone knowing what happened and more importantly, his fast changing feelings towards the pureblood…

He felt he was missing some more points and when he let his eyes wander inside the classroom, he caught sight of the only other silver head in the room, (what did my brother thought regarding all this?) and to the brunette that is her adopted sister (how did Yuki feel?) and all of a sudden, his heart anxiously beat faster as his innards coiled together to give his stomach a heavy churn. His head felt so heavy that he let it dangle to stare at his stomach.

He knew he must talk to them about what happened but how or when, he dreaded knowing. Especially Yuki… how she must hate him now… he felt like he was the worst, most disgusting person in the world to have done this to his best friend. Granted that it was all by accident that he slept with the pureblood and not at all by his intent but if asked if he resisted or hated it… he’ll not be able to even say that he really tried to. If he was to be asked how he felt for Kaname, he won’t be able to say he hated him like he did long ago… he long since knew that his feelings have already changed and that he was just too scared to even think about it.

He wanted to forget everything and just throw it or run far away but that very same action of denial and cowardice hurt the people most precious to him. Had he faced it in the first place, then they’ll not be in this awkward situation. Had he gathered his courage to tell Yuki how he felt and the change of his regard towards Kaname or what happened then, at least she heard it from his lips and not from anyone else. He betrayed the very person who stood by his side through everything despite being what and who he is. She loved him like a real brother and truth was more than what she deserved.

Zero nodded as he determinedly made up his mind to be honest and put his pride in his pocket to talk to Yuki and Ichiru later that day.

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“Yuki.”

She looked up and her gaze fell on the tall silverette who stood beside her chair. Her mind was occupied with thoughts that didn’t concern any of their academic subjects that she didn’t even realize that the teacher was already gone and it’s already their lunch break.

As she stared at his troubled face, she knew he wanted to talk to her and tell her something extremely important and that no doubt, it will pertain to what happened last night. She was both happy and frightened at what he was about to say. She was happy that at last, he’ll tell her what really happened, that he’ll confide in her, be honest with her, and at the same time frightened as it will confirm all her fears and dark assumptions. She knew she’ll be hurt by this but she also knew that she can’t run away from the truth so she gave him a smile, understandably quivering, as an encouragement and nodded at the silent invitation for a tête-à-tête.

Before they left the room to find more privacy, Zero met another pair of silver-lavender eyes that were watching them. Ichiru gave a nod for reassurance that everything will be fine. They all know that pain, at this point, was inevitable but it will be the first step to moving forward and forgiveness. Honesty was the only thing that can salvage their relationship and he must tell her everything though he knew that she knows and she knew that he knows already, but still it must come from the hunter or it will have no meaning and this will never have a closure.
Ichiru has no doubt that Yuki will forgive his brother. She is kind and more importantly, she loves his brother like a true family member and wished for his happiness. He only hopes that she’ll be able to move forward fast and that the pain is only brief but that must be asking too much already. He swore that he’ll stay by his adopted sister’s side today and let her cry her fill. He sighed as he watched the two exited from the building to go to the academy’s garden for their talk through the classroom’s window.

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It was a remarkably pleasant weather that Cross academy was experiencing that afternoon. The wind carried the wonderful scent of flowers with them, letting the garden’s visitors inhale the wonderfully sweet smell of the plants but all of those were lost to the two students walking aimlessly, going to nowhere in particular. They were silent as both try to think on how to start the conversation they both know will not end without tears being shed.

Yuki walked in front, a small distance from the hunter, seemingly admiring the colorful flowers but seeing none of their beauty as she contemplated on her and her companion’s feelings. She was of course shocked though she was only able to really feel it after she was left alone in her room the night after. The facts at hand hinted unbelievable ideas in her head. Zero is pregnant with Kaname-senpai’s child. It was not confirmed but highly probable and it could only mean one thing, her beloved adopted brother was together with her admired hero and crush. That they have slept together was something she’ll never even imagine. It was as impossible as the fact that a man could get pregnant but that was the truth and reality of their situation. She was greatly hurt by this, of course, but she found that more than the fact that Zero slept with Kaname-senpai, it was that he never told her, well perhaps not the fact he had sex with him, rather, the fact that his feelings has changed.

She knew from what was revealed that Zero has feelings for Kaname for he was not the type to immerse himself in carnal desires. She even secretly called him an impotent because of this. The chairman was even worried that his oldest son has some manly problems because of his lack of interest in this type of thing when, once, the topic of Zero’s virginity has oddly mentioned on one of their idle chats. Her brother was the type to hold only the person he loves from the bottom of his heart even if he’s not aware of it. He won’t do it with just anyone just for the sake of having sex. He’ll do it with his only one. The same can be said with Kaname-senpai. That was how she knew that it couldn’t be merely an accident.

But how did he fell in love with him? When did he start feeling this way? What does he intend to do now? She knew that it’s wishful thinking to have wanted the silver head to tell her all this in detail but she still hoped that at least, she was informed though she knew partly the reason why he couldn’t admit anything to her and that she’ll be hurt anyway regardless.

“Yuki… I… I… I’m sorry.” The hunter suddenly started which startled the brunette. She turned to him and found him staring at the ground, brows knotted together, unable to meet her eyes. She could see regret and guilt filling his expression.

“Is it true then?”

“…Yes.” He hesitated slightly before finally admitting.

“Ah.” The confirmation really did hit her hard. “I see… Do- do you love him?” her eyes started to stung.
“I… I don’t know…” she knew he was saying the truth which didn’t surprise her. Zero was not one to admit to himself admiring or falling in love especially with a vampire, a pureblood and a male at that. He’s stupidly stubborn like that.

She tried another way, “Do you still hate him?”

“…..” Burning lavender eyes met watery chocolate ones, “Not anymore.” The intensity Yuki saw in them shook her.

She tried to smile to encourage him but instead, the tears that welled in her eyes fell down and she started to cry. She felt so pitiful but almost instantly, she found herself wrapped around warm and slightly trembling arms as the silver prefect embraced her.

“I’m sorry, Yuki… I’m so sorry… You can hit me… but don’t hate me… Please don’t.” Zero said in barely whispers.

The brunette wasn’t able to reply right away for she didn’t have the ability to say anything. She could only cry her heart out but after a while, when she felt much lighter inside, she whispered in a broken voice, “Stupid. *sob* It’s not your fault *sob* and I’ll never hate you, *sniff* I somehow knew *sniff* a long time ago *sniff* that it can never be me…” she smiled sadly up to him, “I’ll be fine so don’t worry… I’ll be fine again… so it’s okay… just give me time.” she assured him in between tears.

“I don’t deserve it, Yuki… I…” Zero referred to her kindness though Yuki misunderstood it.

“Stupid. Everyone, especially you, deserves to love anyone they wish…” she let go of him to look straight in his eyes then added, “Never let go of that right…” she smiled sadly at him.

They were silent for a few more minutes while Yuki calmed her heart and Zero waited patiently for her.

After she finished wiping her tears and drying her face with a hanky, she turned to him with renewed energy, even putting her hand in front of her – fist closed like a fighting pose – “I want to support you, Zero. You deserve happiness!” she then turned to the flower beds and took a deep breath before she shouted in the air while throwing her hands up, “Aaaah! I’ll… I’ll move forward! I’ll fall in love again! Just watch me!!”

The hunter looked at her small back, amazed at how kind and big hearted their little Yuki has become. He also wondered when she grew up to be so strong. He wished he could have stayed in love with her and never have realized that it was only sisterly love.

Kaname stood against a tree with his back on the bark. His eyes closed as he strained his ears to listen to the conversation between the two prefects inside the garden. He went out as soon as he finished eating and prepared to meet the hunter to speak to him regarding the children when he happened upon the serious and delicate discussion of the two. He smiled as he heard Yuki exclaimed a promise of finding new love. She has grown beautiful and strong. He was glad and proud of her. He was worried at first but everything seems to be in order now and he watched as Yuki went off to go to the bathroom to wash her face.
Burgundy eyes were intent on the hunter while amethyst orbs continued to follow her retreating figure in awe and gratefulness. When the hunter was left alone, he finally emerged and made his presence known to his oblivious mate.

The hunter turned at his aura and immediately, his momentary peace was gone and replaced by thundering heart beat at the sight of the pureblood. *Damn it, he couldn’t catch a break. At least let me breathe!*

“Zero.”

The prefect started at the vampire’s familiarity of calling his first name but didn’t say anything regarding that. He’ll look like a childish idiot if he insisted on being called by his last name or having honorifics added. Besides, he doubted that the arrogant pureblood will actually comply.

“What is it, Kuran?”

“I think it’s time we talk. I believe you have run away for far too long already.”

Zero blushed at this. Of course the vampire would have figured out that he was avoiding him as it was too obvious. He felt like a fool but fuck if he’ll admit it. “About what?” he still asked despite it being so apparent.

The pureblood sighed at the silver head’s insistence in playing dumb. He’s normally more straightforward to the point of rudeness but of all the times, it is now that he failed to show one of his best qualities. Not that Kaname can blame him as the whole situation was really hard to take in but he can’t afford to waste any more time to play the game of tag. He must inform the hunter. He also must feed him to assuage the need of the bond and nurture their child if the silverette is indeed pregnant.

The vampire stepped forward while the hunter stepped back. Zero couldn’t help it; he didn’t want the vampire near as his scent awakened the thirst he has briefly forgotten at the myriad of chaotic confusion since last night. As the vampire got near him, he could feel the stab behind his neck grew stronger at each step and he have a sure feeling that he’ll find himself lost in the pureblood if he were to allow him any closer than he is now.

“Zero.” He repeated as the hunter kept on taking a step back away from him, “The sun is high up and I would rather we do it fast or rather go to a more private and shaded area.” He commented to successfully divert the prefect’s attention from moving away from him.

“Huh?” Kaname took the opportunity while the silverette was distracted and with undetectable speed, he snatched the hunter and slung him on his shoulder, careful to let his lower belly free of any pressure, and went with blurred speed from the garden to the Moon dorm. He opted to use the balcony to go to his room to avoid interruption from the Night class.

Before Zero could even retort, he was moved from the school’s garden to the privacy of Kaname’s room. He was extremely pissed off and mortified at the way he was carried off by the pureblood. His male pride wounded as he was carried like a child or a piece of luggage weighing nothing more than a pound. *Fucking vampire strength.* He glared at the brunette when he was settled down on the vampire’s bed.

But when Zero felt the silky softness of the sheets under him, he only then realized where he was and alarm instantly shot at him causing his heart to beat frantically. He cursed as he blushed reflexively like an innocent virgin. It’s not like it was his first time inside this room. He has been here a couple of times to be fed by Kaname in the past. It’s just that the memory of the result of their last
feeling came flooding back inside his mind the moment his nose was attacked by the pureblood’s lingering scent that filled his room.

The hunter immediately sat up and gave the vampire the darkest look he could muster. “What the fuck, Kuran?”

“You must feed before anything else.” *before you can run away.* Kaname was already unbuttoning his black dress shirt as he spoke, not giving the hunter another moment to retaliate. He leaned down to give the silverette access to his neck when frantic hands shot up to stop his descent.

“No, wait.” The silverette hurriedly said as he turned his head away in trepidation, not wanting to look at the tempting skin on the pureblood’s neck that seems adamant in seducing his senses.

“Zero, do you find pleasure in testing my patience? Do you enjoy making me force you? Or do you simply want to be tortured?” the prefect shot him a glare which didn’t have the intended effect of scaring the vampire who merely added, “It’s been three months since you last fed and not another minute is going to be added to it. Don’t make me force you, Zero, because it will be my pleasure to do so.”

The hunter trembled at this. He didn’t make any movement as he contemplated surrendering or fighting but the impatient pureblood took it as a sign of his stubbornness and did the only thing he could think of. He bit his own wrist to fill his mouth with his pure blood and before the silverette could even react, he was already pulled into a kiss that forced fed him the blood inside the brunette’s mouth.

That was where Zero lost himself.

Three months was such a long time and he found himself far hungrier than he initially thought. He was ravenous. His eyes instantly morphed from silver-lavender to bright red as his tongue delved into the vampire’s soft cavern for any residual blood. Pale hands tightened on the black fabric of Kaname’s shirt to pull him closer.

The brunette groaned as the hunter explored his mouth and felt his tongue on its every corner. He sorely wanted to continue with the searing kiss but he forced himself to break it as he must feed the hunter first before they get lost in the heat that was undeniably forming between them.

Kaname slipped his hands into silver locks to guide his head to where he wanted it and craned his neck to give his mate better access to the blood he so coveted. The hunter, after depriving himself of the delectable blood, wasted not a second more in sinking his aroused fangs into tender white skin, humming slightly as he greedily swallowed down the savory liquid. He drank in large gulps, not finding the strength to stop or contentment no matter how much he took. He wanted more, more of Kaname. His arms instinctively wrapped around the vampire’s neck, his hand tangled on dark brown hair while the other grasped the cloth further away from his neck. Kaname placed both of his hand and one of his knees on the bed to support his and the hunter’s weight as he leaned down, almost half way to completely lying down.

His mate drank from him greedily and passionately, fast draining him but he didn’t care even if he’s bled dry. In fact, he wanted Zero to take in more. He didn’t know how long the hunter fed from him but he knew it was pretty long because when his mate retracted his fangs, he was considerably weak from blood lost. He didn’t understand why even with that, he only wanted the silverette to drink more.

After Zero lapped the remaining blood and licked the wound close, Kaname collapsed on top of him, pinning him on the bed. The hunter didn’t fight as he was well aware that he drank a lot this time,
pure blood filled his belly. The vampire must be feeling anemic so he let him stay on top of him and
minutes passed with no movement, nothing can be heard except their own ragged breathing.

After a while, Kaname stirred and using both of his hands, he pulled himself up and supported
himself by placing his hands on either side of the hunter. He looked down on the hunter’s face,
flushed and with an afterglow from a lavish feast, feeling pleased at seeing health and vitality rushed
back to his face. “You know you must feed constantly. It was foolish of you to run away for so
long.”

The hunter didn’t say anything. He was feeling too ashamed because of his lack of self-control to
make any retort. He cursed his vampiric instincts, his level-D status and his descent to level-E.

The pureblood knew this and decided that it was the time to tell Zero that other than his nature as a
vampire, other things will force him to crave his blood no matter what. “It’s not just that anymore,
Zero. You’re already far from falling to level-E. It’s not something you should concern yourself
about anymore.” The hunter turned to face him at this to which he put a hand on his unbuttoned
black shirt and further part it to reveal a glowing red mark over the left side of his chest.

Right above the vampire’s left nipple was a mark he has never seen before. He looked at it curiously
and confusion burst forth into the silver head’s mind as he tried to connect what Kaname is trying to
say. He gazed up to Kaname’s face with inquiring and confused eyes.

“This is the mark of bonding. The mark will only presently appear during feeding but will become a
permanent mark as the bond grows stronger.” And as if on cue, the mark slowly disappeared to leave
nothing on the pureblood’s unmarred creamy white skin. “You’ll find the exact same mark on your
own chest.”

The silverette was wide-eyed at this and in a flash, he yanked his shirt, ripping the upper buttons out
as he scrambled to get a sight of his own chest and to his horror, saw a flash of red mark just before it
disappeared completely on top of his own left nipple, leaving his skin as pale as ever.

The hunter groaned. He threw his head back on the sheets weakly, feeling all his strength leave him
as realization hit him. He’s bonded, *with the vampire king*. As a hunter, of course he knew about
vampire mating and bonds, but only the technicalities of the relationship like what will happen if one
kills a vampire’s mate and such but never how two vampires actually bond as the information was
practically useless to them. Oh, how he wished he at least got curious. Now he knew what Kaname
meant when he said *that* that night.

“You don’t know what you’re doing or the consequences, Kiryū… so take my advice and get away
from me now… while I’m still letting you… before you regret this.”

He really wanted to strangle himself or be unreasonable and blame the vampire now intently
watching him for his reaction. Argh, he really fucked up. He raised a hand on his head, covering one
of his eyes in frustration.

“The bond cannot be undone. Your life has been tied to me ever since that day and while you’re in
no more danger of falling, the bond will demand that we constantly feed on each other. The need
will only get stronger as well if you’re indeed pregnant, Zero.”

The hunter winced at this. He forgot about that as well, and though it was not confirmed yet, he was
almost too sure that he is what with his condition the last months and what Anne said about why they
landed in this time. Wonderful, he chided himself sarcastically. And he thought his life was a mess
before.
“And I will say this already, Zero; I will not let you abort this child no matter what happens.” The hunter glared at him but the pureblood didn’t flinch. Instead, he met his gaze with equal, if not more, ferocity and determination. No one shall hurt his offspring and he’ll make sure of that though he knew that Zero, though confused, wouldn’t harm innocents especially his own child. He has long observed the hunter’s own brand of care towards Yuki, Ichiru and the chairman and though he masked it with sarcasm and a scowl, it was not lost to him how kind-hearted the prefect really is. A complete opposite of him who hid his deception with charm and smiles but that is a topic of discussion for next time. It is not yet the time to reveal his other secrets to his mate. For now, this should be enough as he needed to first have the hunter accept what is between them that they could no longer deny.

“Fuck you, Kuran. Do you think that I’ll obediently follow just because you demanded?”

“Why Zero, can you really kill the child that is right here with you? Can you tell her you didn’t want her? Can you really erase her existence with your own hands?” he taunted the hunter. He knew he already won even before the battle started. He’s confident that the prefect will not do it and was only objecting out of stubbornness and unwillingness to submit.

“Bastard. You can’t use her against me.” Zero gritted his teeth, not willing to admit defeat just yet. Never to this bastard.

“I don’t need to, dear Zero. I can always persuade you.” He smiled seductively.

“Heh? With force?” the hunter only sneered.

“No, with pleasure.” That was the only thing Kaname said before he crushed the hunter’s lips with his own, trapping his mate under him and coaxing him with a soul-stealing kiss. He slipped his tongue inside the hunter’s warm mouth which was left open when he gaped at his words. Kaname felt the hunter fight him but he was never bothered as he’ll never lose the contest of strength. He easily captured the silverette’s hands above their heads as he freely caressed every corner of his mouth with his tongue. As he deepened the kiss, he felt the hunter’s resolve melt.

Zero couldn’t keep his spunk for long when faced with the desire he kept denying himself. He didn’t want to acknowledge it but his body was honest. He coveted it. He craved it. He wanted it so much it hurts. It felt so right and so damn good that he couldn’t help but return the heat with equal intensity, with fervor.

His body relaxed and the pureblood liberated his hands to favor his hair and chest instead while his own arms wrapped around the vampire’s neck to tangle his fingers in dark brown locks to feel its silky smoothness while the other clenched the black fabric of his shirt. He could feel Kaname’s hand travel southward. The feeling of erotic feathery touches on his skin made him want to moan for more. The moan that he was fighting from making escaped when the pureblood found the bulge that was starting strain inside his pants, it broke their heated kiss as he turned his head away to cover his mouth with his hand in an attempt to stop the embarrassing sound from coming out.

Kaname took this chance to nibble down the hunter’s throat to leave indication of his non-existing self-control on his mate’s skin. Red marks appeared on pale white neck as he passionately sucked the smooth skin causing internal bleeding. His actions continued to taunt the weak restraints of the hunter, their bodies rocking against each other, their hearts thundering in their chests. They were lost in ardor and excitement when a distress cry of a familiar young lady coupled with menacing and frustrated aura forcefully and reluctantly shook them out of their passion.

“Akira!! Kohaku!! Sui-chan!!Nao!! Aarrrrrgghhhhhhh!!!! Mou!! And I thought I told them not to wander off! Not to wander around!!! Aaahhh!!” They could almost see her tearing her hair out as
she wailed.

They were still for a moment before the vampire slowly stirred away from the tempting skin of his mate. Forcefully depriving himself of the strong want to ravish him completely. He wanted to take him again, to set things straight so that that night will not be regarded as a mere accident but action brought forth by mutual affections. He muffled his groan on the sheet besides the silverette’s head while they willed their hearts and breaths to go back to normal. He’s already regretting ending it so early. His need was growing and he wanted to continue but knowing that there will be problems that will arise if they let their apparently missing children wander off around the academy, they must step up to their duties as the parents.

“Get off me, Kuran.” Zero finally managed when his breathing evened out but his body still trembled slightly in shame and disappointment.

“Zero, you can’t run away from this. You know that.” Kaname turned his head to meet lilac eyes but the hunter turned the other way, clearly not wanting to meet his burgundy ones.

“Whatever. Get off now. We need to find those children.”

“This is not the end, Zero. I’ll make sure of that.”

The hunter shivered at the vampire’s promise, in fright or anticipation, he cannot decide. Kaname forcefully turned his head by gripping his jaw to place a quick kiss on the hunter’s lips again. He felt his body tensed against the pureblood.

“You’re mine, remember that well.” He reminded him one last time before finally getting off the hunter to walk towards the drawers to get a clean shirt to replace his sweat and blood covered one. He heard some shuffling and when he turned around, he saw his bed empty. The hunter already gone and had jumped out of the window.

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Moving Forward

‘Shit. Shit. Shit!’

Zero cursed as he walked faster while clutching the front of his ruined white school shirt to avoid exposing his skin and the kiss marks the pureblood had undoubtedly left on his skin. His heart began to beat faster again as he recalled what had happened earlier. He grimaced at his earlier actions. Damn! He let himself get carried away and had there been no interruptions then he’ll surely end up succumbing and repeating the happenings of that night. Fuck! He’s doomed. He knew he was in it too deep already but he didn’t know it’s this deep. It’s like thinking you’re only ankles deep in the mud only to realize that you’re already neck deep and still sinking fast. It brought waves of panic in his chest.

It’s happening too fast that he didn’t know where he ended up now. Suddenly knowing the fact that he already has an irrevocable and unending bond with the vampire had him tumbling down the hill even after he thought he was getting a good grasp of their situation. And the confirmation of his need and feelings towards Kaname as evident on his eager reciprocation of the pureblood’s action sent a good jab in his guts.

He abruptly stopped and stood still for a moment. He groaned, one hand shot up to hide his tightly closed eyes on his slightly bowed head as his other hand clenched his shirt ever so tightly. Yep, he’s doomed… For life…

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When he emerged from his room, he found his daughter standing still on top of the staircase. Her head slightly facing up, her eyes close, as she undoubtedly searched for the auras of her unruly siblings. The aura filled with frustration and the irritation escaping from her promised a world of pain for her younger brothers and sister. She opened her beautiful lavender eyes and turned around to face him when he came close as she sensed him.

“Chichiue.” She acknowledged. A tired sigh escaped before she explained, “They slipped out from me while I was taking a bath… they were gone when I finished…” She felt like she’s growing white hairs despite the impossibility of it. She was so frustrated. They all sneaked up on her, even Kohaku! Even though she knew this already, she was only reminded that all of them have mischievousness deep deep inside them, even Kohaku and herself, though they’re obedient most of the time.

“It’s quite alright, they can’t be far away. We’ll find them. Perhaps they’ve gone to see Zero.” Kaname comforted his very annoyed daughter. Looks like his future won’t be boring as he initially thought years and years ago.

“Um!” she nodded as she waived away all the irritation away. She came here by accident but with a certain purpose and she must see it done! So she must be focused! When her father finally reached her, she started when she smelled the familiar scent on him. She modestly sniffed some more. “You were with otou-chan, chichiue?”

Kaname inwardly flinched at this and felt his body tensed. Had she heard them? He wondered if her
hearing was so superior from the norm being a hybrid that she heard the noise despite the ever-so-present barrier he has erected inside his room to ensure perfect privacy at all times. Thankfully she added even before voicing his questions that would have given himself away, “I can smell otou-chan on you, was he here?” she innocently inquired and the look in her eyes told him that she knew nothing of the intimate moment he shared with the hunter earlier. Rather, he can sense relief and happiness from her.

“How did you know?” he mildly inquired.

“Because of your scent! It’s the smell I remembered and know ever since.” She hugged him and buried her face on his waist. “Ah, this is the smell I recalled, though it’s stronger in the future, but it’s this smell I remember. Thank goodness, it’s here.” She loved this scent, of her father’s and daddy’s combined. It’s their family’s essence, the scent that filled their castle, the smell of home. She didn’t like, no matter how good it was, the separated smell of their father and daddy though it’s the core that made up her favorite perfume; it’s just not right for her. “I hope you get along well with otou-chan, chichiue. I assure you it’s the best thing that will ever happen to you.”

“I don’t doubt that.” The pureblood sincerely agreed as he smiled gently, “Come. Let us find your naughty siblings.”

“Um!” She let go of Kaname’s waist to hold his hand and they set off to find the little devils lurking somewhere in the school.

The father and daughter pair decided to look separately for the four little imps as they have cleverly masked their presences which mightily irritated her. She’s annoyed at how well she taught her siblings the art of sneaking around and playing tricks. She sighed. She’s certainly paying the price now. Oh well, it’s not like they’ll be able to go far. She knew they just went out in search for their otou-chan so she made way to their grandpa’s place while her chichiue chose to search the woods as the search area was bigger because it’s possible that the children with no sense of direction ventured there.

Anne was running fast but she abruptly stopped at the sound she heard coming just right ahead. She opted to simply walking quietly so as not to startle the person currently sobbing softly by the fountain that one must pass to get to her grandpa’s office. The sight of aunt Yuki came to view. Worry shot at her as she moved to inquire what happened when she heard her aunt chided herself.

“No, no, no… stop already… you said you’ll be fine right? So… so… stay strong…” Yuki whispered to herself as she wiped another tear that escaped from her already swollen eyes.

“Aunty?” Anne softly called out.

Yuki turned at the sound of the gentle voice that came from the child approaching her. She looked at her and she can’t help but stare. Here stood the product of Zero’s and Kaname-senpai’s love, looking at her with worried eyes. She’s a wonderful combination of the two people she loved most in the world though she got more of Kaname-senpai’s features from her long, wavy dark hair that run long passed her knees, pink lips and small heart-shaped face but her striking almond-shaped lilac-colored eyes definitely came from Zero, as well as her ears and nose.
“Are you alright, Yuki-bachan? What happened?” she asked when the older girl only stared at her.

“Nothing. I’m fine.” The prefect assured, smiling as she did though she knew the young girl was unconvinced. “Ne… I have a question… You said you came from the future right?” she turned her head back to place it on top of her knees that were hugged together by her arms while she sat on the ground. “Then, how are… how are… your… your parents together?” Yuki managed to ask, the words felt odd as she spoke them.

“Otou-chan and chichiue?” Anne clarified while she sat beside the older woman, imitating her aunt’s current sitting position. “What do you mean, aunty?”

“I mean… are they…. happy?” She cleared as she stared on the ground.

When Anne looked at her again, briefly studying her face and the look in her watery sienna eyes, it struck her. She finally got it…

‘Ah…’

The little princess didn’t know what to feel with the knowledge that her aunt was in love with one of her parents. She didn’t know this story… For she only remembered perfect harmony and easy camaraderie and relationship between the three. Nothing that will indicate bitterness that most of the time arises from a broken-heart.

She looked at her aunt and put a stop to her pity and worries when she remembered the happy future which awaited her bachan. She was about to divulge this but stopped herself. She shouldn’t interfere too much. She knew it will come to place and that should be enough. She shouldn’t take away the joy and fun of the happy surprise which awaited her aunt though when she remembered that there was not much interaction between her aunty and her future mate, she suddenly became a bit worried. Men could be slow or cowardly at times, maybe she should interfere… only for a little bit…. Just a little...

“Um! They’re very happy!” the young girl answered her aunt’s question and to give evidence, she held out her hand to let an album materialize on her palm. “Do you want to see, aunty?”

“Eh?” Yuki frowned and gasped in amazement as a book, no, an album came out of nowhere. She stared at the album that was handed to her and when she opened it, she was struck at the beautiful images the little album held.

She was greeted with genuine and blissful smiles of the two handsome men on the first page. They sat in a settee. The silverette, with his left leg bent and rested on the seat so he can place his left arm on top of his knee, leaned back with his head turned to the brunette beside him whose right arm and head rested on the silverette’s left shoulder. Zero was wearing an immaculate all-white tuxedo whereas Kaname wore an elegant looking black one which he carried with effortless grace. The white gold band that Zero wore around his ring finger was not lost to her.

It’s a picture from their wedding day.

Yuki can feel their happiness from the photograph. She only just noticed how perfect they looked together. She was struck speechless at this. She swallowed and eagerly anticipated the next one.

She turned the page to reveal a sleeping Zero with his head rested on the pile of pillows on Kaname’s lap while the vampire sat on a sofa. There was a peaceful smile and look on the pureblood’s face as he watched his slumbering mate, a book lay forgotten on his left hand where his own white-gold wedding band rested around his ring finger. His right hand that held Zero’s left was
laid on top of the hunter’s stomach, their fingers intertwined, perfectly fitting each other’s hands. Zero’s wedding band shone noticeably. Yuki stroke the picture gingerly, weak with emotions that the image gave her. A smile unknowingly appeared on her face.

She turned to the other page and looked at a haggard and delicate looking Zero, who, despite looking quite weak, still had the look of absolute joy while cradling a bundle of cloth where a small pink face appeared to be sleeping. It’s obviously a picture from after the delivery. She now felt the smile spread even more widely across her face.

The other pictures next to this one were mostly around that time as she saw pictures of the chairman also holding the baby, which was Anne, she was sure of it, as she believed the photos to be arranged from the oldest to latest, happiness flowed from his bespectacled eyes.

There was also the image where she, with curiously long hair, and Ichiru hovered near Zero. They looked like they’re arguing with the silverette to allow them to hold the bundle of joy which the hunter was obviously adamant in denying them as he cradled his child ever so closely. Kaname was by his side and judging from the look on his face, was trying to pacify both parties. She smiled at this. Clearly, Zero wouldn’t trust his treasure on the two clumsy prefects. She chuckled at the funny image they created.

She turned another page to uncover the image of Kaname holding the baby this time. He looked like he was talking to his daughter by how the camera captured his lips that were parted with its sides turned up in a smile. His eyes saying that he has everything he needed to live. It touched her heart.

She turned on to more pages and pictures. She found only happiness and peace in them. From the simple ones that were taken while the couple was walking hand in hand, to ones that depicted Zero doing things like giving Anne a bath as a baby, tying her hair up when she was older (about three), simply carrying her as she slept in his arms or while he cooked and Kaname reading to her while she’s on his lap as he showed her the images or texts, as he carried her while she slept to lay her down on her little bed, where he played with her as toys scattered about on the floor, to images that depicted events like birthdays, Christmas or parties and even one picture showing (this amused Yuki) flustered looking Kaname and Zero trying to calm one crying little Anne. Every picture revealed only warmth, happiness, joy and harmony.

She felt another tear run down her cheek but not because of pain. She cried because she felt a light and warm feeling washed over her. She found great comfort in knowing that her two most beloved people found happiness in the arms of each other. It still ached somehow but not as strongly as before and she felt that it will only be a matter of time and she won’t feel even an itch of it. She’s happy and content now and found that she can finally move forward and accept the truth about them.

She turned to the little girl besides her to give her another smile, a big, bright and genuine smile. They were nearing the end of the album but she stopped at the image she happened upon on one of the pages. Her eyes widened as she turned to the girl then back to the image then back to the child again. “Eh?... Eeeeh!!? What the… He? And… and Ichiru? What? Why? When? How?”

“Eh?” Anne frowned in confusion and when she looked at the picture her aunt was talking about, she finally understood, “Ah...” oh crap, she forgot she put that in her favorites. “Hahahaha... Yuki-bachan, don’t tell them okay? It must be a secret!” she should have given the album that only contained her favorite images of her parents. What an idiot. Could it be that some of her brain cells died last night?

“What, you mean they’re… they’ll be together?” Seriously?

“Um! They’ll have three children! Fuji-chan, Nobara-chan and Sakura-chan. They’re smart and
cute!” Anne confirmed while slightly giggling. She’s very fond of all her cousins.

Yuki gaped at her. “Really? Wow… hmmm… oh…” She wondered if there was any signs of inclination or affection or admiration on either side… was there any? Then she remembered the many stares he directed to Ichiru which she assumed was out of spite like the ones he directed to Zero. Maybe there was more to it. She suddenly felt giddy. Ah, it’s really interesting! Then suddenly, something struck her so she turned to Anne once again. “Was I married in the future?” and when Anne answered affirmatively, “Eh? To whom? Do you know him? Do I know him?” large russet orbs suddenly brightened at the prospect.

Anne immediately leaned back as her aunt eagerly leaned forward, both her hands on her mouth. Her eyes widened when she remembered that the answer to those questions were inside the album as well. *Oh no!* So she waved her hand and willed the album to disappear.

“Eh? Ah!” Yuki started when the album suddenly vanished. “Wait!”

“I’m so sorry bachan but… but… it’s better to let things flow as is… you know… and… and it will be a great surprise! I assure you!” Anne promised vigorously, a sweat escaped from her.

Yuki resignedly sighed at the sight of the clearly troubled child and just asked, “Will I be happy?”

A wide and bright smile appeared first before Anne answered confidently, “Blissful!”

“I’ll take your words then.” She smiled. She’s starting to really look forward to the future. “By the way, why are you here?”

“Ah!” Anne jumped to her feet. She forgot about her little search. “Those little -! I’m hunting for four little devils, aunty. Would you like to join me?” She invited.

The young prefect chuckled. Ah, how lively. “Sure!” Yuki got up and patted her skirt clean before walking after the little girl towards the chairman’s office in search for her future niece and nephews.

“Kyaaa~! So cute!”

When he heard this, the silverette knew he has found who he was looking for and sure enough, he discovered the dark-haired twin boys surrounded by a bunch of starry-eyed Day class girls who were gawking at them. He immediately went over to the boys being fawned over. Seriously, he was both impressed and annoyed at how well they masked their presence. He had to follow them by their scent which was hard since he has not yet memorize it and it looked like they washed before going out first making it twice as hard to track them by smell alone.

When the boys felt his presence, they immediately turned to him. Zero halted his steps and thought his heart would stop when one of them, the extremely lively boy, opened his mouth to greet him.

“Ah! Ot-mph!” Akira began but was immediately silenced when his twin brother’s hands covered his mouth.

“Akira, do you still remember what nee-chan said? Do not cause a commotion.” Kohaku reminded in a low warning tone.
Zero almost sighed in relief. It will cause an uproar if these children actually called him daddy in public. He continued moving towards the group of fan-girls ogling the cute twin boys who looked remarkably like the handsome Night class President.

“Move on with your lives already and leave these children alone.” He scowled as he announced it to the annoying bunch that promptly exploded words of insult. “Shut up!! Go back to your classes!!” the prefect bellowed in a menacing voice that instantly sent the girls away in fright.

“Wha!! So mean! Kiryū, you jerk!!!” They threw one last insult before running away.

The prefect ignored them. He was never bothered by any of the contempt thrown at him and instead turned to the children left behind who were both expectantly looking up to him. The elder’s hands still at the younger’s mouth who just waved his hand at him in greeting since he can’t speak.

The silverette crouched down to sit on his heels. “You two, what are you doing wandering around?” He mildly asked, well, tried. He was careful not to repeat the same mistake he made towards the older girl that morning.

Kohaku answered, “We were looking for you otou-chan. We just wanted to make sure you’re already fine.” He looked at him with uncertainty in his wine eyes. He’s afraid that their daddy is angry at them. Did they bother him? Had they made the wrong decision of coming here? “I’m sorry.” He looked slightly down. Akira looked at his twin and then to his otou-chan, frowning, eyes clearly asking if he’s angry as his mouth was still covered.

Zero was once again attacked by guilt and remorse. What is with him? Is it his voice, his face or really just him? Why do children kept on getting scared of him even when he tried not to frighten them? He took a deep breath and tried again. “Look kid, I’m not angry and I’m fine now. Thank you.” He reached out his hands to pat the two dark haired kids and slightly ruffled their hair then smiled to further assure them. This seemed to have the intended effect as the two instantly brightened and beam at him. Perhaps the effect was too great as they didn’t stopped at that and immediately moved to put their arms around his neck. This caused him to lose his balance and land on his ass.

“Otou-chan~! Otou-chan~! Otou-chan~!” they chanted as they rubbed their heads on his shoulder blades, their swaying hair tickled Zero a bit.

Though the hunter was surprised, he found their actions very cute and innocent that he instinctively stroked the back of their heads, taking in their warmth and comforting scents. They smelled like high grade hot dark chocolate drinks which warms him in winter cold nights. A gentle smile unconsciously spread across his face, painting him in a different light.

“Yes, yes, thank you but we must go back. Your sister looked like she was about to explode when I heard her looking for you.” He slightly laughed at how fast their skin paled when they heard that. “Let’s go, I’ll come and perhaps I can persuade her to let the two of you off the hook this time.” He was mildly amused at how fast their color returned at that.

They’re extremely relieved that their otou-chan will plead their case for them as it most surely meant that it’s going to be a case won.

“Ah, by the way, where are the other two?”


Zero stared at them. “Didn’t you go together with the little boy and girl?”

“Eh? Naoto and Suiren also sneaked out?” Akira looked at Kohaku with an ‘uh oh’ expression to
which the other responded with a grimace. Oh dear, their nee-chan must be extremely pissed off.

Zero sighed, how well he must have raised these children. Oh well, this might be good practice. He stopped at that thought. Fuck, what was he thinking? It’s like resigning to his future! Wasn’t he going to fight Kuran? But when he looked back to the little faces staring at each other, in silent conversation using their eyes, with an *‘I told you so’* expression, he found that what the pureblood said was true. He can’t kill them or erase their existence with his own hands. It’s not fair to them and it’s not their fault. He was so lost in thought as he didn’t realize that he had reached out to cup the cheek of the twin who turned and looked at him in question.

“Otou-chan?” Kohaku asked.

The hunter immediately shook himself out of his thoughts. He ruffled both children’s dark-hair again and spoke as he stood up: “Let’s go, it looks like we need to find two more missing children before going back.” He took each twin’s hand in his which they eagerly accepted as they walked to look for the two young silverettes.

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The pureblood king had less trouble in finding the youngest twin silverettes as they weren’t able to conceal their auras for too long. He spotted them cheerfully walking hand in hand to where they believed their grandpa’s place was, which was funnily at the opposite direction, so they can visit their otou-chan. He learned they sneaked out after finding their older brothers gone and attempted to follow them which they weren’t able to do so as they hid their presence immediately. Seeing as they already defied their sister’s order of staying put, they decided to search for their daddy alone and hid their auras as well.

Kaname merely shook his head at this. He can’t find the strength to be angry at them. Not for this innocent reason. He sighed in defeat, “Very well then, let us go back immediately to appease your sister. I’ll call for Zero once we get back so you can see him but never wander on your own again, is that clear?” They nodded readily at this but Kaname wasn’t so sure if he should trust this promise. He didn’t think that his authority as the pureblood king will work on them and he even have a strange feeling that he’ll only find himself more defeated by them in the future.

The twin silverettes insisted on walking as they found it enjoyable to stop and poke their curiosity at anything that caught their attention. Kaname allowed them to walk in front of him, watching as they followed a colorful butterfly flying up front.

But then, he suddenly sensed someone near them. A hunter. It’s approaching them, seemingly going to the direction where they came from. He promptly stopped from his tracks and instructed the younger two to do the same. They must have sensed the hunter as well as they immediately run to him and hid behind his legs. They waited until they saw the hunter in question, indeed, walking towards their direction. He must have sensed them from far away as he wore an alert and focused expression.

The hunter has messy, ash brown mane and confident dark hazel eyes. He’s in his early 20s though Kaname can’t be too sure because like vampires, hunters’ age could also be different from how they look because of their inherited vampire genes that made them hunters like Kaien Cross. He has a lean muscular built and fair complexion.
Kaname knew the hunter’s name as he was one of the prides of the Hunter’s Association. They met several times in meetings and when the said hunter stood guard in some parties held by vampires. He is considered as a talented young one that was polished by Toga Yagari himself. Kaito Takamiya, one of the fearless hunters known for his great distrust and anger towards purebloods. My, what wonderful luck.

The hunter stopped only a few feet away from the pureblood king, disgust evident from his dark hazel eyes. “Well, well, well, what do we have here? Bloodsuckers prancing around in mid-day. Where’s your entourage? Turned to ashes I hope?” He sneered clearly also recognizing Kaname.

“Kaito Takamiya. It’s a pleasure to see you as well.” The vampire replied in an equally sarcastic tone but not quite succumbing to the hunter’s bait.

“That’s Takamiya-sensei for you, vampire, or don’t you use honorifics because you’re an all mighty pureblood? Oh that’s right, maybe I should call you Your Majesty?” he continued to challenge Kaname’s patience. “Heh.” When Kaname refused to answer, he just added, “I thought I sensed three disgusting presences, let’s see.” That was when he looked down to see a two pairs of hands around the pureblood’s leg betraying the twins from their hiding place with silver tresses even slightly showing. Children?

He crouched down and sat on his heels to look at the children trying to hide themselves but failing miserably. He was like transported back into the past when he finally saw the face of one of the brats, a boy who looked so uncannily like a certain hunter or rather, an ex-human now, he thought sadly, that he knew when he was a trainee. He stared intently. It’s like seeing Zero as a child again but because of those large lilac eyes displaying innocent confusion on his pale little face cupped by soft silver hair, its better perhaps to say; it’s like seeing Ichiru again. He was so surprised that he was in the act of reaching out to the said boy despite himself only to be interrupted by the familiar sound of the same hunter the pureblood child looked like.

“Kaito?” There was a hint of great surprise in Zero’s voice and there was, what was that, panic?

“Zero, my boy, how are you do-?” What the hell? Now there are two children that looked like the vampire king in front of him which are...hmm... What are they? Vampire? No, hunter? No, no, no, not quite.... What are they then? “Who and what the hell are those brats?”

Kaname and Zero tensed at that. They met each other’s eyes both asking what they should do next. Should he dare and snatch the children and make a run for it? No, that’ll be suspicious as hell.

“Kai...to...jiichan?” Kohaku spoke in a way that says that he’s not sure if he was right. Why? Why is he like that?

“Eh? Is that really Kaito-jiichan? Really? He smells different... though it’s indeed him, huh...” Akira said and looked at his twin, mightily confused as well.

“Kaito-jiichan?” the silverette twins emerged from their hiding place to look at the hunter in front of them whose one hand was still outstretched.

The little silver pair frowned and actually sniffed him, which caught the hunter off guard. “He smells different and weird.” They declared before turning around to find the one they were looking for standing before them. “Ah!! Otou-chan!” they ran towards the silver-haired hunter who looked like he was regretting his indecision that might save him from the situation.

All three dark-haired males shook their heads. My, my, my, what a catastrophe.
Yep, should have made a run for it.

“What the fuck?” was all Kaito managed as he watched the young silverettes reach their ‘otou-chan’.

“Maa, maa, Anne-chan, calm down. I’m sure Kaname-kun has already found them.” assured the cheerful chairman of Cross Academy.

When they reached the headmaster’s office, they found the honey-haired ex-hunter working quite seriously and instantly brightened up at the sight of them. “My beautiful daughter and granddaughter!” He ran to hug them dramatically as if they haven’t met for years. Yuki expertly dodged and left Anne to take in the crushing hug which the child didn’t appear to mind.

Her grandpa has always been like this and it made Anne happy that he’s always been the same in this time where everything and everyone was almost too different from how they knew them. “Oh, grandpa!” She responded in equal drama, acting to match her grandpa’s mood. That’ll always be their modus operandi. It started this morning and she’s used to it since he has been like this all her life.

Yuki watched all this in amazement. She chuckled at the theatrical exchange and was all smiles when Anne proceeded to asking if any of her younger siblings happened to pass by to wreak havoc to which the chairman replied negatively as he’s been ‘alone since this morning and constantly missing them’, he added pitiful sobs which earned him a slight pat on the head from the indulgent child.

They were invited to tea to wait for the arrival of her siblings when they all agreed that it’s the chairman who they’re trying to find to inquire about their otou-chan. They didn’t know that the young ones were actually smarter than they were given credit for and have, in fact, already searched for the hunter directly.

“Mou~! They’re always like that!” Anne pouted as she took the cup of tea she was given. “I hope father scolds them.” She huffed.

“Aw! How cute my granddaughter looks when she’s angry!” the blond fawned like a teenager as he took pictures of her in every angle possible.

Yuki merely sighed at the eternal hobby of her adopted-father. She has long given up on making the chairman stop his maniacal way of taking pictures. Besides, it looked like the child didn’t mind. She must have been immune already, Yuki mused.

They were chatting and enjoying tea in peace when the dark-haired child turned her head towards the door and smiled as she announced, “Ah, we have a visitor.”

As if on cue and without any warning, the door burst open to reveal a gruff looking hunter. His one blue eye surveyed the room and he frowned as his gaze fell on the young child who smiled sweetly at him. *What is this brat?*

He came to deliver the newly hired student teacher who will teach in the academy starting next week and to inquire about his stupidly stubborn pupil and of his present condition. The chairman hasn’t
given him any update and so he proceeded to hear from him directly and it’s also been months since he last saw the honey-haired man. He was walking, anticipating seeing him again, when he felt this odd presence.

“Toga-chan! Wha- what are you doing here?” Kaien was slightly flustered as he watched the intensity of Toga’s gaze on his granddaughter. How will he explain his relationship with her? He was sure that Zero will not appreciate his directly informing his master that she’s his child with Kaname… a male and a pureblood.

“Who’s this brat?” Toga asked without preamble, his blue eye not leaving the child’s lilac ones which were very familiar to him as they’re the eyes of his favorite student but what interest him the most was how odd the child’s aura was. He’s sure she’s a vampire but there was something amiss with her. What is it?

‘Oh dear. What should I say to Toga-sensei?’ This is what was going through Anne’s mind at that very moment though she acted calm and collected. Her face never betrayed her mind. She must be careful as she knew she could get her otou-chan in trouble but since no bright idea came to her mind right then, she opted to using smiles to get away and allowed her grandpa to come up with whatever excuse he can provide.

And then she felt it. The presence she’s been looking for. Her heart started to thunder violently despite herself. She absentmindedly stood as she anticipated his coming though when she concentrated, she felt that his aura and smell was not quite as she remembered. It’s raw… it’s like a normal hunter’s aura but she knew it’s him as she can sense the same core, the same foundation where his essence was establish. And she’s most sure that she’ll never mistake him for anyone else, no matter how different he might be.

She unknowingly put her hands together in front of her, clenching it on top of her chest. Her heart pounded faster at the prospect of seeing him again, for even in her own time, it’s been more than a year since she last saw him, making her desperate to see him again no matter which time or era.

The other occupants watched her in confusion before following her gaze. They all looked at the still opened door of the chairman’s office and only after a few minutes, they were greeted by a flustered ash-brown haired hunter, two wonderfully joyful silverette purebloods, which were carried by the distracted silver-haired hunter and two passive looking brunettes who each held the calmer older vampire’s hands. The two hunters looked like they had a race to get there as they were both red-faced.

They exclaimed in unison at the sight of Toga. “Sensei!” They both called out at the same time though the tone of brown haired one felt like he has something to reveal while the other hunter sounded like he has something to explain.

When Kaito spotted the dark-haired girl, he immediately bent to rudely look closely at her exquisite face, making the child visibly jolt. His face was merely inches from hers. His brows drawn together as he intently studied her face making hers blush furiously. “Fucking hell.” Kaito breathed in disbelief which made her jump once more and earned him a reprimand from the chairman and unknowing glares from the parents.

“What? You two look ridiculous.” Toga addressed his two pupils. He frowned even more when he noticed that Zero was carrying purebloods in his arm. Then he started at the familiar look of the silver-haired pureblooded twins. After recovering, his blue eye traveled to the dark-haired pureblood king who merely nodded and down to the two dark-haired twin boys that looked exactly like the vampire holding their hands. One of them even waved a hand at him in greeting. After sensing the boys’ aura, he was reminded of the quaint aura he initially sensed and looked back at the young girl
who was intently watching his older student though Kaito appeared to be oblivious to the longing look the young girl gave him. His gaze went to the chairman who clammed up at the sight of the odd group as if expecting a storm to rage any moment. Something is definitely wrong and he’s determined to know all about it. He turned to the silver-haired hunter, “You boy, speak.”

Zero opened his mouth only to close it again, not finding any words to say. He’s panicking and he didn’t know where to begin, what to say or how to say it. He only hurried here when Kaito said that their sensei is here and has gone to the chairman’s office to inquire about his condition and Kaname informed him that his eldest was also there to look for the missing children. He didn’t even make any plan, his feet just took him there. He’s only certain he’s in deep shit for all of this.

“Ano… Would you like to sit down first, sensei? That will be much comfortable.” The young girl offered which was immediately supported by the chairman and earned her a grateful look from her otou-chan. She must set everything in motion first, she decided. Nothing will come out from her stares only.

“Marvelous idea, Anne-chan. Come sit here Toga-chan and you too Kaito-kun. I didn’t know you’re here already. What made you come here today by the way, Toga-chan? You should have informed me so I have made some more scones.” Kaien gave out a nervous laugh. He didn’t think that anything would lighten the situation at hand, he grimaced internally, “Don’t stand around like statues, you three, and please close the door. Ah thank you, Kohaku-kun or are you Akira-kun? Oh, Kohaku-kun? Thank you.”

They shuffled about the room; Yuki went to seat behind the chairman’s desk, both eagerly and dreadfully anticipating the next events. Kaito and Toga sat on one of the sofas in the middle of the room while the chairman strategically sat between them so he’ll be able to react fast enough should one of them get violent. Zero and Kaname chose the sofa facing the hunters with the young girl and the oldest of one of the dark-haired twins in between them, the little silverettes on Zero’s lap and one of the dark-haired boys on Kaname’s.

“So… where… where should we start?” the headmaster tried valiantly to lighten the mood as Toga’s eye stayed trained on his younger student while Kaito’s roamed from one child’s face to another, greatly doubting the facts he’s been slightly let on to.

“Why don’t we start at who these children are and their relationship with my pupil that he will actually let some purebloods cling to him?” Toga gruffly started, making Zero flinch visibly. He’s very confused, but he didn’t show any of it. He looked at the two silverettes who were both stared at Zero with worry as they sensed his agitation and panic. The resemblance between Zero and the little purebloods were even more obvious at the proximity of the three with each other and the attachment of the two with the older one made it even more questionable.

“They’re my children,” Kaname responded instead when his mate refused to answer the question and began the conversation, “who came from the future.”

“….!”

“Kuran!” Zero couldn’t believe the vampire said it just like that to which Kaname merely gave him a look.

They needed to explain the situation and since it was clear that the silverette has yet to sort out his speech, Kaname took the liberty of starting the awkward discourse.

“What in the world are you saying? Are your screws loose in the head, vampire?” Toga exclaimed in disbelief.
Kaname merely smiled at that. “I assure you I’m saying the absolute truth. I gather that you’re perplexed with these three’s aura, am I correct?” gesturing at the older children, “That’s because they’re a mix of all our races.” And thus Kaname began relating all that has been explained to them last night. Everything from Zero’s Suzaku lineage, his blood, the children’s power, reason for travel, everything. None was left unsaid. Even his possible pregnancy was explained.

“What?!”

That last piece of information made the older silverette bow his head, unable to meet his master’s eyes, and made their sensei jumped on his feet. His blue eye now unable to hide the overflowing confusion and disbelief he felt. The chairman readied himself to grab Toga should he start attacking someone, Kaito was flabbergasted, the young silverettes poked Zero’s unmoving body while the young brunettes faked calmness. Kaname silently waited for their sensei to slip back to composure and Yuki all the while greatly relieved she’s not part of it.

“Hey, chair-.” That was the scene Ichiru happened upon when he opened the door to the headmaster’s office to ask if he’d seen his brother as he needed to report that some girls were squealing about seeing a cute pair of twin boys that looked exactly like the Moon dorm president. Apparently some people were taking a wonderful walk in the park, “-man, would you like some tea? Wait, I’ll make some for you.” He hurriedly added to escape from the tense atmosphere inside the room. One look and he knew what the topic of conversation was about.

Yuki immediately jumped at the chance to get away. “Wait! I’ll help you!” she stopped to add when several pairs of eyes strayed towards her direction, “Hehehe, there are…. too many cups… to… to carry… I’ll help him! Bye!” She hurriedly explained and bolted out of the room without waiting for any reply since her intent was too obvious.

Zero immediately cursed them internally. They just bailed out on him! Talk about brotherly/sisterly love but he stopped himself. It’s not like they have any responsibility to help him and he doubted they can actually do something regarding the situation.

Luckily though, it seems Toga was able to think a bit clearly with that short interruption and proceeded to reclaim his calm. He sighed first then went to pace behind their couch, itching to smoke but stopped himself at the sight of the children. After a while, he stopped to look at his pupil again who seemed to have regained his strength to at least look up again. “So it means… that these children are yours… because of your blood’s power, was able to… well… with that pureblood… and that they came from the future… correct?... And what do you mean hybrid? How does that even work? What powers? Are they purebloods or not?”

The chairman perked up at this, “Oh, they can show you! Anne-chan, if you’d please.”

“Of course.” The eldest child stood up and in the same manner as last time, held out her hand to take out **Byakuya** and unsheathe it from its scabbard. She then went to the black-haired hunter who stood in shocked and amazement to hand over her katana. He took and examined it.

“Anti-vampire weapon…” he looked at her hands, “it didn’t burn you… a vampire… a pureblood… wielding an anti-vampire weapon.” He needn’t speak of what it entailed or how powerful this made the children. “Are you really a pureblood? A vampire?” then he eyed the blade again, “or a hunter?”

“That’s still under debate but I am indeed a vampire.” she smiled at him, “Since Chichiue’s blood was stronger, otou-chan’s blood wasn’t able to transform it but was transformed instead and as per the properties that has always been on the Suzaku’s blood, it gave the pure blood in us tremendous power. Chichiue’s blood is the oldest, purest one there is,” she glanced meaningfully at Kaname, “and as such, it’s the most powerful blood there is. This, coupled with Suzaku’s powerful blood
properties created us. Yes, it’s pure as always but with something a little… more. We were
categorized as a different specie altogether because of the confusion thus we were called hybrids.
There’s only eight in the world.” She realized she has said something that will confuse them so
immediately added, “Ah, that’s… well… that’s something for the future. Ha,ha,ha.” She scratched
her cheek slightly. She must be careful; she decided not to meddle with everyone’s affair… too
much.

Toga only eyed her suspiciously but didn’t say anything nor did anyone else in the room.

In his entire life, he has never experienced anything like this and frankly, he didn’t know what to do
or how to react. The facts sunk in ever so slowly and he found himself lost in what he must say, do
or feel.

The older occupants of the room were alarmed when he raised his hand to touch her, surprised when
he merely cupped her face and panicked again when he pinched her skin to stretch her cheek. The
little girl didn’t do or say anything; she merely beamed at him, the best she can, like she was so used
to that.

“I assure you I’m quite real.” She said playfully when he didn’t do anything else but that for more
than a minute.

Toga didn’t quite understand it. He knew that he felt like he must act strongly against what was
happening but seeing these children already here, odd but beautiful beings as vibrant lives always
are, he couldn’t find it in him to deny or feel rage at their existence. He suppose he felt a bit furious
towards the pureblood who knocked up his beloved pupil and annoyed at his student’s stupidity in
getting mixed up with the bloodsuckers (and wanted to ask him how in the world this even came to
be, but one can’t just ask that. He was also not sure if he’s ready to hear whatever the answer will
be), he can’t feel the rage he felt like he wanted to boil. It seems like it was being tampered by these
children even before it bubbled. He sighed in defeat and turned to his pupil who wasn’t able to say
anything at all. “I think I know what your answer will be but let me ask you anyway,” it was in the
tone of there’s no going back if you’re already decided, “That,” pointing at his lower belly, “will you
keep it?”

The air suddenly went ever so still.

Zero looked at his mentor then to Kaname who met his eyes with a nervous expectant look then to
Anne who had become stiff with anxiousness in her face; she must be really shocked and affected by
the question. She was aghast, her head lightly bowed, that there could be any answer other than yes
or that her otou-chan would actually think of aborting her. She’s definitely hurt and was near tears
when she heard a determined, “Of course.” She looked up to meet her otou-chan’s eyes and her tears
spilled anyway but because of joy this time.

She didn’t notice as Toga blanched at her reaction while the headmaster immediately embraced her.
“Toga-chan, you jerk. Look at what you’ve done! There, there, my beautiful granddaughter. He’s
just being mean because he’s an idiot.” The chairman was a bit exasperated that the hunter asked
such a question while the children were present.

The black-haired hunter turned away, a bit ashamed. He knew he lacked tact but he didn’t really
think of the consequences, his mind was really muddled and he just wanted to set the scores right
away with his stupid student. “Grrr! Shut up!” he barked at the bespectacled ex-hunter fussing at the
still sobbing child. Her little brothers and sister already surrounded her to pat her shoulder, head or
back as their parents stood to earnestly watch them. “Look kid, I’m not trying to bully you. There’s
just,” then paused to think, “just some things adults must do.” To which she nodded.
She knew what sensei was trying to do and she’s happy that their otou-chan chose her out of his own accord. He wanted her. That made her happy. She lived long enough to know the fact that conceiving doesn’t mean wanting. There were lots of heartbreaking stories of children being born even without being wanted or parents hating their own children.

“Well, that’s really mean sensei and here I thought I was the bad ass here.” Kaito smirked at their sensei’s irritation as he leaned, an arm on the sofa’s frame, to look at their little group. His cool voice made Anne straighten her back and wipe her face gracefully. She can’t let him see how unsightly she looked right now! “It’s okay brat, you’ll get used to it. Your name is Anne, right? Hmmm, heh… Zero don’t tell me you really had the hots for Anne Takashima?” he grinned at Zero’s confusion, “Can’t blame you there, brother. Those tits and ass just makes you ha-,” he was abruptly cut when he got a mighty blow on top of his head from Toga and an earsplitting scolding from the chairman.

“What the hell’s wrong with you boy?! Can’t you see who you’re with?!” His sensei roared at him.

“Please be mindful of the children, Kaito-kun! You’re going to be a teacher too! I will not permit such scandalous behavior!” berated the headmaster, rightly upset, while cradling the children together in an attempt to muffle the hunter’s vulgar words.

“What in the world are you even saying?” Zero gritted his teeth as he glared at the indelicate hunter. He long knew since their younger years that Kaito can be such an ass. “I don’t even know that woman.” He felt Kaname stare at him. The dark aura surrounding him betrayed his seemingly indifferent expression. He shivered as it slipped inside his clothes ever so slowly, caressing him in a torturously sensual way as if in punishment.

“Heh?” Kaito rubbed his head, damn his sensei really didn’t hold back, and felt a lump started to form. “I saw you stare at her at one time while she was in the target range. You know that blond bombshell-, okay, okay,” he raised his hand in surrender as his sensei, and this time the chairman as well, made a gesture to beat him up good. “Well, you even named your first brat before her, eh?” his head motioned to the eldest child who was listening intently to his every word.

“Oh?” Kaname blandly spoke but the aura escaping from him, which made the room chill a great deal, exhibited his overwhelming displeasure at that knowledge. It immediately made the other occupants stay still. Toga was suddenly alert but did nothing as he knew the reason behind it, just like Kaito though the young hunter refused to show that he was fazed. The silverette only cursed inwardly, ‘Damn stupid Kaito. Die! Die! Die!’

“No! I don’t kno-, ah…” Zero remembered watching some new hunters do their practice, observing their skills. He can vaguely recall a, indeed perhaps, good-looking blond shooting at the targets though sadly her aim was not as pretty as her. He frowned at Kaito, “Don’t twist the facts, you stupid oaf. Weren’t you the one ogling her?” he let out a harsh sigh, “Che, must have been dumped already.” He was internally relieved when he was finally able to breathe easy as the pureblood’s aura rescinded from him.

“Excuse me? Me? Dumped? Me? You don’t know who you’re talking to, chap.” He waved his hand in this dismissal. “It’s women that can’t get their hands off me,” he even grinned before saying, “My big buddy here is more than capable in satisfying any woman.”

“Kaito-kun, for the last time, mind your words! There’re children here!” the ex-hunter scolded. It was rare to see him irritated.

“What? I-,” when he saw the older dark-haired children stared at him with comprehension in their eyes, he guiltily gave up, “Fine, fine, sorry, sorry.” how did these children even understood what he was saying?
When everyone was settled, and Kaito’s crass mouth was sealed and silenced for the meantime, Toga turned again to his silverette student. He stared at him for a long time. “I will not tell you how to live or what to do with your life, boy. As long as you’re determined and decided that you’ll face everything and not regret what you did, then I guess I will support you,” then glancing at Kaname, “no matter what you decided or… or who you chose to be with. It’s your damn life after all. Live however you wanted.” His words surprised Zero and earned him a soft smile from the chairman.

The silverette wanted to say something but he can’t seem to find the words. He was even more startled when his sensei ruffled his silver tresses like how he used to when he was young. “Sensei.”

“It’s okay, kid, tell me next time. I need to show Kaito where he’ll be staying in for the rest of the year.”

“Eh, you’ll really be teaching here?” Zero arched one silver eyebrow, “Seriously?”

“That’s right, my dear Zero. Feel free to call me Takamiya-sensei, shishou or greatsensei-sama.” His dark hazel eyes were bright with glee.

“Whatever, stupid Kaito.” The silverette only snorted, like hell he will.

“Enough, Kaito, we need to go.” The raven haired hunter dragged his older pupil who looked like he was about to spout some more smart retort.

They watched as the two hunters exited from the chairman’s office. Well, that went unbelievably well. They were amazed and Zero in particular felt extremely grateful at his sensei’s understanding. He knew that their discussion was by no means over but he knew that somehow, his master has already accepted their bizarre future and his unsaid would-be relationship with the vampire. He was also glad they didn’t ask how in the world this happened because he was sure as hell won’t answer.

They were still basking in relief when the angelic face of their eldest, who was staring with yearning at the closed door the hunters exited from, suddenly turned to them, sending a wave of dark brown threads to slam at Akira who was right beside her.

“Grandpa!!” she exclaimed in a very urgent and imploring tone that surprised the honey-haired chairman. “Can I attend the Night class? Please?” she pleaded as she put her hands together, as if in prayer, where she rested her chin to fix her large moist lilac eyes on the ex-hunter’s nervous hazel orbs.

“Eh? But Anne-chan, we don’t have an elementary division in this academy…” he explained with a confused, wavering smile.

“No, please let me attend the high school’s Night class. Please?” she then tackled her flustered grandpa in a hug. She can’t afford to miss this chance as she’s been waiting for it all her life! She begged like her life depended on it. “Please?”

The ex-hunter was troubled at this. He didn’t want to deny anything his cute granddaughter asked for but he knew this is impossible. “But we can’t let a child attend a high school class.” He tried to reason with his doe eyed grandchild but her pleading violet orbs were hard to resist.

“What are you saying, Anne?” Zero frowned at her request.

“Anne.” Kaname spoke with mild warning. Though he can hear the urgency in her voice and see the desperation in her elegant features, even he cannot grant her illogical request no matter how much he wanted to and he was also concerned at the reason for his daughter’s sudden interest in joining the Night class. He doesn’t know all of their quirks and have yet to master their behavior but he was sure
that she’s not the type to ask something so unreasonable unless there was a perfectly good excuse. He knew his daughter was no fool. She can be naïve but definitely not a fool and rarely display childishness.

“I can do something regarding that.” she hastily assured them, “I can control my time well so that will not be an issue. I’ll behave as well and study well, I promise.” The adults all started at her determination as they wondered what could be the cause of this great insistence. Kaname and Kaien caught each other’s eyes, both laced with concern.

“No fair! Me too!” Akira whined and raised his petition. Oddly, Kohaku didn’t admonish him as he too wanted to embark in that fun and promising experience. That would be infinitely better as it would mean a far more productive and effective use of their time.

When the twin silverettes spotted this, they decided that they want to be a part of it as well and so raised both their hands as they shouted, “Us! Us! Us!” while jumping up and down and tried their best to appeal to the now very flustered headmaster.

The distraught chairman looked at one child to another who were saying their pleas all at the same time. It made his head spin but then an idea came to him. It should be able to straighten out their problem. “Alright then, I will allow it as long as you are able to meet certain demands.” He said as he raised a finger, “First, you must pass all examinations that students take before transferring. Secondly, you must be able to attend in the appearance of a teenager. You said you could do this, right?” he looked at Anne who nodded, greatly focused on his every word. “Thirdly, you’ll need to follow every rules set by the academy as a student and lastly, if one of you failed the test, then all of you will not be able to attend the class.” He finished, greatly confident that with that, the children will not be able to attend and if they were by any chance then that would mean they’re fit to go to class and he’ll have nothing against it.

The ex-hunter and Zero were surprised when the children readily agreed to this, seemingly confident that such restrictions were nothing to them. They didn’t notice when Kaname turned to sigh as he was the only one among the three who knew the reason why. Looks like they’ll have some new addition to the Night class.

What intrigued him most was how they’ll be able to comply with the second rule. He looked at his eldest who now glowed with happiness, not at all bothered with any of the rules. There was a slight anticipation to see her other power. This will surely be interesting.

They watched as the children talked about their plans for the coming week when they come to class, their excitement and anticipation, as if the deal is as good as sealed which only Kaname knew really was.

The chairman was greatly amazed that all of them not only passed but perfected the examination. He looked a great deal at the youngest of them, who both beamed at him. Their grandpa didn’t know that Nao and Sui-chan already freshly finished their higher education and currently only taking a break before taking their first course because they were undecided as to what they wanted to learn and course to take and since they have all the time in the world, they were allowed to take their time and think about it carefully. On the elder children’s part, they almost completely forgotten how easy high school education was and thank goodness for the genius of their Hana-jiji, they were able to understand all subjects in a way that won’t make them forget so easily.

And now, they have their white Night class uniforms, school supplies and reference materials ready for their first class which happened to be this coming week. Just two more days! She couldn’t wait!

She sat down at the edge of their bed, the one that she shared with the two young silverettes, and flopped down on the sheets. Her great lilac orbs trained on the dark ceiling, fogged by peaceful memories that will come to pass in the future, a reminiscent smile on her lips.

“Don’t worry brat, you’re not going to be left behind,” he said laughingly as he wiped a damp clean towel on her cherubic face now messed up by horribly applied cosmetics. “I will wait for you,” his dark brown eyes normally laced with mischievousness or sarcasm now drowning in gentleness and kindness. “Yeah, yeah, yeah, I promise,” he added grinning as he pinched her nose.

Her smile turned a bit sad, “You said you’ll wait but it turns out like I always run after you.” She closed her eyes as some unwanted memories flooded her mind. No, she doesn’t want to think about the reason that made her learn that extremely hard spell or her hopelessness as the fact and Kohaku’s warning rushed back to her.

‘You cannot change the future’

I will. I must.
He woke up with a jolt that immediately sent him running to the adjacent bathroom of his room. His world turned upside down and it swirled around him which made his nausea even worse. Fuck, what a way to wake up. This gave him a forceful reminder of his wonderful situation right now. He groaned as he bent and hugged the porcelain bowl once more. Once he was finished throwing away what looked like only liquids down the drain, he weakly sat on the cold bathroom floor allowing him time to breathe and gather his strength. God, when will this stop? Should he ask Yuki? He didn’t think she’ll be able to help though and asking her might invite more trouble than what it was worth. He was glad that at least it’s a rest day so there was no need to hurry. He took his time to will away dizziness and thanked his luck that he slept in his room in the chairman’s residence where he had his own bathroom so at least he avoided having to clean after his own mess on top of feeling very worse already. He cursed the pureblood who made him go through all the trouble. *Fuck you, Kuran.*

There was a slight knock on his bedroom door before it was opened by a young female dark-haired vampire who rushed to his side soon after.

“Oh, otou-chan, are you okay? Is it the morning sickness? Oh dear, I’m so sorry about that.” She apologized very fast, while her charming face contorted with worry.

He smiled weakly at her finding it odd that she was apologizing for something that she indeed caused but absolutely not her fault. “I’m fine. Don’t worry.”

“Nii-san?” Ichiru’s voice rang outside the door. “Anne-chan why did you ru-, ah! Nii-san, what happened?” he started after spotting his brother’s very pale face.

He didn’t answer Ichiru as he found it strange to say that it was only morning sickness when he’s a man, and then he was reminded that he still haven’t talked to Ichiru regarding all this after the late afternoon chaos with the two hunters yesterday. Good thing, or not, that it’s a rest day today. He has all the time to talk to his twin today.

“Is it the infamous *morning sickness*? What do we do?” the younger Kiryū remarked with very slight amusement towards the younger girl.

“It will pass,” Zero answered it as he’s feeling better already.

Anne went back inside his room to look for a towel then came back to wet it before wiping his sweat covered forehead with it, guilt all over her exquisite face. He smiled at this. “Silly, it’s not your fault,” he said as he ruffled her dark tresses and shush her when she was about to say something with a *but* expression.

“Aw nii-san, you’re awfully sweet. I’m jealous.” Ichiru commented but despite his speech, he was greatly relieved at his brother’s gentleness towards the girl. He was one of the people who worried about his reaction towards the children. He can now say that it’s unfounded as he can already see affection and fondness appearing in his brother’s light lilac eyes.

“Shut up. Why are you even here?” Zero just snorted as life slowly returned color on his skin.

“To wake you of course. Anne-chan suddenly ran here so I thought something happened to you. Must be the mother-daughter connection.” He teased earning him a weak punch from Zero to which he only laughed at, it hardly hurt. “Let’s go down, the chairman wanted us to have a great breakfast together and even invited the kids. He’s threatening to cook so I’m begging you to save us and come
down to prepare breakfast.” He explained further with a sudden pleading look in his eyes.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah,” the hunter conceded, determined to prepare breakfast because the headmaster’s cooking could sometimes be so lethal that this porcelain bowl wouldn’t be enough to cure his victims but must take an emergency trip to the nearest hospital or clinic. He also didn’t want to have his children take in poison.

“Can you walk, otou-chan? If you’d like, I can just cook for you.” Anne offered.

He stared for a while, quite surprised at that knowledge since Kaname is the vampire king making his children royalty by right. He didn’t think that this little princess have been let into the kitchen. He only realized that he had raised a quizzical eye brow when Anne pouted and indignantly claimed, “I so can cook otou-chan, you taught me yourself.” As his thoughts was visible on his face.

“Ah, gomen, gomen. If that’s the case then you can just help me.” He said laughingly, feeling all his strength back. His offer was graciously accepted and after a quick preparation, they went down to the kitchen to find Yuki conversing with the small children and the pureblood sitting in with them. He stopped at the sight of Kaname and felt his cheeks burned while his heart beat faster. He willed it away, refusing to act like a girl seeing her crush just like Yuki who he noted had an easy air around her. He didn’t think that she’ll be able to get over it after just one day, that’s too fast and yet he felt no deception in her countenance which admittedly made him sigh in relief.

He watched as the boisterous young brunette tell a funny story that the two young silverettes acted on top of the table which made Yuki laugh and earned soft smiles from Kaien, Kaname and Kohaku. He felt something stir in him at the wonderfully peaceful image it presented. He immediately felt that he was wrong in thinking that it was a very bad morning as he felt only warmth and light peace inside him.

Kaname immediately walked towards the hunter when he came down. He also felt the earlier discomfort of his mate but since Anne already went to him with Ichiru, he didn’t think it wise for him to follow what with the violent reaction his mate might have at the sight of him. The younger children also wanted to come with Anne which the adults only distracted which led to the skit that was now being acted by their youngest.

“Are you alright now?” Kaname asked softly.

Zero would have normally scoffed at his show of concern but he found that he didn’t mind, not anymore, though he did turn away as he answered but they both know it was because of embarrassment and not resentment. “I’m fine.”

“Oh, I can’t watch this!” Ichiru turned away while dramatically shielding his eyes like he was being blinded.

The hunter was embarrassed when he realized that everyone’s eyes were watching them with varying expression of glee, smugness, and happiness. The chairman, the older children, Ichiru and even Yuki smiled or rather grinned at their exchanged to which he redden much to his chagrined.

“What are you looking at? Do you want breakfast or not?”

“Maybe I should really cook for you, otou-chan. After all, it’s your rest day as well. Just leave it to me!” Anne offered again. She really wanted to see their parents together coupled with the desire to see their otou-chan rest once in a while. There was also a small desire to demonstrate her culinary genius that surfaced.

“I can’t let a child cook alone in the kitchen.” Zero gently declined with a small smile.
“We’ll help! Let’s have a cooking show nee-chan!” Akira suggested while holding his twin’s hand up with his own to volunteer their participation. He wouldn’t miss a chance to show off.

Since the chairman insisted that he wanted to eat the lovely and no doubt delicious cooking of his beloved grandchildren which he’s almost too sure will be a piece of heaven, seconded by Yuki and Ichiru and with Kaname’s permission, Zero had no choice but to let the children prepare their breakfast though the little silverettes were not allowed to participate.

The three were given the three prefects’ white aprons, two noticeably whiter as they belong to Yuki and Ichiru who were both banned by Zero from helping out in the kitchen as they’re both walking disasters with their clumsiness. The adults with the two silverettes positioned on the other side of the kitchen counter as the three young ones on the other side prepared for their ‘morning cooking show’.

When they have prepared the necessary basic utensils, they faced the audience and promptly started an introduction just like a real television show.

“Ehem, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and thank you for attending the…the…princess… no… the Royal Cook Show!” Anne started to which the chairman, Yuki and Ichiru clapped. “So first, what should we cook today?” she turned to her assistants.

“Waffles!” exclaimed Akira / “Have more creativity!” Anne countered.
“Chocolat Chaud.” Kohaku suggested / “Be realistic!” the eldest reminded.
“Strawberry Parfaits!” that was Suiren / “That’s a dessert!” she said though she would love that.
“Pancakes!” Naoto voiced / “Go with Akira!” she sighed.

The adults chuckled at the chaos of this Royal Cook Show. Zero smiled at this, feeling much, much better than when he first woke up that morning.

“Step back, you amateurs.” Anne confidently began as she shook her head, “If it’s breakfast, of course, it can only be --- omelets!” she declared as she held a closed fist in front of her. Akira squawked in indignation as his suggestion was waived as simple and uncreative, Kohaku merely gave her a look before sighing in resignation while Naoto and Suiren pouted but with no real anger as they love omelets very much. “It’s not merely that, we only have ingredients for that, you two dolts.” She further explained when she faced the two dark-haired male who still stared at her suspiciously as though they were cheated.

The young hunter trembled as he fought the unrestrained laughter that wanted to escape from his lips as the three young ones, the younger two still muttering something about someone not listening or being unfair, prepared the ingredients to cook omelets that he didn’t realize that Kaname smiled as he watched him, relieved that he’s feeling better.

“Okay, so let us see what we have here, eggs, chives, salt, pepper… oh! I have found some bacon! With this we can create a simple bacon omelet. Let us start, my faithful subjects.” Anne motioned Akira and Kohaku to ready and mix the ingredients and also make some toasts and prepare some coffees and milk as she fried some bacon in the pan while giving out commentaries and in less than a few minutes emerged with a wonderful finished product which they repeated until there’s enough for everyone in the room.

They received claps and praises when they finished and have served newly cooked bacon omelets, toasts, coffees and milk. The chairman’s camera kept flashing at them and the food while saying it’s no doubt the most delicious delicacy in the world. They ate in animated ambience while Zero asked
Kaname in silence that the others, of course, strained their ears to hear.

“What are you doing here so early?” he asked without any real irritation in his voice, only wonder.

“The children requested that we spend the weekend with you. The youngest ones were threatening to cry for the whole night so I consented. They went to bed very early just to be here.” Then he added huskily, “My, aren’t you very much loved?”

He didn’t answer that and only fought the blush that threatened to show but when Kaname smiled, he doubted he succeeded.

“I demand we do something today! Because my grandchildren are going to attend class this coming week so they won’t be able to visit me anymore.” the ex-hunter declared as he dramatically dabbed a handkerchief on his very much dry eyes.

“Eh-!? What? How did that happen?” Yuki and Ichiru both burst out in question.

“Well, if you two didn’t escape yesterday and actually returned with the tea then you’d have known that they’re going to attend the Night class starting on Monday.” Zero explained without looking at them as he didn’t need to. He just knew that they’re also looking away while whistling, trying very much to look guiltless and innocent. He can’t believe that they actually ignored him last night as well, scared of being accused of bailing out on him which was very, very true as it was too obvious.

“So where should we go? Amusement Park? Mall? Beach?” came the chairman’s suggestion.

“Don’t you have work to do?” Ichiru queried to their guardian, “I saw the pile of papers in your office. I didn’t think you’ll be able to get away.” The ex-hunter crumpled his face towards his son who just gave him away. He didn’t want to be reminded of that!

“Aw! I already made plans with Yori-chan today. Sorry~” Yuki regretfully imparted as she was invited to go shopping by her best friend for new coats as it’s getting colder and winter will be coming in a few months though she suspected that it was because Yori-chan detected her sadness and invited her out to cheer her up.

“I also have a date.” informed Ichiru and they didn’t ask about that since Ichiru always have a date.

Yuki suddenly remembered something that made her meet her eldest niece’s eyes who looked up at that statement. The teenage brunette then looked intently at Ichiru who obliviously ate his breakfast. Hmmmmm, should she advise her dear adopted-brother that he shouldn’t go out too much as it might anger his future spouse? Then she perked up the idea that maybe… maybe the glares are because of this! Ichiru has always been sweet on the girls and during crossovers, he opted in to using his charms to ensure that the girls will not go out of line whereas Zero favored reigning them with fear, while she… she… no, no, no the discussion is not about that… ehem… so, is it possible that the vampire was actually jealous? Oh gosh! How cute!!!

She didn’t realize that everyone was actually staring at her since she’s trembling as she fought against breaking out in fits of giggles. They found her very weird whereas Anne smiled as she thought of the same topic.

“Yuki, go to the bathroom if you can’t hold it in.” Zero simply said.

“Hey! It’s not like that!” Yuki retaliated as she blushed. She just lost herself in her delusions in front of everyone, even in front of Kaname-senpai who smiled at her. She cleared her throat. “So me and Ichiru won’t be able to go but perhaps next time.” She voiced to divert the conversation.
“And the chairman.” Ichiru reminded their guardian of his work who looked at him again with a dramatically horrified expression.

That made Zero look up from his food as he came to the same conclusion as everyone else now currently grinning at him. Kaname was trying not to smile as he continued to eat his food; he didn’t know if they really did have plans or are just letting them be alone by themselves but nevertheless, he felt happy that he’ll be able to spend time with his hunter and his children alone. He’s going to make sure that he’ll be able to have as much time with the silverette as possible.

“But… but aren’t they allergic to the sun?” Zero asked, trying not to look flustered. He didn’t prepare his heart for any possible dates when he woke up this morning so it’s currently beating as if there’s no tomorrow.

“Oh, don’t worry about us, otou-chan; the sun never bothered us even when we were younger, maybe because of otou-chan’s blood or because we’re too powerful to be affected. In any case, we love going out!” Anne informed brightly which made Kaname smile internally.

“What about Kaname?” Zero started when he accidentally mentioned the pureblood’s name in haste and it looked like he was not the only one affected as Kaname smiled almost too happily while he informed that he didn’t mind the sun as well.

The pureblood didn’t lie when he said that because ever since he bonded with his hunter, he found that he can tolerate sunlight more and more and he believed that is because of the silverette’s blood. He’ll only continue to get stronger as Zero’s blood’s power will also affect him.

Zero was trapped and he didn’t want to deny what the children so obviously wished as they stared at him with stars in their eyes nor did he want to act like a coy young maiden refusing a date so he consented and plans were made to go to the amusement park, as per the children’s request, later that day.

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His feet felt heavy and for the first time since it started, he actually wished that he really did feel bad so he can have an honest excuse to back out from the promise he made that morning. Zero sighed, remembering the burst of bright auras from the children that they emitted that the adults got covered by warm sensation when they sealed the deal of going out today. The hunter didn’t like the idea of suddenly bailing out on them and see the undoubtedly disappointed looks in their eyes.

There’s no going back. He decided to be a man who honored his words. It’s shameful of him to break his promise because of the simple thought of not wanting to see the pureblood who makes him act like a crazy love-struck teenager, though a small part of his mind taunted that he acted like that because he’s in fact in love with the vampire. He shook that thought away and prepared to leave for the Moon dorm.

He was about to open the door out of the chairman’s house when the voices of three annoying overgrown children that were sadly classified as adults came cheering at him.

“Zero, you should wear something better! It’s a date!” Yuki exclaimed, her voice oozing with suppressed laughter while fussing at his clothing, straightening his already straightened collar and smoothening his crumple-free jacket.
“Nii-san, always remember to compliment your date. Don’t forget the basic of the basics.” Ichiru advised and it was almost believable that he’s saying it with real seriousness had the twinkle in his eyes didn’t betray his teasing thoughts.

“Son, you’re already at that age but I worry about you so take this,” the ex-hunter cautioned in a serious voice without any hint of that irritating teasing glee in his eyes or voice unlike Yuki’s or Ichiru’s. Zero almost believed his sincere actions until the silverette felt him slipping something on his hand which the chairman trapped between his own. “You don’t need to come home tonight.” a vein popped when he saw that the thing his guardian slipped on his hand was a single sachet of condom.

When he looked up, the three had already run away from him and had hidden behind a wall. The chairman even waved a white handkerchief in the air in a dramatic farewell, “Goodbye son! Have a great day AND evening!” he shouted loudly to reach the seething silver-haired hunter.

Zero threw the condom he received towards his fool of a guardian which hit the giver square on the face before he stomped out of the madhouse.

Seriously, every last one of them! It’s giving him a headache! What were they thinking? It’s not even a date alone with Kaname and it’s too late for that thing…. He shook his head, half horrified at his own thoughts. He tried not to blush at this; he cursed when he felt that it was all he ever did since two days ago. I’m going nuts! He instead turned his thoughts to his irritation towards the three stupid adults. He really wanted to strangle them especially the chairman if only he was not pressed for time as the promised time to meet already passed. The children are surely waiting for him so he decided that he won’t forget and shall pound the chairman once he comes back.

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Beautiful melody from the grand piano filled the lounge as Anne played one of her chichiue’s favorite sonatas while the other four children were sprawled on the floor. Kohaku read while Akira supervised the silverette twin’s drawing, lying on their stomach in a circular form as they did. They’re currently waiting for their otou-chan to show up so she decided to occupy herself and the others by playing some notes.

Kaname sat on the armchair by the fireplace while he listened intently to the melody, with the rest of the Night class. Shiki peacefully slept between Ichijou and Rima, his head rested on the female model’s shoulder whereas Kain, Hanabus and Ruka listened while they sat on another sofa. The last two very much wondered how a brute like the hunter was able to raise an elegant lady like their little princess.

They still can’t fully accept it, though they now believe that Zero really is their beloved pureblood’s mate for Kaname-sama gathered his closest confidants to tell them of this fact. Both of them were in shock while the others were only quite surprised but accepted the fact without so much as a word. Ichijou even happily congratulated his friend, followed by Seiren, Rima, and Shiki’s poker faced well wishes, Kain’s small smile and their silence.

Though they didn’t react since this news was declared by their king in a way that silently demanded for their respect towards his silverette mate, and as the children of their beloved pureblood with that hunter quickly enchanted and captivated them, a small part of them can’t help but accept the pair that would cause such happy outcomes. It’s just unbelievable how such an equation produced these
When the sonata that Anne was playing ended, she smoothly began another without stopping; they
smiled as her graceful fingers continued producing beautiful melodies. Hanabusa and Ruka sighed.
It’s really hard to swallow the facts but they guessed they’ll be able to bear it if it’s like this, for the
outcome was not only the charming children but also their blissful leader.

They glanced at their pureblood king who had his eyes closed while his temple rested on the back of
his closed hand, his elbow on top of the arm rest, to listen silently with a serene smile and peaceful
expression on his face. He’s been wearing that expression a lot since yesterday; he’s clearly very
pleased and happy that it made such a difference in his aura and the dorm’s aura as a whole.
Everything was so lively, light and peaceful which was also caused by the little angels’ presence and
Kaname’s tranquil mien. They never saw their leader so at ease or visibly happy before. He always
wore a polite and indifferent guise and even the smile he’ll give his favorite female prefect seemed
like a cleverly constructed mask he made compared to the genuine smiles and expression he’s been
putting on since the kids’ arrival. It’s not lost to them that it’s ultimately the hunter who made their
king happy (though they would really rather die than accept it) and Kaname-sama’s happiness was
more important to them than their hate for the hunter.

Kain watched as the expression on his cousins’ faces turned from mild frown to resignation. He
smiled inwardly for he knew what was going on into his cousins’ mind as he worriedly watched for
their reaction and expression since the start of the confusing situation. He soundlessly sighed when
he saw the acceptance on their faces. Finally, he can rest assured that these two impulsive creatures
wouldn’t cause trouble for Kaname-sama and him.

Anne’s playing stopped when the two silverettes looked up from their masterpiece, which was far
from their expectation of childish scribbles but a detailed drawing of their current position, of their
father and the Night class’ intent listening to their sister’s playing, with Kaname’s eyes shut, Ichijou’s
overflowing happiness, Shiki’s slumber, Rima’s however-soft-still-poker-face expression, Ruka and
Hana’s musings and Kain’s small smile. The youngest twins suddenly stood up and run with their
hands in front of them to the door, which automatically opened and can only be done by Kaname or
any of the children, to exit the lounge. The older kids knew that their daddy is already near because
of the silverette twins’ reaction for they always heightened their senses every time their parents’
arrival time nears so they can be the first to meet and greet them.

“Otou-chan is here.” declared Anne as she stood up from her seat by the piano forte and went to the
door together with the older brunette twins to meet their silver parent.

When Zero opened the door of the dorm, not bothering to knock, he was greeted by the sight of the
youngest twins running to him with outstretched hands and immediately jumped at him even before
he was able to close the door.

“Woah!” the hunter’s exclamation was heard throughout the hall, “What are you two? Puppies?” he
chuckled, a quizzical brow arched slightly.

“Otou-chan! Otou-chan! You’re here!” Naoto happily exclaimed with his head snuggled on crook of
the silverette’s neck, tickling the hunter slightly with his hair in the process.

“You’re late! Again!” Suiren pouted, even putting her hands on both her sides to imitate an angry
spouse.

“Ah, gomen. I was held up by three idiots. Forgive me?” the hunter played along, though there was a
gorgeous smile instead of repentance on his face.
“Okay!” she giggled before wrapping her little arms around his neck.

This exchange was watched with smiles by the older children and Kaname. Akira joined the fray and was followed by Kohaku while Anne and Kaname walked behind them.

“Otou-chan! Are we going? Are we going now? Let’s go! Let’s go!” came Akira’s energetic greeting.

“Behave yourself Akira or we’ll leave you behind.” Anne teasingly warned to her very loud brother who instantly covered his mouth with his own hands while shaking his head. “That’s better.”

“Don’t be fooled, nee-chan, it won’t last.” Kohaku playfully advised.

“We’ll tie him to a post if he didn’t behave then; you have the rope with you?” their sister joked to which Kohaku nodded.

“I so can behave properly you know!” Akira squawked indignantly.

The female brunette gave an exaggerated gasp, “Akira, it’s alright to be loud sometimes but I will not forgive lying.” Anne even dramatically sighed.

“That’s enough now.” Kaname smiled before interfering when Akira was about to say his defense. “We won’t have much time if you continued.” he pat Akira’s head to pacify the now pouting child. “One of you should come with me. Zero won’t be able to walk properly while carrying you both.” he turned to the silverettes and took Suiren from his hunter’s arms, “Shall we go?” he asked his mate who only nodded. Anne took one of Kohaku and Akira’s hands, the latter already recovered and in danger of being too boisterous again.

Once they’re gone, the rest of the Night class who were peeking at them finally emerged from the lounge. There was a sigh of contentment that came from their vice-president’s lips. Ichijou is really happy with Kaname’s situation. He watched his friend’s unchanging listless expression and polite mask since their childhood that he began to worry for his heart and future. He was afraid that his heart has turned to stone, that it has become incapable of loving anyone or feeling happy so he was immensely relieved at the children’s appearance.

He knew long ago, since he’s been watching over Kaname, that his regard for the hunter has long been changed and that he was just lost on what to do or how to face those feelings. As much as he wanted to help, he himself was trapped in an unrequited love that he didn’t know how to address so he didn’t know what to advice his friend that was then unknowingly pining for the hunter. But now, everything seems to be in order and he’s happy for him. He believes that more than anyone else, Kaname deserves happiness what with everything he’s been through. It’s wonderful to see his expression change to different shades of happiness or peace and to see that air of contentment around him instead of the always alert and brooding look that made him stiff and severe looking. It satisfied him. He knew that Kaname’s happiness was just around the corner.

He sighed again but it was because of his own sad situation. He just remembered how unlikely that his feelings and love-life will have such wonderful outcomes like his friend’s. He has been trapped in an unrequited love for so long and only the feelings of the people in his life prevented him from showing it, let alone voicing his affections for that special person. He shook himself. He realized that he’s been musing for far too long so he started to prepare. There’s work to be done. After a while, he went to the door.

“Where are you going, Ichijou-san?” Kain asked as he spotted their vice-president wearing a hat.
“Running an errand.” The blond noble mysteriously and jovially smiled as he put in a pair of sunglasses.

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“Kyaaa~!”

“Oh my gosh! They're so handsome!!”

“Are they models?”

“Look at those children, so cute! They’re twins!”

“I think I just saw my future husband!”

“Do you think they’ll accept if I ask for one picture?”

“Look, the children are so cuuuuute!! Their siblings? Are they brothers as well?”

Zero’s ears were about to pop out because of the shrill voices that surrounded them as soon as they stepped out of the car. Kaname had them driven all the way to town but now, they’re in the middle of a short walk to the amusement park’s entrance so they’re unable to escape other peoples’ notice.

He grimaced as he looked up at the castle-like entrance and the amusement park’s sign. He’s been there once or twice but only by force. He remembered that the first time was when he and Ichiru came to the headmaster right after their tragedy. Their guardian invited all of them to go there in an attempt to cheer the twins up and to have a wonderful bonding time with him and Yuki and the result was plain disastrous. Yuki and Ichiru both ended up sick because on one of the extreme rides that was why they were restricted to the mild ones. He was only pissed off at that time but now that he think about it, the chairman always did his best to make them feel welcomed, even calling them son… he smiled, having second thoughts about that punishment he intended to give the blond ex-hunter.

A small hand caressed his face and he looked at Naoto who’s in his arms, “Are you alright, otou-chan?”

“Yeah.” he gave him a small smile for assurance.

When they’ve gotten the tickets that Kaname bought, who was followed by countless hungry-looking stares from women, they proceeded to the entrance.

People stared even more as they entered the park’s properties. Women of all ages ogled their group and some even nudged their companions to either turn their way or for encouragement to go to them and ask, no doubt, a picture together with the handsome brunette. It unnerved the hunter and immediately irritated him. He was already tempted to make a bait out of Kaname to draw the stares away while he takes the children around the park but he didn’t think the pureblood will actually consent and there’s a part of him that will kill first before he let any woman flirt with the pureblood that he, of course, silenced and brutally murdered.

The hunter watched as the three brunettes walked in front of them, totally unaffected by the giggles and the stares or the normally inaudible shutter sounds they still managed to hear because of their
vampire hearing. When he felt some more stares on their back and shutter sounds from afar, he looked at Kaname who gave his sweetest, most guileless smile, and wondered how he could not care and still remain as unaffected as ever.

He didn’t know that Kaname was untouched as he cleared his mind, very focused at the task at hand. The pureblood is determined to enjoy the day with his hunter and their children and refused to be bothered by anything as he swore that nothing will divert his attention from his family.
Revelations at the Oddest Places

“Don’t push me! I can’t get a clear shot!”

There was rustling from the leaves of the small bush that barely hid their huge group as the normally graceful and elegant Night class crammed behind the bundle of leaves that failed to conceal their hilarious position.

“Why are you guys even here?” asked the vice-president of the Night class to his companions; Shiki who’s only half-awake, Aido with overflowing determination and Kain with his face already expecting failure and punishment, all who stuck too close to him to avoid being expose since they’re still highly noticeable and very much recognizable even with their sunglasses and hats. Their sneaky attitude only made them look more suspicious and eye-catching.

“Because we do not trust that you’ll be able to do this smoothly! Look, you’re even too near. They’ll detect us!” hissed Hanabusa, his striking blue eyes, shielded by a pair of dark sports sunglasses, intent on the vampire couple who’re currently watching their children ride the merry-go-round (“Aren’t they too old for that?”).

“Did you think I never thought of that? Here!” Ichijou hissed back, he wore a shield type, dark violet colored sunglass while a black reporter’s cap hid his gold tresses, and handed a ring with a small red stone to the persistent blond. He regretted telling the others of the errand the chairman has informed him early that morning that he willingly and most eagerly accepted. That was to stalk their president’s family outing and make sure to take wonderful pictures of their bonding. Now, instead of him alone, all of them are here.

Aido and Kain, who both took off of their colored sunglasses to better look at the object, became slack-jawed after studying the ring. They looked at their vice-president with wide-eyes. “Ichijou-san, wha- how? Don’t tell me you-,” they looked back at the ring adorned by a blood stone then back to their vice president with disbelief clear in their eyes.

“Ahh! No! I just asked little Akira-kun how to sneak up undetected then he suddenly gave that to me.” He, of course, will never be audacious enough to ask for pure blood or blood stone. Never! He just asked the child who will less likely be suspicious of the question or would most likely know the answer so he went to the young brunette twin Akira and he was handed this as an answer. “I was told by Haku-kun that Akira-kun’s power is the creation of the most powerful barriers, the ultimate shield that will be able to conceal even the most powerful presence.”

“Heh-?” the blond genius eyed the blood stone with interest. “Like a force-field? Wow... as expected of Kaname-sama’s child.” He concluded with slight wonder regarding the other royals’ unique abilities. He imagined it’s as great as the other’s.

“Yup, anyway, with this, even Kaname will not be able to detect us as long as we don’t visibly appear to the naked eyes. So you guys go back already!” he insisted before pushing Aido’s face away with his hand.

“No! We’re already here so might as well but perhaps Kat should go back since he stands out like a sore thumb.”

The redhead was pissed off at that since it was his cousin who dragged him out to follow Ichijou and he only consented so he can watch over his overzealous relative who always manages to get tangled with troubles which always land his genius ass to punishment and, consequently, him as well
because of their relationship and his responsibility towards this little blond devil. He was about to say a retort when a snobbish snort which still managed to sound elegant came from behind them.

They turned their heads to Ruka who was sitting with Rima. Both were seated comfortably under a café umbrella with tea already ordered and served, not even bothering to hide or put in any disguised like the Night class’ men. “How ridiculous.” She commented snobbishly. Rima silently agreed.

“Ruka-chan, Rima-chan, they might see you!” Ichijou almost panicked when he saw how greatly the two stood out for their beauty attracted the attention of both men and women. Only her irritated aura prevented anyone from actually approaching their table. He was ignored and both continued to enjoy their teas, completely passing up the chance to look pathetic and disgraceful.

“Ah ha! I knew it!” the men blanched when they heard a loud and familiar feminine voice but immediately sighed in relief the moment they found that it only came from the female prefect. She has a mischievous grin playing on her plump pink lips.

“Yuki-chan, please don’t scare us like that. Oh and please hide quickly, they might spot you.” Ichijou requested, instantly feeling incredibly happy at the sight of the brunette.

“They’re already gone to go to the next ride. Don’t worry; I watched them go before coming here to make sure I wouldn’t be found.” She assured them, even making a ‘peace’ sign to which Ichijou smiled.

“Why are you even here? I thought Kaname-sama said you have plans with a friend?” Aido intervened.

“Yup, we’re finished with shopping but I heard some interesting whispers from the girls that came from here about several gorgeous men popping out here and a sighting of a certain famous model.” She motioned to Rima’s way. “So I came here. I knew you guys are up to something fun.” she smiled while explaining. “Yori-chan came back first. So I’ll- eh?” she stopped when she spotted something behind them and gaped at that.

Ichijou, Aido and Akatsuki followed her stare to reveal one Ichiru Kiryū smiling gorgeously down at his date, a blond beauty whose arms flirtatiously wrapped around the silverette’s. Yuki fought the laughter she felt at the absurd picture. She never saw Ichiru on any of his dates before but she found his expression absolutely phony and forced. It was not like him though he’s naturally very charming. There was just something in his eyes that’s completely off. Her eyes naturally travelled back to his future spouse to assess whether he felt anything towards the silverette already and was amazed at the dark expression he possesses.

She never saw Aido-senpai have this hostile expression before and that was saying something considering the many glares he already exchanged with Zero. It was a look that would send even his most faithful fan to run away. If only looks could kill, then Ichiru or that girl would be dead by now judging from his glower. ‘Oh brother dear, you just don’t know how deep you dug your own grave.’ she amusedly grinned.

Kain looked at his cousin with apprehension. Of course he knew of Hana’s affection towards the younger silverette though the blond adamantly denied it. He pointed it as merely glaring and only the effects of his hate towards the older twin but what Hanabusa didn’t know was that he didn’t always glare at Ichiru and was most of the time unknowingly caught wistfully staring with longing in his eyes after the younger silverette. He didn’t press his cousin for more but he didn’t know what to do now that he can see jealousy burn his cousin’s normally cool orbs, sadly contemplating how not even all his genius could solve the complex problems of the heart.
Ichijou was also worried. Being one of the most sensitive and observant of the feelings of everyone around him, he also knew and noticed Aido’s feelings and knowing the painful feeling of longing and jealousy just as well, he’s concerned for his blond friend.

“Are you all done yet? I think you just lost Kaname-sama completely.” Ruka’s voice shook all of them from their musings except Aido who still followed Ichiru’s date with venom in his cold aquamarine eyes. “If you lot are done with this ludicrous business then I would like help with my shopping.” she quickly grabbed Akatsuki’s arm to lead him away. Kain let himself be stirred away for even if he’s still worried about Aido, he can’t deny anything his love demands and so allowed his heart to drag him around for her shopping. He lamented how both he and his cousin never had much luck with love.

“Senri, wake up, we also need to go. The agency just called me. Hey, wake up. Hey~,” Rima followed while shaking the copper head, making both his round brown sunglass and fedora hat go out of place. When he stirred to look up at her, she proceeded and also dragged her male co-worker after she bid farewell to the vice-president.

“Wow~, that’s fast. I guess it’s just the three of us then. That’ll be easier, right? Ichijou-senpai, Aido-sen-, eh?” Yuki started. She and Ichijou just only realized that their other blond companion was already nowhere in sight. They looked at each other with worry and wonder in their eyes.

When he was met with big round sienna eyes, bright with glee and amusement, Ichijou was suddenly very aware that they’re alone together and was forced to realize the dangers following that or pains coupled with that.

Yuki wasn’t aware that her only companion was staring at her with strong desire hidden in his mysterious green eyes while she wondered where the blue-eyed blond is, with her chin resting between her index finger and thumb, her head tilting slightly as she plunge into deep thoughts and happy assumptions of the chaos he’ll cause to jeopardize her adopted-brother’s date.

He watched as she innocently conjured several happy accidents that may happen which may lead to something romantic later on, a smile playing on her lips. He followed her every move, her short dark-brown hair slightly being ruffled by the wind, her charming smile and the twinkle in her bright auburn orbs, getting captivated and entranced by each passing moment.

He has been in love with the female guardian for as long as he can remember. Though at first, she was only a normal human that their leader was curiously interested with but then as he watched that unwavering pure light grew up with her innocence, the strong spirit which refuses to be affected even when tangled with the darkness that surrounded her, her strong love for her adopted family and how she persistently did her best to cheer up the twins even when the older Kiryū rebuked her at first and watched her give her all especially in her duties as a guardian even with her clumsiness, his heart unknowingly got captured and he was already deeply in love with her before he even knew he was caught.

His heart was, of course, also broken the moment he realized his feelings for it was painfully clear that his king held the prefect’s heart that was why he never voiced it out. He never showed even an inkling of his true feelings, nothing that will betray his heart. He knew his regards will never be reciprocated and it will only be a burden to her as well as trouble for his friend, Kaname. So when the children and a new prospect appeared, his feelings were torn. He contemplated how much happiness Kaname will have, how Yuki will definitely be hurt by this and how he’ll finally have the chance he never thought will ever appear. He didn’t think that it will mean that Yuki will finally turn to him at this, but still, he felt that it’s the best chance he’ll ever get.

When he found out how Yuki forgave and accepted the relationship between the two most important
people in her life, he was bewitched once again by her strong and beautiful spirit. Her heart’s kindness and strength always seem to amaze him and he knew he didn’t make a mistake when he fell in love with her. She’ll forever be his only princess, his queen.

While staring at her, he decided that he’ll make his move now and he’ll make sure that when her heart was next captured, it will be by him.

“Oooooh dear, who should I go after? Zero or Ichiru? Which one will be more fun? Zero or Ichiru? Zero or Ichiru?” she muttered under her breath, completely oblivious of the promise Ichijou made while watching her slight indecision. She was only shaken out of her musings when a cap was placed on her head. When she looked up, she saw Ichijou looked down on her with a different kind of smile on his lips (is that a seductive smile?) and a captivating look in his eyes. She blinked and found herself a bit mesmerized by his green eyes. She has always thought that vice-president Ichijou was as mysterious as the president of the Night class but she never realized how manly he looked because of the childishly cheerful expression he always wore but she didn’t think him shallow; rather, she always felt that there’s something more in him than he allowed others to see.

“Wear this so that they’ll not recognize you.” He offered before also putting the pair of dark sunglasses he wore on her. They’re so close when he did that that he unknowingly made the prefect’s heart beat a bit faster. “I’m glad,” Yuki frowned, “that you’re feeling all better, I was worried about you.”

Yuki was caught off guard at the looked he gave her, with such sincerity and tenderness, that she slightly gaped. He seems so different somehow and there was something in the way he said this that made her blush and heart beat even faster. She didn’t know what… it’s like suddenly, she’s looking at a man.

She didn’t get to think more for he suddenly grabbed her hand to guide her to search for their pureblood friend though it was not lost to her how warm his hand on hers felt… and how right.

The oblivious family of seven continued on to their jolly trip. They went from one ride to another, unaware that their stalkers, now reduced to two persistent beings, have already caught up with them and are currently taking pictures of their every moment - Yuki very much wanted to capture an extremely sweet one for personal pleasure and as a hidden weapon against Zero later on - as per the idiot chairman’s request.

Their every move was still followed by a bunch of starry-eyed women and the hunter still blamed it on the handsome brunette quietly eating as they stopped for lunch to take a break in a small family restaurant inside the park, oblivious to the stares his own good looks earned. He waived and ignored the irritation this has caused him both because he’s never the type to want attention especially from an annoying bunch and also because of the feeling arising from this which he didn’t want to call jealousy.

The silverette just busied himself in looking after the children. Currently, he’s wiping Suiren’s mouth, or rather face, which was dirtied after eating her ice cream. “How did you get this dirty just after eating?” he laughingly asked his youngest while gently rubbing a wet towel over her lips and cheeks. She energetically answered that she wanted to eat as much and as fast as possible so they’ll have more time to play. He awarded her a soft smiled.
After eating, they went back to the rides. They spotted a target shooting booth that caught the hunter’s attention. With the children’s cheer and encouragement, he played it and shot the moving cardboard targets with great precision. The perfect score he got earned him a prize stuffed toy animal. He played twice to get two prizes which he gave to his youngest twin.

The three young brunettes also played, displaying great accuracy, especially Akira, which made Kaname and Zero look at each other. All three was able to hit all the targets but only Akira was able to hit all targets in the exact same place, at the very center. This greatly impressed his parents.

“I win!” Akira exclaimed throwing his hands in the air.

“The last time I checked, you only need to shoot them all, not shoot them all at the center, Akira, so we all won.” Kohaku wryly reminded his twin.

“You’ve been using guns all your life so of course you’re good at it. But Kohaku and I have been using katanas so we’re also great at having been able to shoot all targets despite that, ne~ otou-chan?” the eldest child pouted as she found justification and turned to Zero.

“Yes, you all did a great job,” he praised to placate their eldest, “though why is Akira so good at this?”

“He’s been using twin guns as his anti-vampire weapon all his life.” Kohaku explained before turning to the shop keeper, who can’t follow the discussion, to retrieve their prizes.


Zero and Kaname were then again reminded of this fact about their children and it did made sense that if Anne can wield and possesses an anti-vampire weapon, then it’s the same for the rest of them.

“So all of you have your own anti-vampire weapon?” Kaname asked while they continued to walk. The youngest walked on their own and are looking very cute as they hugged the stuffed toys they were given that are a lot bigger than them.

“Um! I wield a single katana, White Night -Byakuya. Akira has twin guns Blood Moon -Akatsuki, Kohaku favored twin swords, Crimson Lotus - Guren, there’s Nao’s katar which is Yoarashi or Night Storm and Suiren’s white chain she called Hakushi or White Death.” Anne further expounded.

Zero can’t decide if he really like the idea of his children carrying and being trained with weapons already at such an early age. “Isn’t it too early for you to be carrying weapons?” he frowned.

Kaname only then just realized that he hasn’t let on the fact of their children’s true age and the fact about their growth process. When it was explained, Zero was dumbfounded. His hunter stared at him with wide eyes which he found really cute and he realized that he has not seen much of the silverette’s expression, other than glares, stares and glowers, just as much as the hunter not knowing his. He has seen very little of his mate’s charming smile and he’s very much determined to see it all.

“Wow…” Zero stared, not knowing what to say. “ten years, huh… so it will take ten years before you go out of your diapers?” he asked but more to himself. He wondered how hard it will be to raise them all as infants for ten years though he knows that he didn’t need to worry about ten years’ worth of diapers since he’s very sure Kaname is more than capable of handling financial matters.

“Ah.” The children laughed at their father’s words. Clearly, clarification was needed. “Don’t worry about that, otou-chan. It’s not like that. Our growth is normal up until our bodies turn about three but it will stay like that for 28 years...” Anne began, trying not to sound depress. When she saw the
confusion, she further explained. “It’s still because of our blood. It’s a powerful blood that has been
designed to survive or rather has the strong desire to survive. Because our blood was a mixed with
Suzaku’s blood properties and strong pure blood, we’ll grow up normally until we have a body that
would be capable to fight and protect ourselves. At three, we at least have enough muscle to run and
wield a weapon so that’s why we stopped growing normally afterwards. Our blood is assured that
we’ll be capable of warding off any enemies. Well, it was what Hana-jiji said. He handles studying
hybrids’ case.” she smiled when she remembered that one of the reason his uncle is handling their
case was also for his own kids because his children - Fuji, Nobara and Sakura are hybrids like them.
“It’s not clear though why it took us 28 years before our body grew up again… perhaps because it
was supposed to be naturally ten mortal years to one hybrid’s year but because of our Suzaku’s
blood’s power sped up the process for the first three years, we became stuck to a three years old’s
body to spend our natural years…” she shrugged, not wanting to be reminded of their immensely
long life-span. “Oh well, the important thing is, we’ll be together for a long time!” she turned to hug
Zero who was inwardly worried for her forcefully cheerful smile didn’t go unnoticed. He looked at
Kaname who seemed to understand and there was a looked in his burgundy eyes that hinted a talk
between them later on. He consented so he allowed the topic to be shifted.

All four younger children did their best to return to the peaceful and joyous ambience they were
enjoying moments ago when they sensed their older sister’s dampened spirits. She allowed herself to
forget it and enjoyed their family date. They all then decided to see the haunted house which Zero
doubted will scare vampires, true creatures of the night, like them.

They entered the dark place which contained plastic imitations of ghosts, ghouls, decapitated human
parts and other things that didn’t remotely impress him. Not even the scary background music or
effects had any impact and he only watched after the children walking before them. The silverette
twin held each other’s hands while each of their other free arms hinged to their older brothers’ which
are on either side of them (the stuffed toys safely tucked somewhere safe in another dimension)while
Anne walked after them, her hands behind her back like she was walking in a garden and not in a
place full of scary things.

As they wandered inside, now in a place that resembles a cemetery while the children giggled when
zombies tried to approach them, he let himself be immersed as thoughts of his future came to mind.
He already agreed to accept his fate, his child that is most likely already alive and is oddly currently
walking in front of him, and consequently his life with the vampire who was just right beside him.

He realized that there are still some things he hasn’t thought of yet. He agreed to have his children
but what does it entail? They’re mates but are they lovers? He knows and it’s blaringly obvious what
it is that he wanted and wished for but does Kaname feels the same? Then it hit him that maybe
Kaname only wanted him for the children and not because he has feelings for him. He suddenly felt
dizzy and wretched but he was immediately jolted out of his misery when a hand and fingers slipped
to intertwine with his own. Zero looked at Kaname’s dazzling and quiet smile which he can clearly
see despite the dark surrounding thanks to his enhanced vampire sight. He felt like he drowned at
that moment for he can clearly see the answer in those clear wine-colored eyes that looked tenderly at
him. His pureblood squeezed his hand slightly and came close to whisper to him.

“What were you thinking about? You had a painful look on your face, what is it?” he asked in a very
gentle voice.

Zero always scoffed at Kaname’s sweet way of addressing Yuki, always thinking how deceptive it
was but he’s completely lost now that it’s directed to him. He didn’t want to be affected but he is
because it didn’t sound or feel fabricated but genuine and sincere. He allowed himself to smile
inwardly but he didn’t let it show. Instead, he just turned to him and said in a sarcastic tone that lost
all power and rudeness to leave only his stubbornness at showing affection which Kaname, of
course, knew given that his hunter didn’t let go of his hand but closed his fingers around his, “What, were you watching me?”

“Every movement.” his smile became even more magnificent at his hunter’s reaction.

“Hmph,” the silverette didn’t answer anymore since he didn’t know what to say. He knew he’ll never win the battle of words with this smart ass anyway so they walked in silence, letting their hands warm each other’s before forcing to let go once they reached the exit.

His hand twitched when the cool wind made it cold but his heart stayed warm as he found his answers.

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“Kyaaa!!” it was an honestly horrified exclamation that came from a teary-eyed brunette who eagerly and foolishly followed their targets inside a horror mansion. She momentarily forgot her fright of ghosts and such paranormal creatures as thoughts of the romantic happenings that their camera might capture, that such booths creates between couples, filled her mind. She completely forgot everything, even the fact that there was no way that either Kaname-senpai or Zero will be scared.

“Yuki-chan, please calm down. It’s okay, they’re not real.” Ichijou tried to calm the terrified prefect. He knew of her fear and would have stopped her had she not run in first shouting gleefully ‘We have a scoop!’ like some paparazzi only to be stopped dead by the sight of a crawling bloody mummy. She run deeper inside in an attempt to get away when it tried to grabbed her foot only to be greeted by other ghostly creatures that are strangely eager to scare. Perhaps it was because of the unaffected group before them, with children who merely giggled, who passed by them nonchalantly.

“Let me out! Let me out! Help me! Ichijou-senpai!” She yelled not understanding anything for she clamped her hands on her ears to drown the eerie sounds. She jumped when a shrill scream of a woman came behind her and a hand held her shoulder. “Kyaa!” she blurted and threw her hands in the air before thoughtlessly wrapping them around Ichijou’s back. She didn’t let go and he didn’t move for she tightened her hug as much as she can as if her life depended on it.

Ichijou stiffened as he was crushed in an embrace and he couldn’t bring himself to move, either because she held him so tight that he can’t or in fear of ending it abruptly, he can’t decide. He only knew that he felt grateful for the innocent opportunity he was given. It was the first time he smelled the lovely fragrance of her hair that he tried very hard not to inhale her scent too obviously or to hug her incredibly soft body in the same fashion that would most likely reveal his hidden feelings of affection, though he allowed himself to carefully stroke her hair. He didn’t do anything much as he immersed himself in the joy that came at being hugged by his beloved which unknowingly made his heart beat too fast enough for even Yuki, whose ear was pressed against his chest, to hear.

She was at first lost in her own fright that she didn’t realize what she just did or to whom the strong warm body she pressed herself against belonged to. She also didn’t register the comforting smell of new books and fresh linens that she inhaled, or quickly hear that there’s a sound of beating drums she can hear nearby, very, very near. When it registered to her where the warmth, the smell and the sound which was in fact a heart beating very wildly, came from, she immediately looked up to find the angelic face of the vice-president of the Moon dorm looking down at her with captivating lights swimming in his emerald-green eyes. She caught her breath as she grasped just how close her face was to his and how a tip-toe will enable her to fully kiss his alluring, smiling lips. She blushed and
suddenly, her heart beat a tad faster than it already is and not because of fright but because of other things she didn’t have the right mind to think about at the moment.

“Are you quite alright, Yuki-chan?” He finally asked when they already spent minutes only staring at each other’s eyes. He didn’t trust himself not to bend down to do what he’s been desiring to accomplish since years ago.

She blushed even more furiously and the words got clogged in her throat so she only nodded, completely forgetting why they were hugging in the first place. She let go very slowly, fast feeling disappointment when her body felt cold without his. They stood in awkward silence for only a minute before Ichijou took her hand in his again which made Yuki perked up. The warmth she oddly missed came back to her and her heart thumped ever so fast but in constant beat this time as she was guided, the scary background noise and scary costumes becoming blurred nonsense, and she simply focused her eyes to the soft golden tresses swaying slightly as they made their way to the exit.

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‘It's official; I’ve completely lost my mind.’

This depressing thought came from the doleful blond currently sitting on a bench inside the amusement park. He dispiritedly looked up in the sky, thankful that at least the sun was not high up, wondering why did he ended up this hurt when normally he should have been sleeping peacefully and snuggly on his bed. If only he had stayed in bed and didn’t let his nosiness get the better of him then he’ll be happily clueless regarding that guy’s date.

He groaned, completely ignoring the many stares he’s been receiving since earlier from all the women who have been trying to get his attention ever since they saw him. Though it would have been more welcome in different situations but not now, not when he feels like his heart is not with him but has run away to wherever that infuriating silverette is.

He’s completely lost, emotionally and literally. He instinctively followed that person with his tasteless date when they moved to a different location. When he realized what he was doing or what he was intending to do which was to drag Ichiru somewhere with him and give him a good beating for reasons he didn’t want to explain, he immediately stopped himself just in time before doing something he’ll not be able to alter and resumed his search for Ichijou or that female prefect. He tried sensing their presence and mentally kicked himself when he remembered that they’re using a very strong barrier that will make them undetectable.

He felt stupid and tired. Why did he even go out? It’s so pointless to even linger around knowing he’ll not be able to sense his companions and he might even be spotted by Kaname-sama if he loitered around but he can’t bring himself to go back with the knowledge that that bastard is somewhere around here together with some unknown girl. It made his blood boil that he can’t even find the strength to stand or will to leave.

“I’m doomed…” for life. He just knew it. He’s done for as he felt his heart took a permanent residence in that silverette’s arms since long ago. Of course, he’s not stupid or he won’t be called a genius. He knew perfectly well that what he felt towards the younger Kiryū was not hatred and he has long identified that feeling but refused to give it a name. He just can’t accept the fact that he has fallen hard for a human male with hunter’s blood at that! Not to mention he shares the visage of that aggravating hunter. He’s human, with hunter’s blood, a man who normally won’t be able to give
heirs, and with Zero’s face on top of all that, so why? Why is it that no reasons are enough to put an end to his feelings? Why even with that does he still see that face every freaking time he wakes up or still envisions that person with him all through his long vampire life? Why the itch in his chest that he thought was evanescent continued to grow to become a gaping hole as his heart was stolen?

He sighed and leaned his head on top of the bench’s rail.

He looked back on the moment he first met the silverette. He was prejudice at him for being the twin brother of the audacious hunter who dared attack their beloved Kaname-sama. He instantly hated him and even resolved to see him in pain when he realized how important he is to that older twin of his so he began observing him from afar. It didn’t take him long to see what he was looking for because Ichiru was really weak and sickly as a child and even when he became a bit healthier as he grew up, he was still not as strong as he would like. He would still get sick and have asthma attacks from time to time.

He was first disgusted at how incredibly frail that child was. It only shows how pathetic and delicate a human’s life is, but it all changed when he saw something else in him. As he continued on to watch him, he realized that Ichiru was incredibly frail but only physically for he refused to succumb to his weakness, his spirit stronger than anyone he knew.

Once, there was a race that their class needed to do as part of their academic activity. Aido was skeptical and he wondered why, when he could easily avoid participating by presenting a very much valid medical certificate, did he still run? He couldn’t understand why he would go through all the trouble. Why does he even try? Aido knew that more than anyone else, Ichiru knew his health and frailty so why won’t he just give up?

The blond watched him become extremely red faced because of the effort and so breathless that it made the teachers very worried and of course his brother, the chairman, and Yuki. They were very concerned for they were unaware of his joining the race because of a business by the hunter’s association.

Aido was stunned at his brilliance then. He watched as others shouted at him to stop but the stubborn silver-head only breathlessly shouted back that he can do it while he continued to run, finishing it regardless of the outcome.

He’ll never forget that day when everyone fussed at a very flushed Ichiru who was immediately sent to the clinic while being scolded by Kaien Cross, Zero and Yuki but still managing a proud, happy and breathless laugh. He was of course dead last and though he lost the race, he won his heart.

He was caught ever since that day and he was more ensnarled as he continued to watch him like the time he mastered kendo. Aido would watch him practice every night and he’ll practice very hard enough to develop calluses and has labored breathing. Ichiru was no genius, especially when it comes to fighting, that was why he needed great practice but the fact that he’s fragile in body, ability and talents never seemed to daunt him but rather, it made him stronger.

The nights he watched the silverette as he struggled with his sickly body and asthma was even more frequent and the blond knew that he was in great pain for it caused the young prefect to shed some tears but he would stand amazed as his frail and feeble light refused to go out even to the very end.

He never saw anyone as beautiful and sprightly as Ichiru that was why his anger towards the older brother grew when he noticed the depressed look Ichiru would have every time his older twin’s magnificence in everything was proven from time and time again. He knew Ichiru never hated Zero for it because it’s not his brother’s fault that he’s simply great whereas he’s pathetically weak but still, Aido never liked how the young silverette would often despairingly laugh and sigh at his own
hopelessness when he thought no one was looking. Aido made a silent promise then that he’ll stay and watch over Ichiru no matter what.

He didn’t tell anyone of his feelings or his promise. He continued on to watch over the younger Kiryū but he regretted it when he once witness a scene that crushed his heart into pieces and gave him a harsh reminder of who he’s in love with. It was when he first gathered all his courage to confess only to see Ichiru kissing a girl in the Academy woods. His genius ass came crushing down the earth and he felt his soul lost to him. He was reminded that he’s in love with a man.

“Ah. Of course.” He’s really kidding himself. He long knew he loves him and has been long resolved to have him but what prevented him is the simple fear of getting rejected because he knew and it’s a well-known fact that Ichiru is a lady’s man. His charm enamored many of the Day class students and he just knew the possible reactions he’ll have if a man, a vampire on top of that, will confess to him.

Yes, he’s incredibly frightened that there will ever be a time when he’ll be hated by the silverette, that disgust will ever be reflected in his very charming lilac orbs or that he’ll ever scurry away at the sight of him. Being rejected will be the worst and every time he’ll try to gather his courage again to confess, these fears will always trample it.

He groaned, feeling more disheartened and dejected after remembering why he loved the silverette and why until now, he still didn’t have him even though he knew that this is the only love he’ll ever feel and want.

The hunter watched the spectacular shift of colors as soft gold, orange, lilac and light blue streaks painted the heavens as the sun slowly descended from its high throne in the sky from their seat inside the car of the amusement park’s Ferris Wheel. It’s a scene that will take anyone’s breath away but instead of the view, the pureblood watched him, hypnotized as enchanting silver strands danced with the wind coming from the open window of their cabled-car, the hunter’s hair color almost indistinguishable as it reflected the light of the setting sun.

He trailed his burgundy eyes on the silverette’s perfect profile that was exposed to him, as his hunter looked out the window to stare at the spellbinding view, to his beautiful lilac orbs which reflects fascination with the setting sun. Kaname was honestly more enraptured by his mate’s gorgeous features than the sunset that he didn’t make a move to look anywhere else but at Zero, uncharacteristically smiling broadly for he found it a great prospect if it is his face that he’ll come to greet every morning across the breakfast table for the rest of his given life.

His stare must have finally unnerved his hunter since he finally turned to look at him, something he’s been clearly avoiding ever since their children pushed them inside to be alone while the kids rode the car that was next after theirs. He must be feeling awkward for they haven’t been privately alone ever since that time in his room. They didn’t say anything and simply looked in each other’s eyes, knowing there were so many things to be discussed but no words needed to settle it for there was only the need to ascertain the feelings they knew they’ve both been trying to run away from since months ago. Once it’s been confirmed then everything else will follow.

The only thing is how to start confirming these feelings.
Kaname knew he needed to start but he didn’t want to break the companionable silence he’s been having with his mate. He’s already contented just by watching the colors of the skies be reflected in his eyes but their time is short and their ride will soon come to a swift end.

And as if on cue, they sensed a surge of aura from behind them and Anne’s presence was felt, the Ferris Wheel’s rotation stopped abruptly causing quite a commotion before a quiet announcement for calm was issued shortly. He smiled at his older daughter’s dramatic antics and approach at obviously trying to help them have a lovely and longer time alone by stopping the ride with their car coincidentally (or not) at the very top, allowing them with the best view possible.

“I guess it’s her way of saying that we should advance already.” Kaname began, not intending to waste his princess’ gift.

The hunter tensed just a bit because he’s always been the type to be awkward at tête-à-têtes. He’s never been good with words and was bad at expressing his feelings so knowing what was to come made him very nervous, more nervous than what he would like. Luckily for him, the pureblood knows this. Kaname smiled at his uneasiness, marveling how even hordes of Es never made his mate falter whereas a simple conversation made him this jittery.

“Zero,” he started again, “I believe it’s now the time to face everything before us. I know you’re well aware of what accepting your and my child means and where that put us. I know you understand this but I shall never forgive myself should you have any doubts left of my feelings for you.” He intently looked into the bright lilac eyes that bellied nervousness and anticipation, “Surely you must know now that I have long since loved you.”

He went very still and though he knew it will come, Zero still blushed and was still caught off guard; he expressed it all so smoothly. He was even half-expecting (or rather, wishing) a plane to crash on them or something, the way perfect moments are ruined by the most bizarre things just so he can escape this very awkward moment. But it happened without a hitch.

He wanted to say something to rebuke what he said. Despite all he has seen and the evidence he was given, it’s all too good, too perfect that it’s somehow unbelievable to his ears which made it very afraid to trust his words though part of him was certainly singing and sighing in relief as his feelings are now apparently answered while another part searched Kaname’s eyes for any sign of dishonesty.

He wanted to make sure before it’s too late because he just knew that he’ll believe whatever this vampire says even if deception clearly reflected in his eyes later on. He knew that he’ll never be able to turn back once he’s given an answer though another part of him chided him and shouted that he never stood a chance. That even now, he’s completely and irrevocably ensnared by this pureblood.

“Is it that hard to believe?” Kaname’s hurt voice jarred him out of his internal struggle and he immediately looked up to meet the sad and sincere burgundy eyes, eyes that were unreadable to everyone only to lay bare to him, “Of course, who would when I’ve treated you horribly in the past.” that was the only moment he looked away to look at the sun that almost completely set. “It’s not love at first sight and to be honest with you, I do not know when it started or how it began. How an extremely cheeky hunter,” Zero glared at him which he only answered with a smile, “managed to capture my heart when no one else did. I asked myself over and over again that very same question.”

there was a pause before he turned back to face him to continue, “I found I didn’t need to know how or when it began because everything about you makes me crazy, sometimes irritates me, enchants me and makes me ridiculously happy. It’s only you who made me feel, makes me breathe, only you who shook my very soul. Your every move, gaze and words seduces me every time to the point where I’m beside myself.”

There was silence.
Zero gaped at him not wanting to let words affect him but he can’t. His heart shook with his words and he drowned inside Kaname’s earnest burgundy eyes that he didn’t know he held his breath. He didn’t want to move lest he shatter the beautiful image in front of Kaname wearing his heart in his sleeves. He stared even more as he took in everything at once, his words and image, of his dark brown locks cupping his face as it’s swayed by the raging wind from outside, his wine-colored eyes dark with emotions and his lips playing a genuine smile. He never looked so beautiful and more breathtaking before with his clothes also rumpled by the wind, his hair becoming a bit messy, the fiery color of the heaven behind him with its remaining light reflecting in his eyes, losing all stiff grandeur and sophistication only to be left with natural ethereal beauty.

His vampire stood up, and oddly the cabled-car didn’t shake perhaps because of the pureblood with him, and took a step towards him. “Zero, I can’t promise you a completely rosy life, for if you’ll be with me that would mean endless challenges and struggles. I can’t promise our union to be all but happiness. I’m sure there will be hurt and pain but if you’re willing to face that with me as I will be willing to face all your troubles and carry your burdens then choose me. I promise to stand by your side until the end of my life.”

This finally jolted the hunter, “Wait, what? Are you- are you- pro-proposing to me? Don’t you dare get on your knees or I’ll jump!” The hunter was incredibly flustered and only added the last note to cover his embarrassment though it was pretty evident by his blushing face. He didn’t notice that it was the first time he spoke since they rode the car.

Kaname smiled at this, glad that his hunter was back with his spunk. He continued, “Well, as much as I wanted to, I’m afraid I was unprepared for I didn’t have any intention of doing it here and now.” he stopped when he thought of something. He then nicked his index finger, filling the car of the sweet smell of his blood which made Zero, who was internally grateful that he has fed just the day before so he wasn’t attacked by bloodlust, frown while the scent was carried away by the wind. With his blood, he drew a small circle on his palm while muttering something under his breath and retracing the small circle over and over again, finally a small light appeared which made his pureblood smile. “I will postpone putting a band around your left ring finger but I would like you to put this on,” he leaned down to reach for his left hand, “this is the only thing I can give you.” He offered while putting on a small circular ring around the pale pinky finger, a ring made of blood stone. He looked at him again, now just directly in front of him with his left hand between his. He held his gaze and continued, “I will not get down on my knees but I would still ask you to share my life all the same.” he declared before kissing the blood ring.

The silverette kept quiet for a moment, speechless, not knowing how to say ‘yes’ without sounding girly. God, why are words so shy to him? His lips quivered, his tongue holding the words his heart has been dying to say in response to Kaname’s proposal but it got stuck in his throat.

“You’re asking for a world of pain.” was the most romantic thing he managed. Zero almost bit his tongue as soon as the words were out of his mouth. Why, oh, why when the heavens gave out the gift of eloquence, was he apparently asleep?

Kaname merely smiled, “I shall carry it then. If that’s what it takes to have you then I welcome it.” it’s just like his hunter to say that at the best moment.

Zero looked at him only for a while before finally nodding, uncertain if it’s enough to answer the pureblood’s question. When Kaname saw the gesture, he made the hunter meet his eyes by holding his chin and when he saw the confirmation in his eyes, he swooped in to seal the deal and bent down to kiss his lips.

Zero hated how he felt like a girl and thought that he’ll never forget that moment or that kiss which
he believed was the sweetest one he shared with the vampire but he couldn’t help it for he was overcome with emotions he never imagined he would ever feel towards his sworn enemy. His hand traveled to the side of Kaname’s neck to pull him closer while his pureblood steadied himself by placing both hands on the top rail of Zero’s seat, simultaneously trapping his hunter and pressing himself closer.

They stayed like that for a while, allowing themselves to feel the everlasting moment of when their hearts understood and accepted each other. Their hearts beat faster in perfect unison.

Zero then instinctively opened his mouth to allow his pureblood entrance when his tongue licked his lips to ask his permission. One of Kaname’s hands that were on the rail immediately held his head to tangle its fingers in his silver threads when the kiss deepened and their pace quickened. He could feel them leaving the innocent moment to journey a more sensual path as the brunette tasted every corner of his mouth while his did the same. The lush rich taste of the pureblood in his tongue send a world of pleasure in him and he felt himself lost in his lover’s warmth coupled with the heavy smell of roses. He didn’t even realize that Kaname pressed himself closer by placing his knee on his seat while his other hand caressed his back, pushing his clothes up, to feel his bare skin. His own hand that was on his pureblood’s neck traveled higher to grasp a handful of dark brown hair while his other hand gripped the black fabric over his back. They drew each other closer, hating even a sliver of space between, desperate to feel the other’s warmth.

They were trapped in the world where there was only them and basked in the sensual wave their touch and warmth produced. Kaname wouldn’t have stopped and would have gone all the way as the want to claim his hunter, who returned his ardor with equal intensity and passion, grew. He was lost as he inhaled his hunter’s scent, like morning dew or freshly cut grass or like the forest at night, giving him the sure feeling that he’s currently holding his peace and destruction in his hands.

They instantly forgot where they were after tasting each other’s tempting lips and was only forcefully reminded when the Ferris Wheel’s motion that they didn’t noticed already started stopped briefly only to rotate again, seemingly pausing for a while to allow the passengers of each car to get out of their respective ride. They luckily caught themselves in time just before their turn came and only three cars were left before theirs.

The pureblood regrettably disconnected his mouth from the silverette’s, but only after a quick light kiss. He moved to kiss his very flushed lover’s cheek, his temple then his forehead. Afterwards, he settled his lips on top of his hunter’s head, who slightly bowed to hide his blushing face on the nook of his vampire’s neck, to muffle his groan, allowing them to even out their breaths. While he knew that it can’t be helped for it’s hardly the place to do this, he can’t help but be frustrated since his advances kept on getting interrupted. He sighed and he breathe in his lover’s scent in an attempt to dampen his building lust though this action only tempted him further.

“I believe it’s the time we head home.” He implied meaningfully.

Zero merely grunted in response and willed himself to calm down. He can feel himself burn in anticipation. Whatever, let the devil take tomorrow. It’s too late for him anyhow for his heart has already decided to live and die with the pureblood in his arms.

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The Start of many Things

They waited as the car after theirs stopped to let their children, with their happy and bright smiles, alight. It’s only been moments ago when they themselves got off from their car after it has stopped and opened by an apologetic young man who quickly frowned at their state, noting the flushed and embarrassed look of the silver haired man and the gorgeous and seductive look of the brunette who smiled at him which made the poor man greatly mesmerized and thus forgetting his suspicion of the two’s relationship. It’s almost dark now and the lamps have been lighted already to brighten the place when they emerged.

They were greeted by joyful children who bouncingly hugged them after alighting from their car. “Did you enjoy your ride?” Anne asked after hugging her otou-chan’s waist after the hunter gathered Suiren in his arms.

“Very much.” he answered shortly while ruffling her hair, hoping his face is back to normal as to not reveal the intimate passing which will make them all awkward.

“I was a bit surprised when you stopped it,” Kaname motioned to the Ferris Wheel when they started walking away with Naoto in his arms. “it’s good that it didn’t cause any panic.” he continued in a light tone, not really admonishing his daughter. He’ll never be angry for he knew the reason behind it and what with the great results of her actions.

Anne giggled as she held Zero’s hand. “Don’t worry about that chichiue since we have Nao with us. He has the ability to control people’s mind.” She added at the shocked look on their parents’ face, “ah, but he merely whispered calm to the human’s mind. He never really used his powers on living creatures before.”

Kaname and Zero looked at the innocent and angelic face of the young silverette who’s currently drinking milk-chocolate from a packed carton. They can’t believe that he possesses such a devious art and while they know they can rest assure that it won’t be used in evil reasons, still their children’s powers and abilities both amazes and stun them. They made a mental note of knowing each child’s ability and personality once they have settled. They proceeded to the amusement park’s exit and only stopping from time to time to buy souvenirs that the children want and Kaname will give to the chairman and Yuki.

They were walking in silence, not knowing what to say to each other. They have spent the whole day acting like crazy stalkers or scoop-hungry paparazzi and now that the day is almost ending, it’s time to head home and give the report to their instigator. It felt like the day has gone very fast. It was not enough.

“Thank you, Yuki-chan, you helped me a lot.” Ichijou started, careful not to let disappointment to fill his voice. He sighed inwardly and wondered how fast the sun has set.

“It’s nothing! I enjoyed it!” Yuki replied sincerely, they have caught many, many interesting pictures. Some they’ll even keep from the Chairman for it contained images one wouldn’t want to share to their parent. They also enjoyed each ride that their targets chose so she had so much fun, though she
felt that it was mostly thanks to her companion who made her day worthwhile. She also sighed inwardly. She didn’t want to end it just yet.

“Should we take a cab? It’s a long walk to the Academy from here.”

“I don’t mind walking!” Yuki mentally kicked herself for blurting that a bit too fast. She glanced towards Ichijou, hoping he didn’t notice that and was mesmerized when she saw his wonderful sunny smile.

“Okay. Should we also grab something to eat on the way?” He invited, fast feeling happiness as his time with the prefect lengthened even for just about a few more minutes.

“Great! I’m hungry!” She readily agreed, perking up and feeling happy that the time with her companion got extended.

And so they proceeded, chatting as they go regarding what happened the whole day.

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By the time they got back to the academy, all five children were already asleep, with Suiren in Zero’s arms, Naoto in Kaname’s and the brunette twins leaning on their nee-chan’s shoulders while her head tilted on top of Akira’s. They smiled as they both watched their slumbering children, exhausted from playing too much.

It was a great task when the time came to wake them up and Kaname ended up carrying Naoto with Akira who really refused to open his eyes while Kohaku held on Zero’ free hand since Suiren occupied his other hand, to be guided as he walked on with his eyes closed and supported by his older sister who rubbed her eyes as she dragged her feet.

“Hey, Akira, Kohaku, wake up, we’re here. Wash up first before you sleep. Geez, wake up.” Zero tried to mildly shake them to wake them up. He sighed and wondered if this is going to be a daily routine in the future. “Come on, wake up. I’ll help you two wash up so you can go back to sleep.”

“They must have been really tired. They also woke up very early today.” Kaname assumed. He smiled at the domestic picture of his lover undressing one of the twins who managed to at least sit up to help them to the bath.

“Yeah.” Zero turned to their eldest, “Anne, you should wash up too. Please take Suiren with you and use Kaname’s bath. I’ll use the one here.” she nodded sleepily. She produced some clothes for her brothers and handed it to her otou-chan before going to her chichiue’s bath with her little sister clearly wanting to hurry up so she can finally sleep. The silverette watched his daughter wobble to the other room before he turned to Kaname. “You, don’t just stand there, help me.”

Kaname was quietly surprised but found himself happy as his mate directed him on what to do. No one has ever dared to order him around. He indulgently smiled. Only his hunter would be audacious enough to do so and it’s only his lover’s orders he shall obey. He also found he liked the feeling of Zero entrusting him to take care of their children.

He was actually having fun while they washed the half-asleep children, their sleeves rolled up just above their elbows so it won’t get wet, and feeling quite warm every time he glanced at his lover’s direction who’s still valiantly trying to wake up Akira while he washed up Naoto and check on
Kohaku who’s washing himself whilst his eyes still close. When they have dried and dressed the
three children, Akira snoring softly as they did, they proceeded to tuck them in on their bed, one of
which was already occupied by their little girls.

They sighed contentedly as they watched their children slumber peacefully while they stood before
the door. Kaname turned his head to his lover, whose eyes reflect fascination and satisfaction, after
which, he rested his temple on Zero’s shoulder while he wrapped a hand around his waist to draw
him closer. “I never thought you’re so good at this.” he smiled, his eyes closed.

“Try living with the Chairman, Yuki and Ichiru and you’ll be an expert within the day.” he
responded, tensing a bit at the vampire’s gesture. He’s not used to having anyone this close before.
He contemplated between scampering away and shoving his pureblood aside to escape. He’s lost on
how he should act but even when he felt a bit awkward and embarrassed at the brunette’s actions, he
found himself basking in warmth the proximity produced, enjoying the addicting smell of roses and
books in him, feeling his heart shook and his body alive.

“My, I’m jealous.” Kaname chuckled.

The silverette looked down at his lover at his declaration. “What? Are you trying to act cute?” he
asked as his eyebrow arched slightly, trying to stop his smile from forming.

“Well, I wouldn’t mind being spoiled by you,” the brunette rose his head to face his lover, his face
inches from the startled silverette, “will you pamper me as well, Zero?” was all he said before his lips
covered his mate’s.

It took Zero by surprise but could only close his eyes as Kaname took over his senses. He somehow
knew that it will come to this eventually and his body honestly wished this. His hands automatically
wrapped around his pureblood’s neck while one of Kaname’s hand wrapped ever so tightly around
his hips as he pulled him closer while the other supported them by holding the door’s frame.

“Hmmm,” The pureblood hummed slightly as he deepened the kiss, his tongue delved deeper to feel
his lover’s heat and enjoy his luscious taste. He caught his hunter’s groan in his mouth as he sucked
his lower lip only to continue to explore the hidden pleasure of his mate’s mouth again. He pushed
Zero’s back on the door as he dived deeper, his tongue intent in savoring this delectable treat.

They were almost lost. Zero returned his pureblood’s passionate action with equal intensity and
fervor as he felt Kaname’s hand on his hip travelled beneath his clothes to feel his bare back, he felt
the cold air as his shirt was pushed slightly up, and would have love to continue but he forced
himself to turn his head away as he reminded himself where they are. “Kaname…not… here…” he
weakly voiced in ragged breathing.

He thought his vampire didn’t hear him as Kaname then proceeded to leave passion bites on his pale
white skin but afterwards, the brunette bit his ear before whispering in a voice heavy with need,
“That can be arranged.” before snatching his arm to march to the room on the other side of the hall.
They travelled so fast as the pureblood was already too impatient as it is and he swore he’ll really
explode in tremendous ire if they’re interrupted for the third time.

So immediately, even before they heard the door of his study closed completely, he dragged his
silverette in the adjacent room whose door opened and closed automatically with the locks tightly in
place, he even made sure that they’ll be soundproof as to not hear what’s going on outside as nothing
will also be heard from the inside. He’s determined to take what he so desired since yesterday and he
shall harshly punish anyone who’ll interfere. No one will stop him from claiming his hunter again.

Once inside, he wasted no time in kissing Zero again while they struggle to find the bed where he
proceeded on pushing him down, careful not to break the kiss, one they intensely shared in mindless abandon.

The young hunter was a bit dizzy with how fast they travelled coupled with the searing kiss that made his body tremble as he felt his body warm in excitement and expectation. He’s been as deprived of pleasure as Kaname was so he returned the ardor with equal want, in eagerness, feeling the fire he ignored burned even brighter within him. His heart soared when he felt the soft mattress and smooth sheets against his back as he was pushed down while his mate covered his body, his arms immediately around his neck, aiding his vampire in pressing themselves closer.

He only vaguely register the sound of his shirt’s buttons came off as his pureblood ripped his top open, impatient to feel his skin. He didn’t care, even when normally he would have shouted, as he felt the pleasure of his lover’s touch. It burned his skin but it was not enough to satisfy him and only succeeded in awakening greater needs.

The silverette then proceeded to unbutton the brunette’s black shirt, urgency making him clumsy as the pureblood found the belt of his pants. It broke their kiss as this immediately caught his attention as he felt him unbuckle and unzipped his pants, his dark lustful burgundy eyes on his equally hungry lilac ones which he closed as pleasure attacked his system. He hissed as he felt Kaname’s hand on the velvet skin of his hardened member, he lost himself in madness as he began to stroke making him arch his body slightly as heated desire clawed his gut, his hips moving to beg for more, his grip tighten over the fabric of his black shirt unable to resume with their task while his head pressed closely on the soft sheets, his lips parted to produce breathless pants. His pureblood’s forehead rested on his as his lover whispered, “Ah, how beautiful,” as he quickened the pace, his husky voice adding up to completely throw him to the swirl of hedonism.

Kaname continued to stroke, his hand adding pressure from time to time making his lover groan and hiss again and again, his movement becoming faster and faster. The pureblood watched in fascination at his silverette’s flushed face reflects pleasure, feeling his own erection form as he drowned in the alluring sounds and exclamation of his hunter.

Zero arched his body as he felt a scorching heat in his abdomen, like lava inside a violent volcano, seeking release. He can’t take it anymore. He felt like he’ll explode at any moment so he willed his eyes to open, he found the alluring burgundy ones immediately as his lover’s forehead still on his. His hands instantly tangled with his dark brown locks to pull him in a brief kiss before saying in barely whisper, “More.” he begged in a ragged and breathless voice.

It surprised Kaname, he didn’t expect his hunter to plead, a part of him wickedly wanted to deny him as felt the urge to subject his petulant lover in the sweetest, most sensuous tortures he knew but as he’s already beside himself with desperate want, too impatient to claim him, he smirked as he conceded “gladly,” as he stopped the pleasurable torment only for a moment to completely strip his hunter of the obstacles that are his clothes, his own followed but he settled with just unzipping his pants as he is unwilling to delay their merging for another moment, eager to feel his lover’s heat around him. He hovered above his lover after placing himself in between his legs, taking his hands in him before he began thrusting slowly, his lover’s tightness seducing him to penetrate harder and he withdrew only to dig deeper.

The burning discomfort caught Zero off guard.

“Ah! Fuck…hurts…!” the silverette breathlessly exclaimed as the pain came unexpectedly, making him pressed his head back harder against the sheets. Fuck, it hurts. He has completely forgotten the burning ache of this moment as he only remembered how good it felt the last time. He panted as he took on more of Kaname at each thrust that seek to be enveloped completely, wrapping his legs
around his hips to help him reach his goal even though the pain almost made him unconscious, his hands gripping his lover’s, which is also closed around his, to give him the strength not to pass out.

“Shhh… I know…” the pureblood purred as he cooed his distressed lover, he kissed his sweat-covered temple to comfort him somewhat as he can’t stop himself, even though he can see agony on his exquisite face, he won’t be able to, he has lost all control and he’ll only be able to stop once he’s fully covered inside his hunter’s warm entrance.

So he pulled back but only to push harder, to sink even deeper, desperate to feel his heat.

When he was finally fully sheathed, both were panting ceaselessly, Zero held on tightly to Kaname’s hands until both of their knuckles were deathly white.

The brunette busied himself with his hunter’s pale skin, leaving traces of kisses as his mark of possession while he waited for his love to get used to his size. His lips traced the long line of his white neck, tempted to bite down, to taste the most delectable blood he’d ever had though he stopped himself as he strongly reminded himself of his lover’s present condition. He’s with child and he’ll never compete with their little angel for his beloved’s blood. His heart heaved but he decided he can wait.

When he felt his hunter’s nudge, a sign he’s ready, he was more than happy to continue with his ardent task. Kaname slowly withdrew only to thrust back hotly, as he looked for the place that would send his lover on edge, they groaned breathlessly as he quickened the pace, his hunter meeting his every intense lunge with equal fervor, with passion.

They shared sloppy kisses, messy as pants and moans escaped uncontrollably, their voices hoarser and more ragged.

The pureblood liberated one of his hand to wrap it around his hunter’s arousal again as he timed each thrust with his stroke, this sent Zero in even more swirl of pleasure that his world turned, not knowing which way is down as he felt himself only arriving at the top. The silverette’s free hand instinctively reached out to grasp at his dark-brown threads as if he’s holding on to his slipping sanity, pulling him down from time to time to taste his succulent lips.

Kaname looked up when he heard his silverette moan lewdly as he thrust, he knew he found what he was searching for, “here?” he wasted no time in striking the sensitive region inside his lover’s heat, sending them both in a myriad of pleasure, he didn’t stop as he pushed even harder, even faster, stroking his lover’s arousal with equal intensity, groaning as he felt himself come closer to the peak.

Zero tried to muffle his groans with their intertwined hands in vain as his ragged voice, evidence of his delight and pleasure, resounded in his pureblood’s room. He couldn’t help it as it felt so great, so damn good, he felt it so strongly that he didn’t even mind if his voice was heard all throughout the Moon dormitory because right now, there is only Kaname in front of him.

“Kaname!” he moaned as he felt himself climaxed. He shuddered as he spilled into his pureblood’s hand. The brunette followed shortly after a few more thrust, groaning on his hunter’s temple as he did, his body shook as he spilled inside his lover, their bodies drowning in the delight of their merging.

The brunette collapse on top of the silverette, both weak with pleasure, they were both unmoving as they waited for their thundering hearts to slow down and breaths to even out. Kaname watched in fascination as he turned to his lover, his right cheek against the sheet, as his hunter gasped for air with his eyes closed. He stared at his translucent skin now basking in afterglow, with some silver threads clinging to his temple and forehead because of sweat, finding him so captivating and dazzling.
that he couldn’t look away.

Kaname reached to move some wet hair obstructing his view as it clung to his lover’s eyelids. His action made Zero open his eyes and turn to him making them nose to nose. He smiled at the sexy picture of his hunter, with his lilac orbs dark with passion, half-lidded and exhausted from love making.

“Zero.” he quietly uttered but not really wanting to say anything, he only wanted to call his name for no apparent reason.

“Hmmmm,” he hasn’t quite caught his breath yet, “what?”

Kaname was silent for a moment and only stared at his hunter. He did not want to ruin the moment with words as he watched him. He smiled as Zero raised an inquiring eyebrow that he finally whispered, “I love you.”

The suddenness surprised the silverette. He only stared as he blushed before turning the opposite side, “Stupid bastard.” he hissed, really, such a romantic sap. His pureblood only chuckled at his expected reaction. *Bastard, he’s really enjoying seeing me flustered!*

The brunet reached out again, this time to force his lover to turn back to face him, meeting him halfway as he lifted his upper body to hover over him again, “You should get used to it.” was all he said before lowering himself down and claiming his lips once again, his hands in his silver hair, preparing to start driving them both to insanity once more.

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It was already late into the night but it’s just the middle of the day for a vampire like him. He didn’t get an ounce of sleep for the whole day as he tangled himself with the ludicrous business of tailing their king and his family. He’s been awake for almost 24 hours and he’s extremely tired but he didn’t think he’ll be able to rest as he felt he’s missing the most important piece of his being.

He threaded the way back to the academy blindly, not knowing when or how he was able to leave the theme park’s premises and how he ended up in front of the academy’s gate at sun down. He didn’t notice anything, not the people, time or surroundings. He only saw his face, his charming smile, bright lilac eyes and mesmerizing silver hair tied back in a ponytail. He groaned for the nth time. He’s exhausted.

He’s tired and he didn’t have anything to do but he still didn’t want to go back to the dorm so he instead took a walk inside the academy’s forest to unwind and take in whatever peace of mind he can get though he believed it impossible.

He walked to nowhere in particular then sat down when he saw a large protruding root of an enormous tree. He rested his back on the bark to look up at the night sky and blindly watch the moon that was slightly hidden by the leaves of the tall trees. He closed his eyes to bask in the cool night breeze that slightly ruffled his golden tresses and kissed his bright white skin, making him feel a little calmer when suddenly, he felt someone approaching. He immediately opened his startled blue eyes when he smelled the sweet vanilla scent of his heart approaching and sure enough, the rustling leaves of the bush shortly revealed the younger Kiryū twin, Ichiru.

Ichiru just got back after escorting his pretty date back to the Day class female dormitory and he just
wanted to take a walk to settle his downcast heart when he happened upon the sight of Aido-senpai. He was as startled as the blond currently looking at him with wide eyes. He inwardly groaned. He didn’t want to see him this time. Why, of all the people he will meet in his innocent little walk, it must be this vampire? Heavens must be greatly taunting him, telling him what he’s trying to do is futile.

Hanabusa watched him and his expression didn’t escape his notice. Is that aversion? Distaste? Dislike that he can see in his lilac eyes? Why is he feeling disappointment at the sight of him? He instantly felt anger as he saw those feelings reflected in his eyes. He can’t help it. He’s been feeling tormented by the silverette in front of him for the whole day and his expression just hurt him even further.

“Hey, you, isn’t it rude to just go like that when it’s obvious that you saw me?” he started when Ichiru made an attempt to go and ignore him as if he didn’t see him and met his eyes. As much as he wanted to hide the anger he’s been feeling, he can’t as it escaped uncontrollably, shaking the air around them.

The silverette stopped as he felt the sudden drop in the temperature and turned back to face the vampire in front who already stood up and is currently walking in his direction. He started as he saw the dark look at the normally cool and charming face of the blond. It’s so different from the glares he shared with his brother that he absentmindedly stepped backwards in fright and felt himself slightly panic when he felt a bark of a tree on his back. He suddenly felt like a prey being trapped by a beast.

“What the hell is wrong with him?”

“Ah, gomen senpai. I thought you didn’t want to be disturbed.” He tried to muster all his courage and masked the fear he suddenly felt. He’s a hunter as well, damn it! Though it’s not official, still, he’s a Kiryū and he shouldn’t feel fear towards a vampire.

“Heh~? And here I thought it was deliberate. Sick of looking at a man after your beautiful date?” Hanabusa sneered. He didn’t care if he just gave away the fact that he saw them at the park or if he sounded a lot like a jealous lover. He’s just extremely pissed off.

“Huh?” Ichiru was seriously baffled. How did he even know about his date? “What are you saying senpai?” He looked up at the blond now slightly towering over him. Ugh, he hated how he seemed smaller than everyone else. He’s puzzled why the normally charming blond is angry at him.

Hanabusa didn’t say anything as he looked down at Ichiru, his senses being clouded by several things at once. He’s angry, jealous and downright pissed off but still he can feel overwhelming love and affection towards the man in front of him. His enticing vanilla scent rapidly drugging his senses and he felt himself lost on what to say next or where to direct their conversation.

He was only able to stare at Ichiru’s enchanting lilac orbs, seeing him rally his fear and trying valiantly to stand before him even though his eyes betrayed him by displaying his anxiety, being captivated by each passing second. He must have completely lost his mind as he did the one thing he was craving to do the whole time. His mind went blank as he leaned down to claim Ichiru’s lips.

The kiss caught both of them off guard and Hanabusa knew he should break it immediately and conjure some excuse no matter how lame it might sound like suddenly loosing strength that’s why he accidentally bumped his lips to the silverette’s or just simply saying he fell asleep on his feet but the moment he felt Ichiru’s soft lips, all hell broke loose and he wasn’t able to stop himself from delving his tongue to torridly kiss him, almost violently.

He wasn’t able to stop himself from pushing Ichiru even harder against the tree and grasping a handful of silver tresses to angle his head in a way that would allow him deepen the kiss easily while
an arm pressed against the bark of the tree to balance both of their weight.

He was so lost that he belatedly noticed that Ichiru returned his actions with equal passion.

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The morning air that greeted his skin as he woke up was quite cold but he didn’t even flinch as he’s been feeling very warm all over. He hummed as he tried to roll over the soft and smooth sheets, his silver hair tousled on the white pillows, readying to stretch only to be stopped. He found that he can’t move as something or someone trapped his body. He languorously opened his lilac eyes and the first thing he saw was a wave of dark brown locks. It’s the top of his pureblood’s head that snugly rested his face on the nook of his neck, his breath on his pulse, as his body covered and warmed his hunter.

It was then that Zero was attacked by the memories of last night’s events. He blushed reflexively as he remembered what happened. ‘Ah’ He thought as he tried raising his left arm that’s been trapped underneath Kaname’s body to look at the simple red ring around his pinky finger. ‘Well, that’s it huh.’

Everything’s settled and there’s no going back, not that he had any intention of doing so as his heart has long been the pureblood’s possession for some time already though he refused to admit it. He has given his answer and has already decided to be with this arrogant and infuriating vampire for the rest of his life. He sighed. Though he might look ridiculous in the eyes of his kin, he can’t come to regret the decision that allowed him to feel this person’s warmth and he believe he never will as he basked in his delicious heat and his scent, he inhaled the smell of combined old books and red roses, giving him a warm comfortable feeling as he wrapped his arms around his sleeping figure, tangling a hand in his dark tresses while another is on the small of his back to press him closer. He sighed. ‘Oh yeah, I’m crazy.’

He turned his head to look at the window displaying the wonderful glow of the sun to ascertain the time now and he almost jumped when he saw that it’s most likely late in the morning, he needed to go back. He really couldn’t stand it if those fools found out that they’ve been right about him enjoying his day and night. He’ll never hear the end of it.

So he carefully tried to slip from under his pureblood without waking him up only to have the arms wrapped around his body tighten possessively as the brunette stirred, groaning while nuzzling his head on the sensitive part of his hunter’s neck, slightly tickling Zero in the process, seemingly trying to find his lost, good spot again. “Zero, where are you going?” Kaname’s voice, deep from sleep, stopped any more of his sneaky attempts to get away.

“I’m going back.” he answered shortly, fighting the smile threatening to show as his lover started to act like a spoiled brat. He marveled how, he never thought he’ll use the word to describe ever, cute he looked like with his actions of hugging him more tightly as he squeeze his head snuggly at the base of his neck.


“I can’t, the chairman will be looking for me. Get up.” He urged without any of the normal annoyance he should have already felt. He tried to move away again by pushing Kaname’s shoulders only to have his hands imprisoned by his lover’s and pinned above their heads as Kaname lift himself up to properly looked at his hunter.
“No.” he huskily repeated as his earlier sleepy eyes darkened by renewed passion bore on his mate’s lilac orbs. Stubbornly refusing to let go, determined to detain his silver-haired lover. He didn’t like the idea of his leaving him even for a while so proceeded in enticing his hunter by granting him the most scorching morning kiss he has ever provided as his hand began their intensive search yet again, resolve to send his lover on edge just like he did the night before.

His hands traveled lower, in a torturously slow fashion, savoring the heat of his beloved’s skin, reviewing the curve’s he familiarize himself with last night.

Zero groaned, feeling his body respond, he couldn’t help but drown in the sensation as his pureblood took him to another maddening journey of hedonistic desire. His vampire successfully blew away all and any idea of going away as he instinctively reached out to envelop him in his arms and to feel the smooth warm body against his. He returned his ardent kiss with fervent need as he joined Kaname in intertwining their tongues, to taste his succulent, flavorful lips, feeling their hearts beginning to race at once.

Kaname caught his hunter’s moan as he found what he’s been searching for and wrapped his long fingers around his lover’s length and proceeded to stroking it. He felt his lover’s grip on his brown locks tighten as he continued the torturous pace over his hard arousal.

Then he broke their kiss to favor his pale white skin, tracing his lips on the line of his lover’s tattoo and began sucking his tender neck to add more hickeys on the great collection he already created last night. His lips moved on to his chest, catching one of the taut pink nipples between his teeth before licking and sucking, loving the breathless groans his hunter produced.

He quicken the pace of his strokes as he continued to tease the pale skin over his chest all the while enjoying the sound of his lover’s pants, feeling his own member harden, greedy to feel his heat around him again and with no clothes to obstruct him from accomplishing what he desire, he wasted no time in indulging himself in his hunter’s heat as he positioned himself, holding his lover’s hips in place to enter him very, very slowly, watching in fascination as his hunter struggle to muffle the deep moan threatening to escape him as his vampire torment him deliberately.

It was still a bit painful but not as strongly as last night, as his body opened for it has yet recovered from last night’s intense activities, he even found the pain a bit pleasurable much to his embarrassment. When he opened his violet eyes, dark with lust which he didn’t know when he closed, he found his lover hovering over him with a seductive smirk playing on his face, his breathing equally labored.

“I’m afraid, I can’t let you go” he said huskily, to which Zero merely sighed and groaned in resignation, as Kaname lowered himself to give his mate another searing kiss to allow him time to adjust to his size and when the pureblood felt the nudge that begged him to continue, he immediately comply and ravish him all over again making his mate’s initial desire to escape disappeared entirely.

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He felt sore all over.

_Insatiable bastard._ Zero groaned inwardly.

He only managed to get away after two hours from when he woke up for his pureblood did try
everything in his power to detain him. He turned a shade of dark red as he remembered how his mate made love to him over and over until he’s satisfied enough to finally allow him to go but only after he promised to come back later on. He can’t believe how clingy and possessive Kaname is but he’s even more surprised as he found himself sighing in contentment and relief in his vampire’s suffocating grasps. *Argh, he really fell hard.*

Once his vampire let go, he immediately went home to the chairman’s abode, opting in to using the window to his room, clumsily climbing up as he felt the ache of his back throbbed painfully. He took a quick shower and don fresh cloths. He wanted to sleep again after the vigorous exercise he had with Kaname but he stopped himself to show his face to the people of the household, putting on a face that he greatly wished didn’t betray him and went down normally, walking as naturally as he can, as if he’s been in his room since last night and not making love with the pureblood.

He was a bit surprise when he noticed that they’re still only having breakfast even though it was already ten in the morning. He approached Yuki and Ichiru that were both seated in the dining table, eating the *chairman’s* cooking absentmindedly. He frowned as he looked at their faces deep in thought as they chew their food without words, they didn’t jumped into the teasing or leering mood he was already expecting. It looks like they didn’t even notice him at all as he already seated himself in front of them yet they stared right through him. He supposed he was a bit relieved but he began to worry as they both looked far away, somewhere unreachable and he imagined seeing their souls leave their body before his very eyes.

“Ah, Son! Good morning! So you already went down. Wait, when did you even came home, were you here the whole time?” greeted the chairman who slightly frowned as he didn’t hear the front door open though he was almost sure that his eldest son didn’t come home. Was he only being lecherous then? He shook his head, never mind. He can see that Zero looks much better and that’s what’s most important. He smiled as he noticed that more than feeling all better, he’d say he glows. It pleased him to see life and color back to his son’s face.

“None of your business.” he scoffed in an unaffected manner, inwardly sighing in relief as he believed that it sounded like him in his most natural and normal day, then he motioned to the two dazed statues in front of him to finalize his distraction. “What happened to them?”

“Ah, I also don’t know Zero-kun. They’ve been like that since earlier. They went down late as well already wearing those looks, do you think something happened?” he asked, very worried, his confused hazel eyes trained on his two younger children.

He wondered if he should call on Wakaba-san later on to ask what happened to the little shopping spree with his princess but he doubted it has something to do with that for if they fought by any chance, then his little girl will be brooding but this expression is not a gloomy one, hmmm, lost? confused? What could have produced this dazed state? The same goes for Ichiru. He went on many dates before but it’s the first time he wore this look after a date. Hmmm, it couldn’t be, right? It’s not a look you’ll normally have after you’ve gotten laid. No, no, no. He shook his head; he’s really being a lecherous old man. It made him wonder when was the last time he… ah, no, no, no… what was he thinking? He should worry about his children first but after thinking about that, he found himself wondering about the whereabouts of his raven-haired lover.

“You, don’t you dare join them too.” Zero’s voice successfully shook his guardian’s musings as the honey-haired chairman began to slip on the same expression. What? Is it a new infectious disease?

“Ah? Ah, hahahaha,” the chairman caught himself then it struck him as he took in the weird look of his dear children again. Of course! He can’t believe he forgot about *that* expression. Then he smiled and sighed, a little sad at the thought that his children are steadily growing to adults. He decided he
wouldn’t be too concerned about it because worries of the heart are the only trouble one would enjoy to have. “They’ll be fine. Breakfast, Zero-kun?”

He skeptically looked up at his guardian but asked nothing as he assumed that he must have found out what was the problem with these two but since the chairman didn’t worry, he decided that there’s no reason for him to be concerned as well. “No thanks, I don’t have a death wish.” his answer to the chairman’s offer.

“Uwah, that’s mean! Papa’s hurt!” his guardian sobbed dramatically, even putting his hands across his chest, over the frilly pink apron, like a hurt damsel.

“Whatver. Move, I’m going to cook my own food.” he replied, ignoring this pathetic excuse of an adult, to go to the kitchen and make edible breakfast to give him strength for the day.

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He stirred, rolling to his stomach that shuffled the sheets covering him, burying his face on the pillow his beloved used for the night to inhale the remaining addictive scent of night forest that both calmed and excite his heart at the same time. He softly groaned feeling regret at letting his hunter go. He shouldn’t have as he now greatly missed his warm body that fitted his perfectly. He sighed as he got up, feeling that it’s pointless to linger on bed now that he’s alone.

He went to the adjacent bathroom to take a quick bath and slipped on a pair of black pants and button up shirt before proceeding out of his room but before he went down for breakfast, he continued to the opposite room from his to peek at his children and see if they’re awake already. He found the room already empty and so he proceeded to the dining hall where he was greeted enthusiastically by the other Night class student which he returned civilly as he made his way towards the children now having their breakfast together with his closest friends.

“Ohayou Chichiue!” he was greeted by his little princes and princesses who all got up to give him a morning kiss on his cheeks.

“Good morning, Kaname-sama.” greeted the rest of the Night class afterwards. They marveled at their leader’s aura today as they notice the glowing blissful atmosphere that surrounded him. They were sure something good happened to him to have produced such an effect.

“Oh, Kaname, good morning! I hope you had a pleasant day yesterday?” his vice-president greeted him almost too brightly. He looked at him a bit oddly because of this. He knew Takuma is the cheerful sort but there is something amiss as he’s not this bright normally, at least not to the point where his sunny aura almost blinded him.

He looked at the other members of the Night class to see if they have observed this change and found that it was not only Takuma who’s a bit different from normal as he saw Hanabusa in such deep thoughts that he doubted he even noticed him entering the room. He also noticed that Senri is nowhere to be seen. He worried a bit as he wondered what could have happened after they have all went away though he kept his curiosity to himself because even if they’re his subjects, he respects their privacy and he wouldn’t intrude just to satisfy himself so he merely returned the greetings and proceeded with breakfast as he seated himself between his children, his youngest twin silverettes immediately sat on his lap.
“What are your plans for today?” Ichijou jovially asked once he was seated comfortably.

“Ah, there are some documents from the council that must be done.” he smiled apologetically to his children. He must finish those paperwork that the council adamantly sends him though he would much rather spend it with his lover and children.

“It’s quite alright chichiue, we understand. If you’d like though, we’d love to help. I worry you’ll overwork yourself!” his charming eldest offered and her last statement made him stare but he reminded himself that his children are extremely intelligent and are fully mature in thoughts. “Akira might look useless at it but I assure you that he’s quite capable and even prides himself of his beautiful penmanship that I must admit is quite elegant in contrast to his poor conduct.” She added as she sipped tea to which Akira cried indignantly.

He chuckled as Akira and Anne began bantering as he accuse his elder sister of having a plain handwriting (“It’s the content that matters!” was his daughter’s defense), it seems to be their everyday routine and he didn’t scold them like he normally do when some people are arguing as he can see that it’s only meant to liven things up.

After a while he asked them if they’re ready with the preparation of entering the Night class tomorrow evening. This question managed to catch everyone else’s attention and he remembered that he forgot to inform his vice-president so he has gone ahead and gave the specifics of what the children and the chairman agreed to.

“Oh, how fantastic!” then his blond friend stopped as he thought of something, “but how?” obviously inquiring at how they’ll manage to appear all grown up.

“We’ll show you tomorrow, Takuji. We can’t right now because it will only take effect for 12 hours.” Anne explained as she beamed.

They smiled. It seems that there’ll be a show worth watching tomorrow and they continued on with breakfast, satisfied with her answer.

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“-ru! –chiru! Ichiru!!”

All he heard was a large sound before he felt the thickening of his skin and register the inevitable pain. Clearly, his face just kissed a very solid wall.

“Ugh!” he covered his nose with his hands. There didn’t seem to be any bleeding, thank goodness, but it still felt so painful he almost rolled on the floor. “Nii-san, why didn’t tell me?!” he shouted as he pressed on his nose tightly.

That pissed Zero off. He had been calling Ichiru since he saw him about to walk through the wall in an attempt to actually pass through it like some poltergeist. “Ah, gomen, I shouted at the wall to move but apparently, it won’t budge.” he responded sarcastically to which Ichiru groaned some more. “Why is your head up in the clouds anyway?”

“That pissed Zero off. He had been calling Ichiru since he saw him about to walk through the wall in an attempt to actually pass through it like some poltergeist. “Ah, gomen, I shouted at the wall to move but apparently, it won’t budge.” he responded sarcastically to which Ichiru groaned some more. “Why is your head up in the clouds anyway?”

“Nothing and my head is not in the clouds,” he replied as he rubbed his nose, his face still very red from the impact. “I’m…just…normal…fine…” he stammered as if he didn’t know what to actually say.
“Are you saying that to me or to yourself?” Zero asked, now being a bit worried. Yuki and him have not yet recovered from whatever disease they caught as they’ve both been in the same dazed state since this morning. What the hell happened to them? At least Yuki didn’t go about bumping on random innocent objects though she would stare in space then suddenly giggle out of the blue, making him worry about her sanity instead of the furniture. “Did anything happen to you yesterday?” he saw Ichiru stiffen right before his very eyes at the question.

He swallowed first before answering in the most unaffected way he can, “What could possibly happen to me, Nii-san? I’m fine! I’m good! How was your date by the way? Was it good?” Ichiru inquired all very fast making it all the more unnatural which made Zero frowned even more.


“Nothing! Honestly!” He was beginning to panic a bit. He can’t tell his brother, as he himself didn’t know what just happened, “come on nii-san, you’re being such a suspicious mother-hen.” he followed that with a highly obvious fake laugh, “I need to do my homework, see you!” he hastily finished as he run up to his room.

“Wait, Ichiru!” he called in a futile attempt to stop his twin. He was extremely puzzled as to what happened to him; he contemplated between grilling him for answers or to wait for him to open up. He sighed, hoping that it’s nothing too big.

Once inside his room, Ichiru immediately locked his door. He was slightly panting at the effort of running. ‘Shit! Shit! Shit!’ He threw himself face first on his bed, muffling his groan on the sheets. What the hell was wrong with him? Can’t he be more obvious? Geez, what horrible acting. He groaned again before rolling to turn to face the ceiling. He stared blindly at the fluorescent lamp in his room but the only thing he saw was the wave of golden threads that adorned the head of a certain blue-eyed vampire. He closed his eyes and still saw the same image and even more vividly, he sighed, it seems he really can’t escape his grasp.

Then he rummaged the memory of last night. He felt his face burn and for the nth time curse himself at his reflexive action. Why did he let himself be carried away? Why!? He just gave himself away entirely! He really wanted to die. Bury himself in a hole, feeling very ashamed.

He rolled on his side as he opened his eyes before another sigh escaped from him again. He felt like he wanted to cry but stopped himself as he refused to take pity on himself after feeling too pathetic already. He won’t allow it. But it’s really painful because of all the pranks Aido-senpai had to do, it would be to playfully kiss him. He’s extremely pissed off but it was only short live as what he really felt is agony.

He was still for a moment.

When did it begun? He looked back and pinpointed it to the very first time he saw him, with his smug, confident and cool aquamarine eyes, bright white skin and enchanting golden hair that shamed the sun. He had felt this way since he first laid his eyes on Hanabusa Aido; he had loved him since they first met.

He rolled on his stomach again to hide his face on his pillow as he recalled why in the world he has been in love with that bastard all this time.

Ah, yes. It’s because he was greatly mesmerized by him, not only by his charming looks but it’s more of his attitude and behavior. He fell in love with his confident, positive, fearless and energetic blue eyes. He liked how he never seemed to be daunted no matter how many times he’s been struck and punished. He’s persistent and zealous, energetic and sprightly and to him, who’s always been so
weak and pathetic, he’s like the sun -- brilliant and dazzling. It stunned and amazed him and before
he knew it, his eyes were following him, his movement, his smiles and his gaze that was why he
knew that Hanabusa Aido hated him.

He watched as disgust and hatred filled his beautiful sapphire orbs as he watched him during their
younger years. That was why he attempted to bury his feeling countless of times.

It’s painful.

It’s suffocating.

He dated many women just to find one that would enable him to forget him, but all failed to move his
heart but maybe that’s because it’s not his to give anymore, but that vampire’s. As every time he’ll
feel like there could be something special with a girl he’s seeing, one look at him and he’ll win him
all over again. He’s frustrated. It was like running in a never-ending loop. It’s eternal.

Grrrrr! Oh hell! Why, of all the insidious jokes did he even do that?! His only consolation was that at
least he was able to stop himself from confessing entirely… no, wait… maybe wordlessly leaving
after that, without even looking at him, was a dead giveaway. He groaned again. He beat his
innocent pillow in frustration. And now, the vampire knows! Why was he not able to stop himself
from kissing him back?! He sighed. He couldn’t help it. He has been dying to do it since a long time
ago and now he’s doomed! He dejectedly pushed himself up only to let himself come crashing back
down. He just gave himself away. He muffled another groan on his pillow.

Then, he lay there, unmoving. Wondering if he could somehow stop his breathing before tomorrow
comes.

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She watched as the sun slowly but steadily descended, leaving dark shades of orange-gold and
violet-blue colors in its wake while the temperature also dropped, the cool being carried in the air.
She walked sublimely as the wind softly swept her long dark wavy hair together with the snow white
skirt of her dress. She’s taking her ‘morning’ walk though it’s already six in the afternoon but she’s
not wrong as it is only early morning for a vampire like her.

She continued her stroll while humming one of her favorite solemn tunes as she watched the
changing color of the sky. It has always been her favorite pastime, taking traipse while watching
beautiful sceneries though seeing the heavens change in color always saddens her a bit as it is proof
of running time. She sighed, refusing to take pity on herself. She has long decided not to feel sorry
for herself as she was blessed with many great things in life and pitying such lucky circumstances
will be an insult to the less fortunate.

She stopped as she took a deep breath and was surprise to inhale the scent of one of her favorite
persons. Her beloved. She quickened her pace to make her way to the clearing and sure enough,
there he is, sleeping peacefully under a tree with an open book covering his face.

She halted to compose herself, willing her heart to calm down as to avoid making a spectacle of
herself because of her excitement, then proceeded to walking softly as not to startle the sleeping
hunter. She stared as she came nearer, trying very hard to display only an impassive expression
though she felt her face betray her for she can’t help but be affected. It’s much too familiar, this
scene, the sight of his ash-brown hair swaying slightly beneath an open book while he slept under a
tree. It squeezed her heart with nostalgia.

She stopped just beside his sleeping figure, thoughtlessly bending down to reach him despite herself
when a hand suddenly shot up to hold her wrist, stopping the young vampire before she touched her
goal, startling her while the other one removed the book covering his face, to reveal the sleepy face
of Kaito Takamiya.

“Nanda, it’s just Zero’s brat.” He yawned while he sat up, letting her hand go. “Wha’cha doing
brat?” he asked after he stretch his upper body while sitting. “Oh fuck, it’s already this late? Shit. I
haven’t done my lesson plan.” then after clicking his tongue, he just waived it away, “Che, I’ll just
make up something tomorrow.” then he finally turned to her, “So what are you doing sneaking
around, hmmm, Anne, right?” he looked at the exquisite face of the little girl before him. When he
saw her, he had to blink a few times for he initially thought he was seeing a babe, only to reveal a
child. He groaned inwardly, he must have been too deprived as of late since he kept seeing a ghost of
a woman in her features. It didn’t help that she smelled so sweet. What was that fragrance called? He
knew that smell but he forgot the name of that white flowering plant.

“Ah.” She caught herself. She almost forgot it was her name he called for she was half-expecting or
rather, waiting for him to call her by her *name* like he normally do in her time. She straightened
herself and smiled, careful not to let the foolish sadness she’s feeling to show as it was no one’s fault
but her own, before giving him an answer, “I was just taking a short walk, Kaito-san.”

“Heh~? Pretty late walk you’re having, brat.” He grinned.

“That broke his smile, “Ah, I forgot, you’re a vampire. A pureblood. Tsk.” he growled, turning away
to look at another part of the landscape.

She stiffened at his reaction, greatly hurt by it. She gathered from the last time they met that he has a
deep hate for vampires she didn’t know about. It perplexed her because even though she knew that it
was the default feeling of every hunter, like Toga-sensei in the past, still she can’t understand why he
hated vampires so much that it’s out of the ordinary or rather he hated purebloods by the looks of it
as the silverettes’ encounter with him in the forest that day was disclosed to her. The Kaito she knew
didn’t display such hate towards their family. His sarcastic and crass remarks would always be
present but she knew that he’s just always been like that.

She frowned, confused and baffled, unsure of what to do. She’s been unsure on how to actually
approach him and make herself agreeable but now that there’s even that *hate* to mend, she’s even
more lost. Feeling all hope vanish from her, feeling the fates laugh at her, taunting her that her dream
was too impossible, her destiny sealed, her future unchangeable, and his heart unattainable.

“How do you hate me, Kaito-san?” she asked before she could stop herself.

The pain in her voice made the ash-brown hunter turned back his head and somehow he found
himself irritated at himself and the brat before him. He didn’t like how beautiful she looked even with
her downcast lilac eyes and quivering red lips but what caught him the most was that look in her
eyes, it’s a gaze of a woman. He stopped himself at that thought. *Woah! Don’t go there buddy, you
wouldn’t want your ass to land in jail!* He let out a harsh breath then he reached out to ruffle her dark
hair to which she looked up, surprised at his action. He grinned at her round lilac eyes, which he
found stunning, and responded, “Nah, I don’t hate you, brat.”

She started at his expression, not being able to say anything in reply as she was attacked by wistful
memories at his action. It’s all so familiar to her for it’s always what he does. With the exact same expression, with the same grin, same tone and the same look in his eyes that he’ll calm and assure her. She’s happy though she felt like crying instead as she watched her love whom she never attained, proven to have remained unchanged all through the years despite being so different from what she remembered since his core and the most important piece that is his heart remained to be something she’ll forever desire and it ache for she knew it was not her that holds that treasure but the woman whose name she took.

It drowned her heart. It’s painful, it’s suffocating, it hurts so much she can’t breathe.

She tried to rally her emotions but the strong reminder of her wish choked her. She thought she hid it all cleverly behind the mask she has mastered constructing all through the years but what she didn’t know was that the young hunter saw her agony though he didn’t know the reason which worried him. What? Wasn’t that counted as comforting? Fuck, she’ll cry. “Hey, bra-,” he started but was stopped when another hunter interrupted.

“Anne?” Zero was walking towards the Moon dorm to see the children when he felt his eldest nearby.

Her otou-chan’s voice came to her, instantly making her feel light as it’s always been a comfort every time she feels the pains of her heart. “Otou-chan!” she exclaimed, running to Zero and immediately hugging his waist, not noticing she’s trembling a bit, tightening her grip as she fought against crying miserably.

The silverette hunter noticed all of this and immediately jumped to the conclusion that she was terrorized by the crass ash-brown haired hunter. “What the hell did you do, Kaito?” he glowered, seriously pissed off at the man who dared harass his daughter.

“No, otou-chan, Kaito-san didn’t do anything.” she defended him while she shook her head. Her voice was a bit muffled for she didn’t trust herself not to cry if she lift her face when the person making her feel light, her otou-chan, her forever ally, is here.

Zero still frowned and was still pissed as hell at Kaito though he didn’t say anything more. It’s obvious that something happened or his daughter wouldn’t be acting like this. “Fine, let’s go.” he said after throwing Kaito one last glare. When Anne merely nodded but didn’t let go, he proceeded on to carrying her in his arms. He thought that she’ll protest but she even wrapped her arms around Zero and hid her face between his neck and shoulder. Yup, something definitely happened and if Kaito really caused this then he’ll make sure to kick his ass later.

He only threw one last glance at the hunter who was looking at his child quizzically, honestly confused as to what just happened.

As the silverette hunter made his way to the Moon dormitory, after a long silence, he finally asked, “What happened? Did Kaito say anything to you?” he felt her shake her head but he was all the more unconvinced, “Anne, tell me because if he did anything to you, I swear-,”

“No, otou-chan, believe me, really, Kaito-san didn’t do anything, I swear. It’s… it’s me.” she confessed, finally emerging from her hiding place and looked at her daddy’s face to assure him.

“Then why does it look like you’re about to cry?” he asked, now very worried about her as he saw unshed tears in her weary lilac orbs.
She wasn’t able to answer it immediately, “No… it’s really just me, otou-chan… it’s no one’s fault…” she began while hugging his neck tightly again and after a long pause, “it’s just hard for a woman’s heart,” she continued softly, “to be trapped in a child’s body…”

Zero stopped moving to process what she just said. \textit{What? What? What the fuck?} He was stunned when he understood what she meant. Then, after a few moments he finally managed to ask, “Seriously Anne, Kaito? Are you sure?” he was almost certain that his daughter was tricked at some point. How did it even come to that!?

And when his beloved daughter looked at him again with her furiously flushed face, shy smile and embarrassed but bright lilac eyes silently telling him that she’s serious, that she loves him, and that she has found the only man she’d ever want, the world stood still before it finally crashed down on him at mach speed.

He suddenly wanted to kick and beat up that jerk Kaito.

But why him? He was incredulous. One look and anyone will be able to tell that his daughter is perfect in every way whereas compared to the crude and indelicate bastard that Kaito is… granted, he’s one of best damn hunter in the association, easy on the eyes and with a good head on his shoulder, still, he somehow can’t accept it. Maybe he should do something…he was seriously contemplating never letting Kaito see his child ever or just plainly burying him alive when Anne spoke again.

“Otou-chan,” she expressed in a very gentle voice that’s begging to be heard, “Kaito-san is one of the most outstanding men I’ve ever met and I know that you know he’s a good person.” she smiled and it stunned him how womanly his little girl could look. He stared in her eyes that are overflowing with sincerity. His heart somehow sank at the thought of another man in her heart but he knew she’s right. Kaito may be a crass bastard but he’s a decent and good guy… though it’s not really enough to appease the raging storm inside him.

He’ll make sure that bastard will see hell first before he gets his eldest daughter. He won’t give his princess without a fight. He sighed.

“Kaname will not be happy.” He dejectedly replied. He finally got why some men didn’t want to have daughters… because no matter how much they treasure their little girls, in the end, they’ll still choose another man over them.

She giggled, “In the future, you both know this already. You’ll be fine, otou-chan. Know that no man will replace you and chichiue in my heart. I love you.” She hugged him again.

‘Ah’ he’s defeated. He sighed again while hugging her back, wishing very much that she’ll not grow up too fast.

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“Ah, Zero-sama, good evening.” beamed the energetic vampire when he entered the Moon dorm with Anne.

The hunter was taken aback by the greeting and started at the honorific. \textit{-sama? the fuck? }“Ichijou-senpai, don’t call me that.” Pale cheeks slightly coloring at the request.
“But you’re Kaname’s mate, in the future you’ll be his husband and so will be the king’s consort.” All of this was said matter of factly and without any hint of mockery but that didn’t prevent Zero from developing a full-blown blush.

“What the hell?!” he roared, his voice louder than he intended as he tried to hide his embarrassment.

Ichijou merely chuckled at his display of stubbornness and Anne watched amuse at her otou-chan, fighting the urge to say ‘but he’s right’ as he’ll really be their chichiue’s Royal Consort. She tactfully held her tongue. It might be too much for her poor blushing otou-chan to bear.

“Ah, gomen, gomen, should I call you Zero-kun then? Will that suit you?” Ichijou just asked indulgently as they walk towards the stairs.

“Whatever.” he turned away, his face still red much to his chagrined.

Ichijou led them to Kaname’s study which opened soundlessly right at the moment they reached it; they entered and were greeted by the sight of three brunettes doing what looked like paperwork. All three looked up when they entered. Kaname’s smile almost too captivatingly at the sight of his hunter, Kohaku’s was with ease while Akira jumped violently.

“Oh please dear Akira, don’t complain when you’re doing something as noble as helping chichiue. It’s unsightly.” she said coolly, “and I do intend to help, I just took my daily walk before I do.” she added before smiling sweetly. Akira looked at her suspiciously before pouting, “Maa, maa, look, I’ve even asked the cook for some tea, biscuits and cakes for snacks later on.” she offered enticingly.

“You’re the best sister in the world!” Akira took the bait very easily as he jumped to hug her.

Zero, Kaname and Ichijou smiled at them as Akira hugged Anne who patted his head while shaking at his naivety with an ‘oh-how-easy’ expression. “So, what else is left of the work? I’ll do the rest so you two can relax already.”

“Don’t worry about it nee-chan, we’re actually finished already. We’re just putting these in envelopes so that it can be sent out.” Kohaku spoke as he folded another letter to be put inside an envelope which their chichiue will close by a wax seal bearing the royal crest.

“Oh! You’re already finished?” Ichijou was seriously amazed as he knew that it was days’ worth of work that they intended to finish today.

“I was also impressed at how well they did the tasks. They clearly have experience with dealing with council matters as well as imperial work.” Kaname agreed, very proud of his sons’ abilities and intelligence.

“Hehe, of course, we’ve been taught well!” Akira beamed, very happy with the praise, to which Kohaku and Anne nodded.

“Ah, I knew I didn’t make any mistake when I volunteered you, my dear Akira.” she praised as she dramatically wiped away imaginary tears, “I’m proud of you my darling brother. I shall rest easy every time you do the work as I know it will be a job well done.”

Akira was nodding without really thinking and when it registered to him what his sister has been trying to imply. He immediately stopped and voiced his protest, “Hey, you’ll just make me do all the work!”
“Nonsense, who said you’d be alone? Of course not, you’ll always have Kohaku with you.” She declared with such a serene face devoid of any guilt, as if honestly baffled at his accusation.

“Nee-chan!” Akira whined while Kohaku merely sighed.

“I’m just kidding brother dear. You should know I’ll always help you.” she laughed while pinching her boisterous brother’s cheek. “Come, let me help you so we can come down for tea.” as she joined her two brothers in the center table of the study where they’re doing their work.

“I shall ask the cook for those treats.” Ichijou proposed as he smiled jovially before going to down to the kitchen.

When they were left alone with the children, the hunter started in a low voice.

“You slave-driver.” Zero whispered without looking at his mate, feeling more than seeing the smile on his annoyingly handsome face.

“Oh, aren’t I fortunate to have such lovely children?” he whispered back as he walked besides his lover who’s currently watching their children, instinctively wrapping a hand on his waist and resting his head on his shoulder as if it’s the most natural thing in the world. “and may I inquire as to why you came only now?”

Zero tried his hardest not to blush at Kaname’s show of affection as he answered in a low voice as to not be heard by the little ones and tone he hoped sounded like his natural sarcastic self, “I slept since someone tired me out.”

“Hmmmm, then I take it you have enough energy for later?” he felt his hunter tensed as he understood that, though it was said lightly, he’s being quite serious.

“Insatiable bastard.” Zero hissed which Kaname returned with a chuckle.

The door to the study suddenly opened to reveal the two newly awaken silverette twin, with Suiren rubbing an eye as she hold on to Naoto’s hand who led her there.

“Otou-chan!” Zero was immediately greeted and tackled by their youngest, they both tugged on his pants as they silently begged to be carried which the hunter immediately complied.

“They’ve been waiting for you to come when they fell asleep.” the brunette informed as he smiled. The two requested to see their otou-chan but as he has work to do and without anyone to accompany them, he asked for them to wait patiently for the hunter which they grudgingly nodded to while pouting.

“Hmmmm,” he merely hummed in response. He found it sweet that they’re being very clingy to him. He knew vampire children are very attached to their parents as children as they’re the ones who first feed them blood and protects them from any harm. He inhaled the twin’s comforting scent as he thought guess I won’t be able to avoid frequent trip to the Moon dorms. He looked at his lover watching him, with genuine happiness as well as mischievous glint in his dark burgundy eyes. He couldn’t help but roll his eyes at this, whatever; he knew he wouldn’t be able to escape anyway.

“We’re finished father! We put it on your desk to be sealed then it can be sent out directly.” Anne delivered the happy news. “So shall we go for tea?” she asked as she took the two silverettes and led them down to the lounge together with Kohaku and Akira who petitioned the addition of some pudding and ice cream to their snacks which was seconded by the two youngest. “Alright, alright, we’ll be going first otou-chan, chichiue as additional orders has been set for the kitchen,” and then she seemingly turned back to her siblings, “Seriously, you three, do you know that it’s not the palace
kitchen? We should be modest!”

Kaname smiled what wonderful timing. He had a feeling that Anne deliberately led the young ones away to provide them privacy. “My, what a matchmaker.”

“She apparently got your romantic nonsense.” Zero grumbled, also concluding the same, not wanting to look at the brunette who was left with him. He was about to step out when the door suddenly closed with a soft thud. He sighed. He was still a bit tired but he felt his body warm in anticipation, he willed his racing heart to slow down, as he knew what was coming. When Kaname next spoke, he felt his breath at the back of his neck.

“I can’t be more thankful for that.” the pureblood whispered in a deep voice that sent wonderful shivers down his hunter’s spine. He wrapped his arms around his lover from the back, to press his chest closer to Zero’s back then he gripped his jaw and motioned him to turn so he was able to kiss him over his shoulder.

He kissed his hunter torridly and possessively, feeling like it’s been years since he last did if judged by his thirst towards his petulant lover. He’s right. He’s insatiable, as he’s greedy and selfish towards everything about his mate. Kaname is sure as he felt his desires only become greater as he feels his warmth and weight, the unquenchable thirst making him gluttonous the more he taste. He must be steadily becoming insane but he welcomed the madness as he never felt more alive than with the arms of his stubborn lover.

The brunette dove his tongue even deeper, leaving no place in his silverette’s mouth unexplored as he savor the rich delicious taste of his tempting lips while his hand moved in to explore his body, greedy for his heat.

When he felt his pureblood’s hand travel southward, he immediately caught his lover’s hand as he struggle to break the passionate and sensuous kiss to have his voice heard, which was ragged by the time he finally got the chance “tea…” he breathlessly reminded him.

“I know…” but still continued as his tongue delved deeper to taste his lover’s luscious flavor, “Don’t worry… I’ll wait later… for the… main course.” he finished in between kisses. He continued on for a few more moments, finding it hard to honor his words as his hunter tempted him even as he stood there, still and unmoving. He didn’t know what is it about Zero that seduces him until he’s nothing but a fool. He only found that he loves the feeling of having this man in his arms.

It took a while before they were able to stop themselves and it took a while more before their bodies calmed down. Kaname reined his craving as he had no intention to sever himself from his lover.

“You have better informed the chairman because I won’t let you go even when morning comes.” He fiercely vowed as he had no intention to sever himself from his lover.

“You really are an insatiable bastard.” Zero heartlessly complained as the sweet warning of his pureblood made his heart tremble, anticipating his dark promise.

The brunette chuckled, “I am but only to you.” giving him a quick peck before finally letting him go only to take his hand and went downstairs to join the others.

By the time they arrived at the lounge, all treats have already been half-eaten but they didn’t mind as they’ve tasted far sweeter things and anticipated something even more so for later.
There was a buzz inside the Moon dorms that night as the occupants eagerly waited for their Royal visitors to emerge from their room as they’ll join them for their first class. The news about their princes and princesses’ transfer to the Night class was highly anticipated by the young vampires as the trick to the chairman’s second rule will be unraveled. The lower class vampires waited at the foot of the stairs anticipating how they’ll look like while their king’s closest confidants helped the children get ready.

Inside the pureblood’s room, Akira, Kohaku and Naoto ready themselves for the night, together with Kaname, Ichijou, Aido, and Akatsuki, all who were already dressed and just watching for when they transformed to their teenage appearance while the same could be said for the girls with Ruka and Rima in the other room across theirs.

“So, how will you do it?” Ichijou asked eager to see how a child will grow to a man right before their very eyes.

“It’s nothing really worth watching, we’ll just take this pill my sister made using her blood and that’s it, our limbs will grow and will take on the appearance of a grown up, it will stay like that for exactly 12 hours before we turn back to a child, so we’ll just take it every night before classes.” Kohaku explained. He’s wearing a bath robe too big for him, so are Akira and Naoto.

“Hey, it’s time, we need to drink it now or we’ll be late for class.” Akira excitedly informed his twin.

Kohaku looked at the time and when he confirmed that it was time to change, he gave a pill each to his twin and youngest brother both who took it immediately.

The other’s watched in amazement as they saw the limbs of each child grew and their bodies fill the earlier loose robes with muscles and lean bodies. In less than five minutes, they saw before them the grown up version of the three little children, marveling at their appearances.

The brunette twin proved to be a carbon copy of their king as they have two Kanames currently stretching right before them. Naoto on the other hand proved to be a perfect mix of their pureblood leader and his mate but as he possesses silver hair and lilac eyes, one will tend to think that he looks more like Zero.

They weren’t able to say anything, even Kaname. They only watched in silence as the children stretch their muscles before shrugging out of their robes to put on the white Night class uniform.

“Ngh! It was a long time ago since we last did this.” Akira reminisced as he stretched out his arms.

“Hmmm, isn’t it because of the trauma we had when nee-chan forced us to go to a ball in this form? We got swarmed by endless parents shoving their daughters to us for dances.” Kohaku shivered slightly, already putting on his uniform, as he remembered the nightmare that made him hate growing up.

“Ah… That’s right, I forgot…” Akira mumbled, slumping down a little as his eyes turned blank, that horrible night came back to him and he remember how bad his feet hurt then. That made him shut up for a few days.

“Daijobu, daijobu, nii-chan, I’ll protect you.” Naoto assured, his uniform messily put on, while patting Akira’s back.
“Nao!” he hugged his brother, “No, it’s big brother who’ll protect you!”

“Great, great, now that’s enough, we need to hurry or we’ll be late.” drawled Kohaku shaking his head, why is everyone in their family so odd and dramatic? He sighed.

The others can only watch at the exchange before them. They blinked as the young twin brunettes looked a lot like their king, it’s hard to process the fact and they had to mentally remind themselves that the one currently snuggling with the silver-haired teen, acting all childish and sweet, was not their king but his son.

Kaname found himself smiling, he felt really light. It was really unbelievable how great his future will be. He initially thought that he won’t ever have anyone he’ll love more than his sister and parents but here he is, currently feeling emotions that far surpassed even what he felt towards his surrogate family. Now he can confidently say that he’ll love no one more than he does his mate and children.

He felt his daughter outside the door so he willed it to open to allow her entry and even he stood in amazement as he watched his two beautiful daughters enter the room followed by Ruka and Rima who both gasped at the sight of the three grown boys.

The honey-haired vampire absentmindedly covered her mouth as she watched astounded as two Kanames put on their white blazers. It’s incredible how much they looked like her beloved pureblood leader.

After greeting him, Kaname watched as Anne came nearer her brothers while Suiren went to him to hug him around the waist. He patted her on the head, her silver tresses shinning like moonlight, being strongly reminded of the same silver hair he now greatly missed. He smiled as he felt proud of all his offspring, happy that he and his hunter made such beautiful children.

“You’re still not finished? How come we beat you in readying and we’re girls! You should be ashamed!” scolded Anne as she arched an eyebrow. She looked lovely wearing the white Night class uniform, carrying it in effortless grace befitting royalty. They were in awe at how much she looked like Kaname thereby looking a lot like their late queen, Juri Kuran, Kaname’s mother but with striking lilac eyes and big wavy curls. She went to Naoto to help him straighten out his uniform.

“What have you been doing?”

“Akira has been fooling around.” Kohaku listlessly confessed, giving away his twin brother who smiled sheepishly at their older sister.

“I knew it.” She just sighed as she helped Naoto don his white blazer. “Come, let me look at you three, I have to make sure that you won’t bring shame to father.” She inspected the three as she put both her hands to waist in a bossy manner.

“That would be impossible Anne. You’re all perfect.” the Night class was a bit surprised at their leader’s words but understood perfectly. They inwardly smiled as they saw Kaname’s contentment evident by his smile and mien.

“That’s right. You’re all very beautiful and handsome, no one will ever say otherwise, I assure you.” seconded by Ichijou with his signature smile

Anne giggled and beamed, feeling very flattered and pleased even though she heard it countless of times already, she’s happy that their father is pleased and proud of all of them. “Well, I guess you three passed,” she nodded, “shall we go chichiue?” she turned to their father.
He looked at the clock before assenting, “Well, I believe it’s time.”

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When the gates opened signaling the start of the Night class’ parade, all the mortal girls, even some boys, began to squeal as they shouted the names of their favorite Night class student. They were more rowdy than usual as the three prefects that were supposed to stop them have their heads up in the clouds. It’s highly noticeable that the guardians are distracted that’s why they all took this chance to try their luck and get as close as possible to the famous beauties of the Night class.

The night march would have turned into a bloody war because of the inattention of the three prefects, as Yuki and Ichiru’s mind were both occupied by blonds whereas Zero is feeling lethargic. He’s exhausted because a certain bastard refused to let go the whole night, making him too tired to go to class that morning and even now that it’s dark, his body has yet to recover. He didn’t have the strength to even shout at the pesky little monsters who are tormenting him with their shrill voices.

Zero took a deep breath and was just readying himself to bellow when the crowd suddenly went silent. When his direction flew to the Night class, he understood the reason as he was also startled by the sight. If he didn’t know that Kaname was an only child and that his young twin brunettes will be attending the Night class in their teenage version, by some mysterious spell of their eldest, he would have thought that Kaname is a triplet and those were his twins walking on either side of him. He marveled at how uncanny they looked alike. They could definitely stand in as Kaname in a crowd and no one will know, the only difference they had was the aura each brunettes possesses as Kaname wore his sophisticated mask, Kohaku have an indifferent expression whereas Akira sported an amused and boyish grin that undoubtedly enamored many of the night and Day class students. Kaname actually wearing a boyish grin, it could kill.

His eyes travelled at the stunningly beautiful lady besides Akira, he stared at her lovely face that greatly resembled the male brunettes besides her, with her long dark brown hair dancing with the wind in a mesmerizing way with her light lilac eyes bright with glee and excitement. She looked celestial as she walked with such grace and elegance that would shame all models and beauty queens, her smile turned even more charming when she spotted him which he returned in kind.

He next searched for his youngest twin silverettes who’re on Kohaku’s side and he sighed at how enchanting they looked. Suiren looked ethereal with her long silver straight hair, bright lilac eyes and milky white skin against the white Night class uniform and with the night sky, she looked translucent and glowing like a wingless angel in the darkness and with Naoto who she tangled her arms with, they’re a sight to behold. Naoto looked as immaculate as his twin and as breathtaking. He was like a Grecian god carved from the purest and whitest alabaster. He smiled as he watched them, they really are a mix of his and Kaname’s features and they looked so beautiful. Their light-colored features shone against the shadows of the night. They looked like a pair of dolls as they walked with Suiren’s arm around her twin.

He might be biased saying it himself but he thought that no vampire, even with their inhumanly gorgeous looks, will ever be able to surpass his children’s exquisiteness.

Kaname was very amused by all their reaction though he couldn’t blame any of them as even the whole Night class fell silent when all of them went down earlier. He saw the slack-jawed expression of every vampire as they took in each faces and there would have been a mighty confusion of who he was amongst the three male brunettes if only there was no difference with their smell and aura, as
his pureblood scent and aura is different from the hybrids’. They stared in awe at their beauty for even in a vampire’s standard, his children topped all the charts of their aesthetic senses.

While everyone was busy holding their breaths as they took on the beauty of the new arrivals, two blonds of the Night class actually took this chance to look at their beloveds. Ichijou spotted Yuki whom he greeted in his most magnanimous smile while waving in her direction which she returned in an equally cheerful smile while also waving, looking like two innocent elementary students whereas Hanabusa, who didn’t mind not being noticed for once by his fans as he’s busy looking at the younger silverette, sharply turned his head in Ichiru’s direction, catching his eyes briefly that made the silverette jolt visibly before turning away reflexively to avoid his piercing gaze. Ichiru immediately regretted it and inwardly cursed himself as he’s only digging his grave by further confirming his feelings with his actions.

Suiren unhinged her arms around her twin to run towards Zero when she spotted him, her smile forming that managed to further stun the Day class students who watched the new faces in the parade.

The crowd just belatedly register that the two new silverette beauties looked a lot like the two prefects and was further confused at their possible relationship with the Kiryū’s when the enchanting silver-haired beauty hugged Zero suddenly with a delighted smile on her lovely face.

They were about to shout indignant screams of unfairness when they stopped, amazed, as the forever cranky prefect who’s even crankier if possible, instead of scolding the new Night class student, granted her a gorgeous smile that took every Day class girls’ breath away. They stared and even had look at the other silver-haired prefect to make sure they were really looking at Zero Kiryū, their badass of the Day class and the demon prefect from hell. They all marveled as they never saw him smile before and they were reminded of the changes they noticed which were the new hot topic of the Day class girls.

Zero unknowingly had many secret admirers who were just refusing to admit their crush, what with his rude remarks and behavior, but as he kept on getting even more handsome in the past few days, some girls can’t help but be more enamored and now, with that smile, he just unwittingly made himself the prey of many, many women.

The hunter was unaware of the hungry eyes, previously trained on the Night class, now following him. He was busy adoring his youngest as she threw her arms up and twirl around seemingly wanting to show off her uniform and her new look to her daddy. He chuckled, “Yes, yes, you’re very cute.” as he patted her head.

This action made even more students fall hard for him as they saw him in a new light. He just looked too seductive with that smile and he just killed them with his laugh. They all looked at him so hungrily that they didn’t notice the drop in the temperature as Kaname noticed their fancy towards his mate which has become too apparent to everyone except to Zero who’s not looking. They didn’t notice the entire Night class shivered as they ogled the prefect.

All the vampires were in cold sweat while the two prefects, who were both shaken out of their inner musings, immediately tried to get Zero’s attention but they didn’t need to as the hunter looked up at his lover, feeling the tension as he’s overflowing with a displeased aura making even Suiren stiffen, with a quizzical brow arching up. ‘What the hell happened while I was not looking?’

“Chichiue, please, it’s because otou-chan is pregnant. It’s one of the reasons why he’ll grow alluring and become even more attractive, especially in mortal’s eyes. It’s designed so no one will even think of harming him.” Anne looked apprehensive as she begged their father to calm down.
Kaname sighed willing his aura to stand down. It’s unsightly to display such behavior especially in front of his children just because of jealousy. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath before opening them, his sophisticated mask back before continuing with leading the Night class. He of course acknowledged Yuki and Ichiru’s efforts and hard work, both who were shaken and quite scared of him after feeling his aura, before stopping in front of Zero who’s still looking at him questioningly.

“Good evening Zero. I trust you’re well.” He inquired with a smile that made his hunter lean backwards as he’s not fooled. He felt the danger behind that sweet smile. Something tells him he’ll be too exhausted to move again if his pureblood captured him tonight (‘Why? What did I even do!?’). “Be careful not to let your guard down and be taken advantage of.” he added in a whisper, with a serious warning tone that made even the brave hunter gulp.

They began to move but not before Anne hugged her Otou-chan and though she made a mental note not to publicly show affection to him as to not raise question, she still forgot as she tiptoed to kiss his cheek like they always did when they’ll be away. She only remembered too late when there was an outburst from the Day class students.

“Wha! Who is she Kiryū?”

“Is she your girlfriend?”

“Noooooooo!!”

This made Anne jumped. Oh dear, what have I done?

“Eh? Ah. I’m so sorry,” then Anne mouthed soundlessly, “Otou-chan.”

“It’s okay, go now. Have fun.” Zero just smiled as he ruffled her hair. There was even more violent reaction with this; both from his unknowingly new found fans and from the men who won’t allow a Day class man get such a beauty for a girlfriend, especially not from the Night class.

After watching his daughter join the rest of the Night class who were waiting for her, he turned back to the rowdy students and proceeded with his normal duties, “Shut up! Go back to your dorm!”

-Hana are you okay?” Kain immediately addressed his cousin who has been strange since yesterday after he came back to the dorm. He found out from their vice-president, who’s becoming even more cheerful to the point that it’s annoying, that he suddenly disappeared after he has gone with Ruka and since he didn’t say anything to him coupled with his silence which is the sole proof that something is incredibly wrong, as his cousin is never silent, he came to inquire if something is the matter with him.

“Huh? Of course.” Hanabusa just answered absentmindedly, his mind still with the young silverette. Kain was all the more unconvinced by this. His cousin didn’t even display his usually flamboyant attitude nor give his admirers the normal fan service he usually bestowed them, clearly, something is wrong! “Hana, are you sure?”

“Huh? Of course.” he repeated in the same distracted manner.
Kain sighed, he decided that he’ll just try again later, clearly his cousin is not yet sane enough to answer him coherently, at least he’s being silent, he’ll just observe him until his soul comes back to him to make sure he won’t do anything stupid.

“I’m sorry for the commotion I’ve caused chichiue.” Anne apologized to their father after they arrived inside the classroom.

“There’s nothing to apologize for, Anne. I’m sure Zero will be able to handle it.” Kaname assured his repentant eldest. He even found it a good opportunity if the rest of the Day class students will think that Zero is involve with Anne as he’s sure that no one would compete with his little princess, what with her extraordinary good looks, so anyone who actually dared to eye his hunter will give up on him entirely though it’s only as long as they thought him involve with her or Suiren for he’ll not allow it if it’s with anyone else. He’ll only endure it because they’re their daughters. He inwardly sighed, if only he could announce to everyone that Zero is his... though he believed his hunter would definitely pack all his belongings and leave permanently afterwards.

“Alright chichiue!” Anne perked up at Kaname’s assurance. She inwardly promise to be more careful and when the bell rang signaling the start of homeroom, she went back to her seat which was just in front of Kaname who’s with Naoto and Suiren at the back of the class, she seated herself between Akira and Kohaku. She anticipated their third class where she’ll see the apple of her eyes, Kaito Takamiya-sensei.

She felt him even before he entered the classroom with his signature smirked clearly designed to irritate and annoy the vampires inside the room as if he really wanted to cause a commotion to have an excuse to shoot the vampires in the head. It’s an expression that aggravated most of the occupants of their classroom but it’s a familiar expression that always made Anne happy. She smiled as he entered the room and introduced himself.

“Yo bloodsuckers, I’m Kaito Takamiya, I’ll be your Intermediate Mathematics teacher, nice to meet you all,” he smirked, “be careful not to sleep in my class because I’ll be happy to make you close your eyes forever with my gun.” this caused many of the students to react violently. Some even stood up as they snarled as they knew he’s a hunter and that they’re being challenged.

The young brunettes sighed and shook their heads. ‘same old Kaito-san/jiichan’

“Enough.” Kaname’s warning resounded in the room, silencing the snarls of the outraged vampires, “sit down.” he motioned to those who stood up.

“Heh~,” was all Kaito said when the vampires readily obeyed the pureblood “Tsk, well, I guess I’ll start with the roll call, let’s see. Senri Shiki is still excused? Never mind that.” He skimmed the names and stared when he saw several Kuran in the list. He frowned and his eyes traveled to the pureblood’s direction and he only noticed that there were three purebloods inside the room and those weird auras are also present. He started at the appearance of the supposed to be little brats. What the
He was surprised, though he didn’t show it, and instantly knew the reason why they updated the master list. Damn the chairman, *he didn’t even inform me of anything like this!* He sighed as he mentally made a promise to complain to the ex-hunter later, for now he’ll do his job as the sensei of these vamps. He focused his attention to the lesson, trying his best not to turn his gaze towards the pureblood’s way as he earlier glimpsed of a certain young lady whose appearance is adamantly trying to steal is concentration. *Fuck, why did she have to look like that? Damn it!*

Anne smiled as she watched Kaito go on with the lesson, feeling happy while she listened to his voice as he explained the equation and stared at the white board as his surprisingly tidy scrawl enchanted her.

When he asked someone to answer the question on the board, no one but Anne raised her hand to volunteer (Aido still too busy in his inner world to participate, some are still too angry to care). Kaito avoided looking at her as much as possible and he didn’t want to pick her but he had no choice so he called her name without looking at her direction, after that, he can call any other student he felt like bullying.

He waited for her to come and when she walked pass him, he was instantly attacked by the same sweet scent that enticed his senses. He’s becoming greatly irritated at that smell and he didn’t like how fascinating her long hair swayed or how perfect her features are. He didn’t want to look at those striking lilac eyes nor those smiling red lips. *Damn vampire beauty.* He cursed inwardly and he passed on the fact that he was never seduced by any of the vampires’ inhumane beauty, except for this one.

“Explain your answer.” he asked, devoid of any sign of admiration.

Anne was even livelier and more upbeat as she explained how she was able to come up with the answer, her eyes bright with glee.

He first only stared at her then he sighed and cursed inwardly as he got the feeling he’s not suited to being a teacher.

“Yeah, that’s right, good job brat.” he resignedly complimented as he allowed himself to smile a little, he didn’t want to but he can’t helped it, it’s hard to hate these brats anyway and they’re Zero’s kids after all, he convinced himself.

Anne felt her day be completed by that single praise. She has balls under her feet when she returned to her seat. She didn’t even notice that her father was looking at her quizzically as her liveliness and smile is quite different from her usual happiness and smiles. He has lived for a very long time to know what that could mean. He looked again at Kaito who continued his dutiful lecture.

*It can’t be…*
empty. Anne took this chance to occupy it to play some notes in the grand piano.

She smiled sadly as she stroke the keys and started producing a melancholically beautiful melody. She’s happy and sad at the same time as she wished for her dream to come true so much that it’s painful. She wants it so much it hurts as she realized that being with him is something she’ll covet her entire life. It’s irrevocable, unchangeable. It could only be him.

She was playing as she poured her longing and yearning for her unreachable love. She was so immersed with her emotions and her playing that she didn’t even noticed the presence just outside the parlor.

Kaname leaned on the door, silently listening to his daughter’s playing when his hunter, who came to check on the kids to see if anything happened on their first class, spotted him. Without explaining, he just suddenly said, “Something tells me that our little princess is pining for someone.”

“Oh,” he sighed; he immediately understood, “So you noticed huh?” he slyly glanced at his pureblood to see his reaction as he took the space besides him and also leaned his back against the door of the lounge.

“Hmmmm, a hunter huh,” he turned to his mate, “Like father, like daughter.” he smiled though he felt troubled as he knew that loving a hunter is a most thorny path for a vampire, not to mention a pureblood royalty, like her. He wondered with apprehension at his daughter’s choice of beau, he knew that there will be hurt and pain, one way or another.

He looked at his hunter’s lilac eyes, he smiled sadly, feeling lucky as he felt his fortune of having his beloved turn to him at last and then terrible worry as his daughter might not be as lucky as him.

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The dwellers of the Moon dormitory were so preoccupied with their own worries that they weren’t able to sense the arrival of a certain vampire inside the academy. His familiar copper hair raged with the wind but instead of his normally sleepy blue-grey eyes, what bore his handsome face were icy cruel mismatch eyes of blue and red and instead of the normally laid back expression, there was a vicious and merciless smile that adorned his visage making him look sadistic and ruthlessly gorgeous.

The twisted smile he made as he anticipated meeting his dear nephew was even more poisonous as he thought how much he waited for the opportunity to finally face his great ancestor and exact his revenge. He’ll make sure that he’ll feel the agony he had felt and afterwards, he’ll savor the blood of every one he hold dear and lay waste to this world he tried very much to protect. He let out a wicked laugh that would send shivers even to the most courageous hunter then proceeded to the Moon dorm to have his much awaited family reunion.

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The wind roared outside causing quite a storm even without any rain pouring down and with it came the dawn of the impending chaos the pureblood knew will inevitably rampage, the beginning of the evil that will throw them all into the swirl of pandemonium.
He realized it too late as he immersed himself in feeding his hunter as Zero needed to be fed regularly to nurture their developing child. He was watching him sleep; feeling a bit dissatisfied that he collapsed as soon as he finished his meal that he wasn’t able to ravish him though he can’t blame him, perhaps two days in continuous succession was a bit too much. And so he contented himself by stroking his soft silver tresses when he belatedly register the disgusting presence of the vampire who just entered the academy premises, his disguised was not able to mask the stench that he has.

He was suddenly alert, alarm quickly filling him for his worst nightmares were about to start, as his initial plan was no longer an option for he’ll die first than let his hunter face off the monster that threatens to destroy everything that he is. He grimaced.

When he first met the hunter, greatly unaware of the feelings he’ll have for him in the future, he strategized making him the knight that would finished what he couldn’t do as restrictions of blood and bond stopped him. He initially wanted Zero to be his tool, thinking he can dispose of him once he has accomplished his goals, to use him as his killing machine. Now, he can’t even imagine leaving him to handle this fight or to let him shed a drop of his blood. No, he'll let himself be destroyed first before letting any harm claim his love. He’ll never allow it and so he rose from his position by Zero’s side and granting him a gentle kiss before going out of the room, setting up a barrier as he go so he won’t feel the events that’ll follow. He went to the room in front to do the same and to check on their slumbering children, all whom are safely tucked in their beds before he went down to face their unwanted visitor, Seiren suddenly behind him.

He saw Ichijou waiting for him at the foot of the stairs, worry in his emerald eyes clearly reflected.

“Kaname, it’s Senri, he…” he stopped as Kaname merely nodded. They both knew what awaited them as they began to follow the screaming aura that clearly taunted them.

Their search led them to the lounge. They found the copper-haired vampire sitting snuggly by the fire, his mismatched eyes reflecting fascination as he watch the flames dance as if he’s looking at the future he wanted for his dear nephew, he then turned to greet him.

“Ah, Kaname, how beautiful you’ve grown!” he greeted as he stood, opening his arms as if to embrace his favorite nephew, “You’re well, I hope?”

“Enough uncle, you should know that there’s no need for hypocrisy.” Kaname replied coldly, his voice not reflecting his apprehension.

“Kukuku, you have not changed my dear nephew, still uncute even after all these years.” he teased as he let out a very sick laugh that made Ichijou cringed.

“What are you doing here Rido and what have you done to Senri’s body?” Kaname continued as if Rido didn’t speak. He felt some auras approach them; evidently, the Night class felt the same disturbing presence of his pureblood uncle.

“I’m here to fulfill my promise of course; you know what I’ve wanted ever since that day I’ve awoken you. You owe it to me and I demand to take it.” his smile becoming even more twisted than the last.

“Kaname-sama! Wha-?Shiki?” Hanabusa stopped at the sight inside the lounge. He wasn’t able to sleep when he suddenly felt the frightening aura of another pureblood so he came with Akatsuki. They met Ruka and Rima on the way, both also felt the strange, mad aura.

“Shiki? What are you doing?” Ruka’s normally elegant and melodious voice slightly shook from fear she can’t explain. What’s wrong with him?
“….Who are you?” Rima’s confused voice, which was rarely heard, filled the silence. She instantly knew that it’s not the Senri she knew. He’s someone else; someone is using her Senri’s body.

“Ah! How wonderful, more spectators! Hmmm, you,” he motioned to Rima, “Are you Senri’s girl? My, my, my, I guess my son’s taste is not that bad.” His tyrannical laugh that filled the room sent shivers down the nobles’ spines.

Kaname released his aura; he’s growing impatient of Rido’s taunt and madness. “Enough Rido, release Senri and go. You are not welcome.” He warned as the room trembled, he felt the Night class shrink in fear but it did nothing to his uncle whose mismatched eyes still displayed the same haughty and cruel intentions. He’s confident, of course, that Kaname can’t touch him, their bond as master and servant will prevent him from doing any lethal damage to him. He’ll never be able to kill him.

Then it started. It happened fast as without any more words uttered, Rido nicked his index finger to draw out his blood whip which he immediately lashed at Kaname who was shielded by Seiren but what happened next was something he, not even Kaname, didn’t anticipate as a small child of six with a quaint aura he has never felt before, seemingly appeared out of nowhere.

Kohaku dashed out in lightning speed as the whip was about to hit their father, he positioned himself in front of Kaname and their aunt Seiren. He crossed his arms together in front of his face and Rido was surprised as his solid whip suddenly turned back to normal blood, splattering the child, his nephew and the Night class with his pure blood, its scent filling the room.

“That’s messy!” a voice came from another child. Rido was astounded, it only dawned upon him the children’s visage, they looked like him and Kaname. Kurans. Twins? What are they? He wasn’t able to recover before a gush of cold wind penetrated the room. He only vaguely registered the window of the room being opened before he realized that something, no, someone, has come near enough to pierce through him with a blade.

“Kohaku! Akira! Anne!” Kaname was stunned. He didn’t feel them wake or come down. He was shocked at their appearance and even more so at the sight of his eldest daughter stabbing his uncle in his cousin’s body with her white katana.

“Senri!” Ichijou was shocked at their sudden arrival and when it finally dawned to him that Anne is stabbing his roommate through the heart, he was paralyzed with fear.

Rima wasn’t able to utter a single sound. She was only able to gape as she watched the horror in front of her and she became weak as she felt cold fear grip her heart. “Nooo!” she finally managed. She was about to run when she hit a solid, invisible wall.

“Calm down, Rima-bachan. Nee-chan will not kill Senrijii, I assure you.” Akira reassured in a mild and serious tone, far from his normally boyish and mischievous one.

“Greetings grandfather. It’s the first time we met and I greatly apologize that it should be through these unfortunate circumstances that we’ll finally become acquainted. Alas, we must also part for as chichiue said, you are not welcome. Please forgive this impolite child, if you can.” Anne expressed in a soft and gentle tone as if she’s introducing herself over tea and not while she’s stabbing her companion with her blade.

Rido looked down at the child who pierced him, he was stunned at her exquisite face that greatly resembled his most coveted little sister except for the lilac eyes that reflected no fear towards him. He didn’t know what they are but he felt himself grinning as new ambition formed. Still, he’s baffled as to where these children came from then he was reminded of the memories his son withheld from him the moment he took over his mind. Of course he tried to look at memories this foolish boy refused to
show but what he saw first was the memory of that girl Rima so concluded that they’re merely foolish romantic memories of her that he held onto to avoid mixing her with his mad plans so he let it go, seeing as it’s useless to him anyway but now, he knew his son was hiding far more greater things. *How very loyal to his king.* He then began his harsh and violent intrusion inside Senri’s mind and he grinned as he found what he was searching for.

They watched in horror as Senri’s body shook violently, jolting Anne and making her press his body harder against the wall, while his face contorted in suffering then to a twisted grin then back to painful agony.

“Senri! Senri!” Rima began to hit on the sturdy invisible wall that surrounded them when Shiki started screaming in anguish before he maniacally laughed only to scream in agony again, unaware that tears started to fall from her eyes. “No! Please! Stop it! Help him! Senri!” she panicked. She can’t take any more of this nightmare. She can feel Senri’s pain. She begged to be released so she can go to him. “Akira-sama, please!”

“Rima-bachan, please calm down. Nee-chan!” Akira tried to convince them. He can’t release the barrier that protected the Night class as they’ll only get in the way but since he also can’t take any more of the sickening picture of their grandfather’s torture, he implored his sister to do something fast.

But even before Anne can utter the spell that will sever their grandfather’s soul from their uncle’s body, he suddenly stopped screaming then he opened his eyes. It still revealed the mismatched colors of red and blue partnered with the heartless and cold-blooded smile that let them know they’re facing Rido.

“Hah! How wonderful. That blood. Hmmm, how simply wonderful. Kukuku... hahahaha!!” Anne was taken aback as he laughed as if he’s currently not at a disadvantage, as if he’s not being stabbed through the chest, as if he’s not pinned against the wall, “and you, the power of time? How marvelous. Simply marvelous!” He turned to face her and she was shocked at the madness reflected in his eyes. That alone made her tremble slightly. She never saw anyone as insane as this person and this is what made him even more frightening, “My nephew, I’m amazed at your choice. I was disappointed at first since you picked a *man* but now that I know he’s a Suzaku, I can’t help but approve! Excellent!” he turned to Kaname who blanched at his words. “I’m hurt that you kept him away from me. I want to see him.” he declared as he grinned, his eyes reflected his intent.

Kaname shook with anger at this, his enraged aura poured out from him, “You’ll never have him.” he almost snarled, which made the Night class take a step back. They have never seen their king this angry and murderous before.

“Oh, but that’s what I’ll make sure of. I would have wanted to have your other brats as well but since they won’t have a chance to see this world, I guess this one will be enough.” He smirked fiendishly, “I can just create my own!”

Kaname and Anne were jarred at this, “I think not.” She glared as she finally found her courage again at his statement. She put her left hand on her katana and cut herself to smear her sweet smelling blood on her blade before pushing it further into his uncle’s body, even piercing through the wall as she did. She ignored the horrified screams and exclamations of her aunts and uncles and focused her mind at the task at hand. She then began muttering a spell under her breath which morphed her lilac eyes into blood red. The room shook as Senri’s body writhe as if being electrocuted. She stared intently as the colors of his eyes flickered back and forth to the cruel red and blue of her grandfather’s to the somnolent blue-grey color of her uncle’s. She knew it was almost finished but before the blue-grey color prevailed, he suddenly gripped her hand which held the katana to lean his
“I’ll come back for you and your ‘otou-chan’.” He smirked as he let out one last sadistic laugh before his body was thrown backwards by Anne’s invisible force and flattened him against the wall.

“Be gone.” She uttered with finality. He let out one final scream before he lay motionless. When peace triumphed, she then carefully retracted her sword and gently caught her uncle in her arms.

“Shiki!”

“Senri!”

“Anne!”

“Nee-chan!”

Everyone shouted all at once causing quite a dramatic confusion as Akira dissolved the barrier that trapped their father, aunts and uncles to stop any action. They all gathered around the two.

“Senri! Senri!” Rima and Ichijou were immediately on their knees besides the seemingly lifeless body of the copper-haired vampire. “It can’t be, will he die?” Ichijou asked, very pale with worry while Rima cradled Shiki’s head on her bosom as she cried incessantly. They would only register later that it was the most emotion they saw from the orange haired vampire.

“Well, don’t worry.” Anne weakly assured them.

“But you pierced him with your sword, in the chest.” Ichijou asked, his words a bit too fast.

Instead of answering, she just showed her blade which was stained with only one blood, hers as evident by the scent, and that was when they realized that there was no scent of Shiki’s blood in the air nor was there any wound in his chest.

“Wha! How!?” Hanabusa was as flabbergasted as the rest while Kaname can only stare in quiet regard. It’s impossible that they imagined all of it. They’re all sure that she stabbed him through the heart.

“I have the power of dimensions so instead of piercing uncle, I made it passed through grandfather’s soul’s chest then I used my blood to sever their connection so he’ll never be able to manipulate him again.” She explained a bit breathlessly, “He took a great damage but he won’t die from it as he can only be completely killed in his own body…” she finished. She smiled weakly at the awestruck faces of her uncles.

“Are you alright, nee-chan? You look pale. I told you it’s not wise to use another powerful spell when you have yet to even recover one tenth of your original power,” Kohaku inquired with a worried frown.

“No one else will be able to do it,” she lightly defended, panting a bit, feeling very weak indeed. She of course knew that she was burdening herself further but it can’t be helped because she’s the only one who can sever the connection of his uncle and grandfather forever as she’s the only one who held the power to manipulate dimension thereby being able to cut the normally unreachable string that attaches his grandfather’s soul in their uncle’s body.

“Anne, are you alright?” this time, it’s Kaname’s voice filled with worry and concern which shook her.
She opened her mouth to give her usual assurances when everything spun before her and darkness claimed her consciousness. She only vaguely heard the panic and clamor as she let herself drift off to sleep.

There was a great commotion inside the Moon dormitory that early morning as all the vampires inside woke up at the great pressure of a pureblood’s and their king’s, princes’ and princess’s auras then came the smell of pureblood in the air as well as a very strange sweet smell they had no doubt came from Anne-hime. They were all in the right fit of worry as when they’re all about to storm out of their respective rooms to protect the royal family, they found that they can’t go out and that they’re trapped inside their rooms because without their knowledge, their little prince, Akira, encased each room with a powerful barrier to protect them and simultaneously avoided getting them mixed up as well as having them in the way of the fight.

When the barrier was lifted, they immediately went to the source of the tumultuous power and they were met with Chairman Cross who’s carrying their other prince, Naoto, in his arms while being followed by the two prefects, Ichiru and Yuki.

They were about to proceed to the lounge when their King emerged from the room carrying his eldest daughter in his arms, followed by the twin brunettes then Akatsuki who’s carrying Shiki, Toya, Ichijou, Aido, Souen and Seiren hot on their heels. They were mightily confused with the situation.

“Kaname-kun! What happened?” immediately asked by the very flustered chairman, “Nao-chan said that he-.”

“Chairman, let us go up to my study first. Ruka and Takuma, stay here and control the rest of the Night class.” Kaname intervened before Kaien can finish as this is very important matter that can only be discussed in private, promptly giving out instructions to put the situation under control.

They all proceeded upstairs in Kaname’s room while Ruka and Takuma explained to the rest about a surprised attack that happened and assured everyone that the situation was already contained and there’s no need for alarm. Kain who’s carrying Shiki went to the clinic with Rima and Seiren as Kohaku advised that he will open his eyes after a few hours so to let him feel comfortable.

When Kaname willed the door to his room to open, it revealed the angry face of his lover. Zero stood in the middle of the study with Suiren’s arms wrapped around his left leg, seemingly trying to stop him from attacking their father at first sight.

“Kaname, you bastard!” was Zero’s greeting to him. His hands curled into a ball so tightly that they could almost smell his blood in the air. Everyone who followed their king jumped at this as they never saw the silver-haired hunter get this angry. Yuki and Ichiru, even Kohaku and Akira, specially cringed at this because they know that face all too well as it’s the face their brother/daddy that would mean you’re-so-dead. It is his expression when he’s as angry as can be, no wonder Suiren is valiantly trying to stop their otou-chan from moving with her own body.

“Zero,” Kaname merely sighed, apprehensive but not fearful at his lover’s apparent anger. He knew it will come down to this should Zero find out he’s being left behind to be protected though he wondered how did he even knew when he specially erected a barrier to ensure he’ll not feel a thing
whilst inside the room. When he looked at his children, he decided that he might already know the answer. He sighed again.

“How is she?” his lover next asked, his voice becoming a tad calmer as he inquired about their daughter’s health while still glowering at him, “Be quick and bring her inside.”

The pureblood nodded at this and they proceeded to the adjacent room where he carefully laid down Anne on the soft mattress. He was followed inside by Zero, who picked up Suirens as he really can’t move with her stopping him (he was once again surprised by their children’s power as Suiren was seriously able to hold him back with her strength which normally was impossible to be contained inside her tiny body), together with everyone else.

“Will my granddaughter be okay?” the chairman asked as he carried Naoto inside the room.

“Don’t worry grandpa, nee-chan will be fine. It’s just that manipulating dimensions is a hard trick that requires a large amount of power, not as much as a time spell though, and as nee-chan has yet to recover from the time travel spell, it just took a toll on her body. She’ll recover after some rest.” Kohaku explained in the lightest manner possible. Of course, he also tactfully kept that aside from that, their sister has also been tiring herself to make as much blood pill that will enable them to grow to teenagers as her current power allowed her. If their parents and grandpa decided to make them stop attending the Night class because of that, he’s sure that she’ll strangle him to death instead.

“I see, that’s good then.” He sighed in relief then turned back to the pureblood whose normally impassive eyes now clearly reflect frustration and anguish. “Is it really him, Kaname-kun?”

Kaname nodded, “Yes, I’m afraid so. Rido is indeed back.”

The atmosphere inside the room visibly dropped as their king confirmed the terrible news. Only the two prefects seemed to be a bit puzzled as the name seems to be a spell for calamity. Zero, as a hunter, of course knew the tragedy of the Kuran Royal family. How their ambitious and insane older brother killed both the late king and queen of the vampire society, leaving their prince, Kaname as the sole heir to the throne but only that as the specifics were left to be discussed by the adult hunters and he was only a child then but what he’s wondering about was the content of their conversation.

“Kaname, what did he mean by it? What promise? What did he want from you? What did he mean by awakening you?” Zero questioned and he saw that each question made his mate paler and more uneasy. Why? What is Kaname hiding?

“Zero, I -,” he was still hesitating to reveal it all. He’s not yet prepared to confess it all to his mate as he knew, he just knew, of the hate he’ll unleash with this revelation because with it, he was planning to tell him of all his crimes and sins, including one that was connected to his beloved’s life and how he manipulated him in the past for his own selfish goals. He was hesitating when he was fortunately interrupted by their now stirring daughter.

Zero looked at his pureblood apprehensively because the agony, misery and fear he saw in his burgundy eyes as well as felt through their budding bond didn’t escape him. It made him nervous as he knew Kaname is hiding horrors he didn’t want him to know. He caught his vampire deliberately allowing himself to be distracted by their daughter and he decided that perhaps, it’s not yet the time to know. He only wished that Kaname will be truthful to him soon.

“Ung hmmm, chichiue? Otou-chan?” Anne began in a tired voice.

“Anne, are you feeling better?” Kaname asked as he held one of her hands. He’s still worried as she still looked exhausted and very pale.
“Yes, father, please don’t worry. How are you? How’s Senriji?”

“Senri is still in the clinic but we’re all good thanks to you three. But that was dangerous. Why did you attack him and how did you even know of this?” Kaname frowned a bit as he asked, feeling the anguish and frustration flood his feelings, his protective instincts in the fore.

“It’s Suiren, she’s a clairvoyant. She can see bits of the future, especially impending doom, and transfer her visions to other people. That’s how I knew what was happening even though you locked me here.” It was Zero who answered the question.

Everyone else except to those who knew this already was amazed at this. Kaname was only a bit surprised before he nodded.

“That’s right, chichiue, Suiren told us about grandfather’s visit so we made a plan and countermeasures even before you set up the barrier. I’m sorry about that, father. I just thought it will be better to quickly sever uncle from Rido-ojisama to avoid any damage to Senriji…” she explained repentantly, they all knew that it was impulsive and dangerous to do it but the sooner they got their uncle back, the better as it will be beneficial to their father to have his closest aides nearby and it will also hurt everyone to have to fight the copper-haired vampire. It will break Takuji and Rima-bachan’s hearts.

Kaname looked grim but didn’t say anything as he tried to rein his feelings of dissatisfaction. He’s greatly displeased with himself as to have let his children face the monster instead of him. He felt useless and powerless. He didn’t notice that his aura already escaped, cracking the window glasses as he felt the need to murder his uncle who dared threaten his family and ruin it for the second time.

“Kaname,” his hunter’s voice resounded in the quiet room as everyone fell silent at the frightening tension coming from him.

“Chichiue, please.” Anne pleaded, worry at her father’s feelings.

Kaname also felt the tug on his black shirt by his twin brunettes, worry on their faces.

Kaname sighed. He shouldn’t drag everyone in his gloom, so he retracted his aura, making everyone breathe easy before he turned to his hunter and children. “I’m fine, thank you, but please do not attempt to do something so dangerous again. If something were to happen to you all, I wouldn’t know what to do.”

“Then maybe you should include me as well when you’re about to face something like that.” Came Zero’s retaliation. He’s clearly still angry at being left behind. “You know that I can fight. I’m not some damsel to protect Kaname!” he only barely managed not to curse as he felt his irritation come running back to him. When he woke up with Suiren and after she showed him the images, he immediately tried to go down only to be stopped by the barrier Kaname erected and as much as he wanted to, he wasn’t allowed to leave. His children were able to with their powers but they can’t take it off to let him out and he has a great suspicion that they also didn’t want to even if they can.

“I know that well, but now, especially now Zero, I can’t let you do that. If you’re shown the events then surely you must know that Rido now intends to have you and our child inside you.” Kaname stood to face his hunter as he spoke, “and you should know that I’ll die first before he gets you.”

Zero froze at the intensity he saw in his pureblood’s eyes. He saw the beast that lingers inside his deep burgundy eyes that’s determined to tear down anyone who would dare come snatch its mate. He was silent only for a while before he turned his gaze away. “Bastard.” was all he was able to say in response.
“What should we do then, Kaname-kun?” Kaien inquired next, trying to divert the awkward situation.

“We wait first. Anne said that he took a great damage because of her attack,” the pureblood started as he turned to the ex-hunter before nodding to his daughter who also nodded back to agree with his words, “so we’ll wait and anticipate the next attack. Of course, we must be vigilant and think of all possibilities of what the next attack will be. We need to protect Zero as he’s the target,” He ignored the indignant reaction of his lover as he looked at everyone in the room and he stopped when he saw Ichiru as a thought came to him. “We must also protect Ichiru. You’re also a Suzaku and Rido might target you as well.”

Zero’s grumble that was disregarded on purpose was put to a stop at that as he took on that fact well. He suddenly felt worried for his brother as well.

“We’ll need to set someone to watch over you at all times,” Kaname murmured a bit absentmindedly as he thought of who could be up to the task when his eyes roamed to the vampires currently present and his eyes caught the only other vampire within his loyal subjects that was present in the room. “Aido, look after Ichiru and protect him at all cost.”

The blond and the younger silverette prefect jolted at this.

Ichiru wasn’t able to stop his eyes from widening and was about to voice his incensed opinion about the pureblood’s order when the blond vampire spoke.

“With my life, Kaname-sama.” He accepted with such sincerity that highly satisfied his king. Hanabusa then turned his head to the startled younger Kiryū who met his determined sapphire orbs with confused lilac ones.

Only the children and Yuki, who was watching the exchanges with a suppressed smile, managed to catch Ichiru turning away to the other side to avoid Hanabusa’s piercing gaze with a blushing face while the pureblood, the hunter and the chairman discussed tactics and enhance security inside the academy.

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Truth and Feelings

He took a step forward, followed by another, and heard it imitated by another pair of legs. He stopped and so did his annoying stalker. He moved forward only to be imitated again.

Ichiru felt a vein popped because of irritation built up. **Damn, stupid nii-san and senpai!**

The silverette quickened his pace and so his annoying guard while internally cursing his brother and his future brother-in-law. He can’t believe that his motion for reconsideration fell on deaf ears. They just totally ignored him and his indignation of being able to protect himself well. Alright, perhaps it’s pipe dream to think he can actually stand up against a pureblood and they may be right in thinking he needed a guard, though his male and hunter ego hurts like hell, but why him? Why **him**!? And this stupid vampire, why are you so obedient? Didn’t you hate me? Is he really just loyal or was he really trying to get more in his nerves? Isn’t he disgusted by him? What is he trying to do? Is he really just playing with him then?

He wanted to explode. He’s so confused already as it is and now, even more so. He’s also hurt, he’s been trying to erase these feelings and now, he’s being tempted more than ever as they’re brought closer to each other. **Damn!**

“Damn, Aido-senpai, enough!” he finally blew up and faced the blond vampire who still have an easy expression despite the silverette’s anger, “Don’t you have better things to do like sleep? It’s early in the morning!”

Hanabusa just smiled. If he’s following just anyone else, he would have agreed as resting was one of his favorite activities during the day and he hated the sun very much but as it’s Ichiru, he wouldn’t even mind staying up all day or being burned to charcoal so long as he can, and legally, protect and watch over his beloved silverette. “Kaname-sama asked me to protect you and that’s what I’ll do.”

Ichiru ignored the pain that he felt at the blonde’s words, ‘**Ah, so he’s really just following orders…**’ He clenched his fist to calm himself so bitterness won’t be reflected in his voice, “I can take care of myself, I don’t need your help.” He voiced in a flat tone as he turned around to continue on his way as classes were about to start. He felt so downhearted at the thought that Aido-senpai was only doing it because he was asked to, disappointment fueling his anger.

Aido felt the change in Ichiru’s mien as it was mirrored in his expressive lilac eyes. What was that? **Hurt?** “Wait, Ichiru!” he exclaimed as the younger Kiryū proceeded to class.

“Don’t get familiar with me you bastard!” the silverette shouted without looking at him. He was surprised when Aido called his name though he didn’t show it as he’s too busy in stopping himself from wallowing in misery. **Fuck this. I said I’ll forget him. Don’t play with me, you asshole!**

Hanabusa followed him with a frown on his handsome face. This person’s action really baffles him sometimes. He’s confused as to how to take in his responses. One moment, he felt like Ichiru might be feeling the same as him and then, afterwards, he felt like the young Kiryū is disgusted at him. So what is it? Is he in love with him or he disgusted at him?

He honestly didn’t know what to think regarding the silverette’s reaction. He wanted to believe that Ichiru might be feeling the same for him but now, he felt that the young Kiryū is really angry with him. Why? He sighed, really, sometimes he just wanted to un-love him but his heart opposes the very thought as it feels the happiest whenever he’s around him. The mere sight of those dancing silver threads, smiling lilac eyes and charming expression causes him to feel so alive, it
would seem like he’s the very air that he’s breathing, he’s what sustains him.

He sighed before smiling in resignation, defeated, as he watched and followed the back of the retreating figure in front. He knew it’s pointless to even have an internal debate with himself as he knew that the silverette will be the only one who’ll ever hold him, heart and soul.

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There was a thrill of excitement in every student of the Day class as the new transfers colored their every conversation. They are all excited as to who the two other Kanames are and their relationship with the Moon dorm president and if Kuran-senpai really is a triplet. They’re also talking about the angelic silverettes who look like twins and the female brunette with them, why the silverette girl went to the grumpy prefect, their connection with the Kiryūs and if the attractive brunette really is Zero Kiryū’s girlfriend. At the mention of the prefect, every girl will turn to whisper how gorgeous he’s turning to be that his handsome features, that they refuse to acknowledge before, can no longer be denied by any of them no matter how grouchy he might be.

The girls in Zero’s class turned their heads every time he passes and will suck the air to inhale his fresh manly scent greedily. They don’t know what it is with him these past few days since he came back after a long absence, he became so alluring and irresistible that it made such a high in every Day class girl’s senses. They all sighed dreamily, greatly wishing that whoever that woman was, she’s nothing but a friend to Kiryū-kun as they’re all sure that it’s a lost cause should she really be his girlfriend. Their smiles turned to sighs of despair then they let their eyes travel to the sleeping prefect who looked very tired but still managed to look delectable in their eyes, they sighed longingly again.

A certain blue-eyed bespectacled girl watched their expressions nervously as she fidgeted one of her braided light-brown pigtails. She stared longingly at her silver-haired crush and sighed miserably as he kept on getting more and more popular as of late. Her shoulders slumped dejectedly. Nadeshiko Shindo has long been in love with the older Kiryū ever since he saved her from breaking her neck from a fall when she once tried to foolishly scale the wall to give her favorite Night class student a chocolate for Valentines. She thought he’s just like a knight in shining armor and was pursuing him ever since but in vain. Still, she didn’t give up as she felt like she has all the time in the world for no one has ever noticed, or acknowledged, how wonderful he truly is but now that everyone seems to target him, she felt like her already very slim chances dwindle even more. She felt like crying. She sighed again.

Nadeshiko looked up and saw the ambition in the eyes of the many girls in their class. She then decided that one of these days, she’ll gather all her courage and confess as she’s in the point of do or die. She can see the same intent in her rivals’ eyes so she proceeded with making a plan to create the perfect confession.

Suddenly, the air inside the room become heated as the promise in many of the girl’s in Zero’s class swore to confess to him was silently made, determination burning in their eyes.

The unknowing hunter felt a shiver down his spine which shook him from his nap. He looked up, blinking a few times to get rid of the sleep still evident in his lilac eyes, unaware that he’s the subject of many stares and thoughts of the girls in his class. He still felt drowsy as he wasn’t able to get enough rest what with the events last night. He wasn’t able to catch some winks as he watched over his eldest daughter slumber whilst thinking about what secrets Kaname could be keeping from him.
He stretched his limbs before looking out the window which reflects the dull grey sky. It’s been cloudy for a few days already; it looks like it will start raining any time or day now. He yawned, the weather making him sleepier than ever.

He steadily keeps on losing sleep these past few days and coupled with his condition, it’s making him fall asleep every chance he got. He was about to lower himself on his table again when an angry shout that undoubtedly came from his twin brother prevented him from doing so. He sighed; knowing what was about to come as it’s been going on since dawn.

“Nii-san! There you are! Nii-san, what happened to what I asked you to do? Nii-san?” Ichiru hastily inquired at the moment he sighted his older brother. Zero has been avoiding him since this morning as he kept on pestering him to talk to Kaname-senpai and retract his annoying order of having him tailed and protected. If being asked to be escorted was not insulting enough, as he’s from a hunter lineage, they’re unknowingly rubbing salt to his wound by choosing that vampire to protect him. Gah! It’s infuriating!

“Ichiru… I told you, I agree with Kaname. I think we should be careful for now…” Zero groaned as he still wanted to sleep.

“But why only me? You’re the target!” Ichiru immediately countered.

Zero looked up at his brother, “Hah, you think you’re the only one. You can’t feel that?” he tested as he pointed a thumb outside the window.

Ichiru followed where he’s pointing out. He wasn’t able to first see what his brother is trying to tell him but then, when his eyes strayed to the branches of one of the trees standing tall outside their classroom, he saw a shadow of purple tresses. *Ah, Seiren.* “Then, why him?” he replied a bit sulkily as his best defense for this case against his brother went down the drain.

“Him? Aido? Why not him?” Zero asked, already closing his eyes, feeling really tired, “Do you hate him?” he asked without really thinking as his mind is already half-asleep.

“Huh? No! Yes!” Ichiru answered, immediately correcting himself when he accidentally slipped out the truth. He wished his brother didn’t catch that. Luckily, he’s safe as he saw his nii-san take in steady deep breathes, sign he’s already deep into the world of dreams. It’s fortunate but he sighed as he realized that he’s still facing the same problem he’s been trying to rid himself. He looked out the window again and he saw his problem with his back on a tree.

His lilac eyes met his cool aquamarine orbs. Hanabusa Aido immediately smiled and even waved a hand at him.

Grrrr! He’s extremely pissed off that he just wanted to explode! Really, why of all the-, he let out a harsh breath, trying to calm himself.

He sighed. How does he stop it? This nightmare? Of his heart still being imprisoned in that blond vampire’s clutches…

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His burgundy eyes stared outside the glass paneled door of his balcony, not really seeing the tiny droplets of rain beginning to fall against the glass as drizzles started for his thoughts wander to his
hunter he knew is currently sleeping as he took advantage of their bond now strong enough to communicate their thoughts and feelings to one another. His grim expression seemingly compliments the dark skies as his thoughts were filled with things he knew would afflict his beloved.

The pureblood felt remorse and guilt; anguish and penance filled him as he imagined the painful expression of his lover once he knew of his sins against him and his family but what occupies most of his emotion is fear. Fear for his lover as his life is now threatened by a force that he’s powerless against and most importantly, fear of Zero leaving him. He knew his crimes against his silver-haired hunter are far too big to be forgiven easily but he also knew that it must be revealed as soon as possible as keeping it longer will only add to his sins.

His heart heaved at the thought and possibilities that might arise after he has given the truth to Zero that he felt the courage he’s been trying to build shrink smaller and smaller. He’s in turmoil and his beast roared inside him at the thought of losing his hunter forever.

He will not allow it. It can never be.

Kaname rose from his seat and opened the door leading to the balcony, feeling the cold wind penetrate his very bones and water soak his black dress shirt. With blurred speed, he traveled to the chairman’s house, and came through the window of his hunter’s room. His lover’s refreshing scent immediately surrounded him, he took a deep breath, feeling calm and warm all at once by just his smell.

He went and sat on the bed where the sleeping figure of his treasure lay peacefully slumbering. He felt Zero stir a bit as he felt a change in his surroundings. The pureblood smiled down at his hunter, he’s amazed at how great his lover is at sensing changes in his environment even though he’s unconscious and was quite surprise when he didn’t wake up all together but he believed it might be caused by his pregnancy. He bent down to kiss his silver hair and inhale his scent, marveling at how light he’s feeling compared to his earlier gloom, as his darkest thoughts were forced at the deepest recesses of his mind. He sighed as he basked in the contentment and satisfaction of having Zero in his arms.

Zero always seem to have this effect on him, granted he would sometimes feel so angry and annoyed at his stubborn and petulant lover that he would greatly wish to torment him but most of the time, he would feel so light that his vision of the world turns bright and illuminated, he’ll feel his heart pure and glowing as if it was never filled with anything dark and vile. He’ll look at the hunter and he felt himself becoming the man he wanted to be, as if he changes him to a completely different being altogether, not the cruel and wicked person that he truly is.

He inhaled more of his lover’s scent, deeply intoxicated. It’s unbearable how much he loves this man. With Zero by his side, eternity seems like a blink of an eye, it will not be enough to express his affection to this extremely adorable creature.

Kaname used to always wish to be a great, decent man, capable of true generosity and love, disgusted at his own selfish and cruel heart, but now he didn’t care, so long as he can have his hunter with him.

He can be wicked, he can be evil.

He felt his heart squeezed painfully and his chest felt heavy at the thought of losing the only person who made him feel happiness and joy, who made him feel that living for so long is not so terrible as long as he’s together with this creature, who filled his heart with serene calmness and violent excitement. He who builds and destroys him at the same time and most importantly, he who made him breathe and feel alive.
He can’t let go, he won’t.

Kaname kissed his lover’s temple as he made the promise of becoming the most despicable person in the world in order to keep his love with him. If he needs to force and imprison him, he will. Even if he’s hated by him, he still wouldn’t care, he’d rather be called selfish and foolish than let go. He swore that nothing will keep him away and nothing will take Zero away. He’s determined to hold on to his hand and would dare anything to keep him by his side.

Kaname granted his lover a small kiss on his lips, unable to stop himself from lingering a bit as he wallowed in the sweet sensation that his hunter’s full lips produced, he couldn’t help but delved his tongue a bit to savor his luscious taste when the silverette opened his mouth reflexively.

Zero stirred, feeling someone passionately devour his lips bit by bit. He languorously opened his lilac eyes as he felt the familiar soft lips on his and savored the rich flavor that never failed to take away any and all sensibility from him. His drowsiness quickly left him as he confirmed the owner of the sinfully seductive mouth whose enticing kiss steadily warms his body, sending electricity through his system, exciting his heart almost instantly. His arms immediately wrapped around his pureblood’s neck, one slipping through his dark brown hair, the other tightly gripping his shirt, both he noticed were a bit damp, to pull his vampire closer to him.

Kaname groaned when he felt his hunter promptly returned his kiss. He allowed himself to delve lower and explore the deepest recesses of his lover’s mouth, feeling Zero open further to allow him entrance which he took eagerly, relishing the heavenly taste of him, sensing his nonexistent control as it completely slipped away from him.

“What do you think you’re doing,” Zero asked, his voice husky from sleep, when they stopped but for a moment to breathe heavily, “attacking me while I’m asleep, you pervert.” panting quite a bit.

“Oh, I merely intended to take a small bite,” Kaname murmured on his temple nonchalantly, “but you’re so tempting, I couldn’t stop myself,” the silverette could feel his lover’s smile on his skin.

“Perverted bastard.” Zero hissed but without any annoyance, he’s feeling too aroused to care.

“Ah, but it’s you who made me like this,” the brunette confessed as he hovered over his lover, “so please take responsibility.” before lowering himself to claim his mouth once again, trapping the sigh that escaped from his lover as he tangled a hand through his hunter’s silver tresses while the other hand proceeded to unbutton his white shirt.

The prefect closed his eyes in resignation as he drowned in the thrill his vampire produced, he felt his lover’s exploration of his mouth, greedy to taste and seek pleasure. He caught Kaname’s moan as he started his own search inside his pureblood’s mouth, returning the ardor with wild craving and appetite. One of his hands went to his chest to feel his body, his lover’s heart beating against his palm, thundering violently as his own, before undoing his buttons.

Kaname broke the kiss when he finished unfastening his silverette’s shirt, which he proceeded to remove, his lips immediately went to taste and suck the pale white skin of his hunter to leave incriminating marks of his passion. His mouth moved lower to his chest, favoring one of the pink nipples which he nibbled, making Zero arched his body as he tried to suppress his groan of pleasure with his hand.

The silverette was so lost in the heat of the moment that he didn’t notice that the brunette already found the garter of his cotton pajama pants as his mind got occupied by the sinful lips sucking one the snubs on his chest. He just stared dazed towards the ceiling, half-lidded, with his head pressed against his pillows, panting heavily, his lover’s lips continued to travel southward and he realize too
late that Kaname’s mouth is already very, very low. He quickly propped himself up with his elbows.

“No, stop, Kana- ah!” he came crashing back down as his ‘pureblood took his arousal inside his mouth, he pressed his head harder against his pillow, gasping for air, feeling his body drown and go wild. He wasn’t able to stop the sounds that erupted from him, his mind went blank while his world spun, as his pureblood took on his whole erection. He whimpered as he sucked, feeling himself turn weak with pleasure as felt his lover’s tongue on his velvet skin, “Kah… hah.. na… ungh… meh…” he moaned and panted as he felt the heat boiled inside his gut, seeking violent release.

The adorable sounds his hunter created only made Kaname continue ardently, he’s lost to the pleasure his hunter’s taste in his mouth gave, and he couldn’t help but suck and take more of his silverette, licking the sensitive underside, tempting his lover to let go of his sanity, savoring his delicious treat. He loved how Zero breathlessly begged for him to stop while unknowingly moving his hips for more. The pureblood didn’t stop the wicked and sensual torment, he could feel his hunter’s rein of control disappear completely as he’s thrown to the myriad of pleasure while he licked the slit of his erection before sucking him whole again.

“Hah! Kanah… hah… me! Ah… I’m… already…” the hunter couldn’t help but beg, gripping a handful of dark brown locks between his thighs as he felt himself closer to release.

“Go ahead,” Kaname smirked, anticipating his taste, loving every pant from his hunter and the weak pleas in that low seductive voice that was set to ruin him even further.

“n-no-o…” Zero valiantly tried to restrain himself but it was so hard to do so as his pureblood kept on teasing his already weak control, adamant to drive him insane and put him on edge. He didn’t want to but the sweet torture proved hard to resist that he wasn’t able to stop himself from unleashing the seeds of ecstasy inside his lover’s mouth. His body shook with euphoria, pleasure flooding his system, satisfaction making his skin glow instantly. He panted as he opened his lilac eyes to see his lover back on his knees, smirking mischievously as he wiped some of the juice on the corner his lips that escaped from his mouth with his thumb. “B-bastard,” the hunter weakly cursed the sexy picture of his vampire.

“Why? It looks like you enjoyed it though,” Kaname teased as he smiled ever so alluringly while removing Zero’s pants completely. His shirt, already half-unbuttoned, followed next with his own pants, both which he threw on the floor. He lowered himself on his hunter once more to provide him a torrid kiss after placing himself between his lover’s legs.

Zero wasn’t able to retaliate further as he claimed his lips, tasting his own flavor in his mouth, as he wrapped his legs around his waist to aid his vampire in their merging. He groaned when he felt the painful pleasure in his entrance as his pureblood began the maddening journey to hedonism. The pressure not as agonizing as before for his body became accustomed to the assault of his lover’s arousal and with only one slow sensuous thrust, seemingly on purpose to mischievously torment and build desperation inside the core of his being, his vampire successfully sheath himself deep inside him, making both groan in delight.

His vampire broke the kiss to look at him and with a smile while taking deep breaths, in the most seductive voice, whispered, “You’ve always been captivating but never as captivating as this, when you’re filled with me…” the possessiveness his lilac eyes saw in his deep burgundy ones knocked the air out of his system that he wasn’t able to say anything as he watched his alluring image, with lust and greed dancing in his pureblood’s eyes, ravished and claimed him, marking him as his own, “You’re mine.” He heard as a finger traced one of his soft pale cheeks.

Kaname waited only for a minute before starting his ardent journey to the peak of their joining. He impatiently withdrew only to dig deeper, move even quicker, seemingly trying to be embedded in his
hunter’s core, to be part of his essence, of his soul.

Their kiss turned clumsy because of unrestrained pants and moans of passion both produced when Kaname began to thrust briskly, urgent to feel more of the coveted heat he seek that seems to seduce his senses to no end. He plunge harder and faster, each thrust driving them more and more to intoxicating excitement, his hunter’s heat coaxing him into madness.

“Zero... Zero...” the brunette repeated almost deliriously as he succumbed to the overwhelming warmth of his lover’s body.

The silverette moaned and groaned as his pureblood sank deeper and deeper, meeting his vampire’s movement with intensity and eagerness as his lover attacked his pleasure zone, the world already forgotten as Kaname occupied his every thought, filling his mind of nothing but him and his overflowing affection, the voice calling his name repeatedly in a low, husky tone only driving him to the pinnacle. His body went crazy as his pureblood wrapped a hand on his hardened member and began to stroke, timing it with each intense, continuous thrust. His silver hair tousled as he push his head forcefully on his pillow with his hand, that was blindly searching for something to hold on to for dear life, found his lover’s smooth locks, damp from sweat, as his body burned, the need for release smoldering.

“Hah... kan... ame...” the hunter panted incoherently.

“Uhm...” the pureblood hummed in agreement.

They shared one more messy, scorching kiss before they finally climaxed, orgasm shaking their body, as they spilled in each other, pleasure evident by their bright, flushed skin.

Kaname put his forehead on top of Zero’s as he waited for their pants to cease and heartbeat to calm down. He can feel his lover’s breath mingling with his own and he had to smile as contentment filled the core of his being, feeling the desire to never leave this place. He kissed his hunter’s temple then his silver hair before lying beside him to rest for a while, for he wanted to take another hike to the heights of ardor and passion.

There was a soft click, signaling a lock being opened, followed by the cold night wind that penetrated the small dark room where a certain silver haired prefect slumber peacefully without care in the world, unaware that a vampire already entered the privacy of his room in the male Day class dormitory. Hanabusa Aido entered as quietly as he could, a thin ice, which he used to unhinge the lock of the window, in one hand. He promptly closed the window to prevent even more cold air to penetrate the room of his beloved as he was well aware of Ichiru’s vulnerability against the cold weather for he is susceptible to various illnesses.

He went to sit beside the silverette, smiling while he move closer to his love, removing the few silver threads that obstructed his view of his charming face. He sighed, feeling quite exhausted as the cruel blessing made him both very blissful and extremely tormented but he wouldn’t have it any other way. He’s sure that he would dare even Kaname-sama’s anger just to have the post of protecting this stubborn prefect.

They spent the whole day running around the campus as the silverette adamantly attempted to lose
him which he of course was determined never to happen. He run his thumb against the pale white skin of Ichiru’s cheek, savoring the heat that came from this beautiful, sprightly creature, while his mind went back to that night inside the forest when his impulsive action awakened some questions in his mind and hope in his heart. Dare he believe that Ichiru could feel the same as him? Dare he dream? Should he take this chance to finally say the words he long buried within the deepest recesses of his heart?

Somehow, the always present fear is still there, reminding him of the harsh possibilities he’ll face should his worst nightmares came true, but one thing is for sure, he’ll take whatever chance that would allow him to get as close as possible to the younger Kiryū, that would hopefully enable him to seduce and steal his heart finally.

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She was walking inside an abandoned mansion, its ruins the shadow of previous glamour and elegance, not knowing where to go in particular. She was lost and she didn’t know her goal, she was searching for something but she didn’t know what. Memories? The past? What part of her past? She knew she lost something very important, a great part of herself, the part that made her Yuki.

Suddenly, she was transported to a different place, a different time. When she looked up, there was a beautiful woman hovering over her, her small body, with a tragic smile on her pale pink lips. Anne? No, not quite as she didn’t have Zero’s striking lilac eyes, her eyes displaying knowledge of centuries old. She looked exquisite but the look in her eyes was heartbreaking. This made her eyes water.

“Yuki, my darling child, my daughter, my Yuki.” She whispered in a soft, gentle voice that Yuki thought she knew well, no, her soul knew very well but she can’t remember when or how.

Yuki was about to reach out her hand when the woman collapsed, angling her fall so she didn’t crush her small body and instead landing on the space besides her. Yuki was wide eyed and began shaking the unknown woman’s unmoving body and that was when she realized the blood in her hands, in her tiny hands. Red obscured her view of everything and suddenly, a blinding light and pressure befell her and she found herself falling, falling while being stripped of everything that she was, feeling herself change, transforming to someone, no, something else.

Then she was swallowed by the darkness…

She woke up with a start, immediately sitting up and feeling the cold wind chill her sweat-drenched skin and clothes. She was shaking as she hugged herself for calm. What was that? That nightmare, it seemed like… like… like memories…

When a drop of water fell on her arms, she only just then realized that she was crying. Why? Why? Why?

She felt cold, hollow as fear gripped her heart. It chilled her bones and she panicked as she felt like something will snatch her in the dark. Her eyes searched for light, her skin craved warmth. She was trembling, wanting to open the lights but can’t seem to find the energy to stand.

She moved her eyes around her darkened room when she spotted a big teddy bear sitting at the foot of her bed. It was the souvenir that Ichijou-senpai gave to her. They spotted it as they were walking
on their way back to the academy the day they stalked Zero, Kaname-senpai and the children. He said it’s a thank you present for accompanying him on his task. She reached for it and immediately hugged it as uncontrollable sobs escaped from her, seemingly trying to get the energy as she thought of the vampire that gave it to her.

“Ichijou-senpai… help…”

“Ungh…”

Zero groaned as sunlight attacked his still closed eyes. He could tell that its morning already but he still wanted to sleep so he raised an arm over his eyes to block the harsh rays seemingly telling him to get up and prepare for class like a good student. He groaned again and tried to roll to the other side but he was stopped by the body whose arms wrapped tightly around him. He felt his pureblood’s head burrowed at the back of his neck, his lips and breath on his pale skin. The silver-haired prefect sighed, feeling more than ever the desire to stay on bed like this and he would have closed his eyes again if only he didn’t hear the sound of the bell signaling the start of the first class. He felt the remaining drowsiness go away immediately, “shit, I’m late!”

He quickly but very carefully, untangled his lover’s arm around his waist. He thought Kaname would wake up again but he successfully managed to unwrapped himself and immediately stood up to hurry to the bath, only to have his legs give up under him. He crashed down on the floor on all fours and was further humiliated when an unrestrained laughter came, resounding inside his room. No doubt his face was flushed as he felt his cheeks burn in shame. Damn, Kaname was awake. So much for stealth.

“Ah, do you need a hand?” Kaname offered as rest his head on his palm, his arm on its elbow to prop him up on his side, his deep auburn orbs filled with teasing glee as he looked down on his hunter currently glaring at him.

“Bastard,” the furiously chagrined hunter hissed, trying to scare his lover despite his ridiculous stance and the futility of his action, “how could you do it three freaking times when there are classes today!?”

The brunette merely smiled at him, nothing will seem to break the good mood he’s currently in, “My, but I didn’t hear any refusal on your part so I merely took what I wanted,” he smiled even more seductively, unaffected by his lover’s irritation as he knew it’s caused by embarrassment rather than the aversion to the activities from the night before, “I even gather you enjoyed it, am I wrong?”

“Shut up, you bastard.” Zero growled, unable to give any retort back as they both know the answer to that question, he just cursed the smart ass in front of him through their bond, knowing that his pureblood will be able to hear it and he was given a chuckle in response. He tried again to stand up, placing both arms on the bed to give him momentum when suddenly, his feet left the ground. His lover just carried him in his arms, in bridal style which immediately caused the hunter to explode strings of curses and threats, his usually pale skin now steadily becoming beat red because of shame and mortification.

“Fuck Kaname, put me down, now! I’ll shoot you! I swear I’ll really shoot you! I’m not a fucking woman! Put me down! Kaname!” the poor prefect shouted and pushed his lover’s shoulder to no
avail as his vampire only smiled and chuckled. He was carried to the bath and was promptly washed like a child.

“Hush now, you don’t have the time, am I right? We must ready you for the day and since it was my fault you cannot walk, let me take responsibility by preparing you.” The brunette’s voice was full of serious sincerity though his eyes betrayed him as it displayed his unrepentant bliss and the desire to further irritate his mate. He hummed as he began to soap his lover’s smooth, normally pale white, flushed skin.

“Move, I can wash myself!” the hunter valiantly tried to regain his footing as Kaname always seem adamant to bring him to his heel which leaves Zero helpless against his lover. “Enough, Kaname, I swear-, wait, what are you doing?!” the silverette panicked as his pureblood joined him in the tub.

“What else? Joining you,” the brunette said matter-of-factly though his glee is pretty much evident with his smirk. He’s enjoying seeing his hunter flustered and panicky, very far away from his usual cool and confident self.

Kaname pulled Zero to him when the hunter was in the act of leaving the tub, wrapping an arm around his lithe body while his hand reached for the scrub to continue washing his squirming lover, very much enjoying the moment of his beloved’s unease.

“Fuck Kaname, let go!” the silverette snarled over his shoulder to his unaffected partner, feeling embarrassed at being washed like a little kid.

“You’re wasting more of your precious time by fighting me Zero, stay still and I’ll take care of you.” Kaname murmured on his ear, Zero could almost see the smile that is undoubtedly plastered on his exquisite face, starting the sensuous rub of the sponge against the still flushed skin of his petulant lover.

The prefect was almost sure that he won’t be able to attend the next classes as well as his vampire to wash him with caresses filled with dark and sweet intentions.

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She stirred from her sleep and languorously opened her lilac eyes. She blinked a few times before sitting and looking outside the window to ascertain the time, It was dark with rain clouds and it looks like there’s going to be a storm. She brought her hand in front of her, she still felt her power weak but her body felt lighter now. She sighed; their journey back home will be delayed for quite a while as the energy she needed to recover went down another level. She hoped her siblings wouldn’t complain as she honestly wouldn’t mind staying for a bit longer.

At the thought of home, the image of their parents suddenly popped up. She sincerely hoped that they’re both fine. They should already know that they are here in the past so she’s not worried about that but she’s afraid that they’re greatly missed. She smiled hopefully, greatly wishing that their parents are all alright.

She got off the bed and proceeded to the adjacent room next door, only realizing that she slept in their father’s room, and opened an empty room. Cold wind and rain penetrated the study as the paneled glass door stood opened.

“Chichiue?” she asked to make sure but there’s really no one inside, “Hmmmm, he must have gone
to see otou-chan.” She smiled as she moved to close the door to the balcony. The door of the study leading to the hall opened to reveal her other siblings.

“Ah, nee-chan, you’re awake. Wonderful. We brought you some food.” Kohaku greeted at the sight of her after opening the door. He’s holding Suiren’s hand while her other hand held Naoto’s. They were followed by Akira who’s carrying a tray filled with food. “Where’s chichiue?”

“Ah, he must have gone to see otou-chan.” She smiled and added when she saw the food Akira proceeded to put on top of the center table, “Thank you. I’m famished. How’s everyone? How’s Senriji?”

“Everyone’s alright. Senriji woke up hours ago but returned back to sleep afterwards though he seems to be feeling better.” Kohaku reassured.

“Hmm, that’s good,” Anne chimed as she sipped the tea she was handed. Naoto and Suiren sat beside her on the sofa, she turned to their youngest twin, “You two did a good job, but why did you show the images to otou-chan, Sui-chan?” she lightly scolded as she pinched the female silverette gently.

“Demo, demo, otou-chan said it feels like something is wrong! He wanted to go out anyway so I showed it to him…it’s not good to hide things from family!” she defended her case, pouting. They’re really never the type to hide such serious matters from their parents.

The eldest sighed. She of course understood, so she just smiled at her as she rubbed her slightly pink cheek. “Oh yes, we made quite a mess in the lounge. Have you fixed it already?” she turned to the twin brunettes.

“Well, the blood has been wiped, it was a mighty difficult thing for the vampires that did but the hole in the wall, there’s nothing that can be done about that.” Kohaku informed, “We’ll need your help for that, nee-chan.”

“Oh poor them.” Akira shook his head, “It really should have been me who blocked that attack so they didn’t have to suffer. Cleaning away the intoxicating blood of ojii-sama must have been a nightmare for them.” He quibbled, even dramatically putting a hand on his chest.

This seemed to have irritated Kohaku a bit, “It’s not my fault that you’re slow, Akira, and what would you have me do? My power is nullification so it ended that way. It’s better ojii-sama’s blood rather than chichiue’s, right?”

“Of course you’re fast, since you have lightning as well,” Akira teased, he’s been feeling bored so he wanted to cause some trouble but Kohaku didn’t answer anymore, instead, Naoto did.

“Then you should have included me!” the young male silverette squeaked his indignation of not being able to protect their chichiue as he was tasked to collect their grandpa. “I could grow a tree to protect chichiue!” he pouted as he placed his chin on his older sister’s lap.

“Now, now, Nao-chan, I know you can handle your powers well but still, you’re too young for that and otou-chan wouldn’t want you to exert yourself.” Anne pacified her brave little brother by patting his silver hair, inwardly grimacing at the image of him growing a tree in the middle of the room for protection as he controls earth. Now, that would have been a great mess. She shot Akira a ‘that’s enough’ look that successfully silenced him.

“It’s extremely worrying though, it seems that Rido-ojiisama is after otou-chan…What should we do?” Kohaku asked, diverting the conversation.
Anne turned grim at these. They only heard a few stories regarding their Rido-ojiisama as their parents and generally everyone in the castle avoids talking about him as if trying to forget a nightmare so they didn’t know how this particular chapter of the past ended. Though their future was evidence enough that everything will be alright, still, it’s worrying about how it will go from now on. Did they do something, or must they do something to arrive at that happy future? Should they act? They didn’t know what to do and if they were essential to be able to keep their parents safe then they must be vigilant. She sighed; happiness is really something one must work hard for. She looked at her siblings, determination getting stronger than ever as she promised to do everything in her power to ensure that they’ll see the world and future as they know it.

“Don’t worry, everything will be as is.” Anne reassured confidently.

There was a knock on the door of their father’s study. They felt their Takuji’s presence so they willed it to open to allow their uncle’s entrance.

“Eh? Where’s Kaname?” asked Ichijou when he only spotted the children inside.

“He went out for a while, uncle, why?” Kohaku answered.

He looked a bit troubled but immediately hid it together with a white envelop he’s holding behind his back. He smiled, “It’s nothing, ah Anne-chan, are you feeling well already?”

The older children noticed it but chose not to be too nosy as it could be very private. They’ll be informed if need be.

“I’m feeling better thank you Takuji. Would you like some breakfast while we wait for chichiue?” Anne invited brightly.

“No, it’s quite alright, I had my breakfast already. I’ll go downstairs, please tell me if Kaname is back alright? And tell us if there’s anything you need.” He smiled again; he can’t trouble the young ones with the problems of the adult.

He went to close the door when the children nodded. When he was gone, the brunettes looked at each other, a bit worried at what it might be all about.

What is it this time?

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He watched as the earlier dull grey skies completely darkened to let out a heavy downpour from the window of his hunter’s room. He sat on the bed, his naked body covered by a simple white blanket, bending his left leg to place the elbow of his left arm on top of it, resting his head at the back of his hand to look at the exhausted figure of his sleeping mate. He smiled a bit guiltily, his lover just missed another day at school but though he’s feeling responsible for Zero’s tardiness, he can’t quite bring himself to regret spending the whole day on this bed, making love to the silverette until they’re both too tired to continue anymore.

He sighed; evidently, his fears are making him too clingy and too greedy to feel his mate’s skin next to his. He wanted to make sure he’s still there, by his side, still trapped in his arms, unable to go anywhere. He softly brushed his fingers though the enchanting silver threads, feeling his stress ebb away. He smiled, a bit sadly, as he made a silent wish to let time stop and make this moment eternal.
as he made the decision to tell the truth, which could destroy this very peace, to his hunter.

“I won’t let go of you Zero, even if you push me away, I’ll never let you leave.” He bent down to murmur on his silver tresses, determination laced his soft voice, before lying down beside his lover and trapping his treasure in his arms, wallowing in the warmth his body produced. He gathered his beloved in his arms, positioning Zero’s head at the nook of his neck, the hunter’s head on his arm with its hand pressing him closer so he can inhale his calming scent. His other arm around his pale waist, his hand gently caresses his lover’s smooth back. Kaname felt Zero’s hand instinctively wrapped loosely around his own body, he smiled as he tighten his grasp, his promise getting stronger in his mind.

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The weather that evening proved to be a storm heavy enough to suspend the entire Night class’ lessons as almost all their teachers who are not using the teacher’s quarters and are residing in the town were unable to come to work. He watched the dark skies with apprehension as it reflects his inner chaos. His dark, suspicious wine orbs strayed back to the letter on top of his desk. It’s an invitation addressed to him, Kuran Kaname, and his esteemed partner, the future Royal Consort, Kiryū Zero from the council.

He grimly contemplated what it could mean, he just got back from Zero’s room, leaving the hunter still sleeping as he needed to attend to the preparation for his next moves and to check on his children’s welfare when Takuma hurriedly gave him the invitation that just arrived from the council. They were both doubtful and concerned about the seemingly innocent and cheerful invite, politely asking them to attend a ball where they can meet his mate who descended from the great bloodline of Suzaku’s and their children who even came from the future, to introduce themselves and pay their respects.

Clearly, someone leaked the information regarding his future family and his current relationship with Zero. It is possible that it came from any of the gossiping vampires inside the Moon dorm who were all, admittedly, very shocked and awed at the future of the Royal Family.

The talk of Zero being the descendant of the mythical mortal family they only used to hear, or even never, as a bed time story was widely talked about among the lower class vampires and the possibility of them telling their parents, family, friends or anyone in the outside world was highly possible if anyone had dared disobeyed him for he had clearly expressed that it must be kept a secret and that it shouldn’t be spread to anyone not belonging in the Moon dorm as it might endanger his family and Zero.

He didn’t think anyone would be brave enough to do it which led him to a more morbid thought for in light of the recent events; it is highly possible that it was Rido, the only other vampire who knew about it, who spread the news. But why? What is his goal? What is it that he hopes to accomplish?

The dark aura that escaped from him shook the air in his room, as him and his beast roared in frustration, making the glass of his windows cracked and his companion jump.

“Kaname…” Ichijou began, “please do calm down, it won’t do to lose ourselves now.” imploring him to compose himself.

“Did Ichiu say anything?” he asked as he willed his aura and beast to stand down.
“He wished to be introduced to them Kaname… I was phoned a few hours ago, informing me that he’ll come here in a few days to introduce himself…” Ichijou admitted, unease evident in his eyes, meeting his grandfather and the head of the council was never such a fun event for him.

Kaname was silent as he contemplated the real impact of the announcement of his mate’s identity and lineage and what possible chaos it might bring to him and his family. He clenched his fist tightly as he fought for calm.

He was left alone afterwards which was fortunate as his irritation kept on building up as frustration and helplessness overcame him. He didn’t know what Rido’s ultimate goal is but he knew it would cause harm to those he holds dear. There was also the matter of his sister, it’s time. He must reveal one of secrets and take his other family back as his mother’s spell will soon left her with horrible memories, he must awaken her, to save her sanity.

By revealing this, he’s afraid that it would hurt his mate and if that is so, he would rather unleash all his horrors to his beloved to prevent having him in pain more than once. He must inform him as soon as possible as he also felt his courage waver. He leaned his head on his balled fist which he placed on the door of his balcony. He closed his eyes to compose himself and when he opened them next, he spotted a figure moving towards the Moon dorm and though the person himself is being shielded by the umbrella he’s using to avoid getting wet, he still knew that it’s his heart that is moving towards their dormitory. He smiled weakly, as both happiness and dread filled his heart. Happiness for it’s what he always feel every time he’ll see Zero and dread as he made up the decision to confess his crimes to his beloved, before he had the chance to run away and his courage fail him.

Without much thought, he opened the door to his balcony, making raindrops land inside his study, to proceed to the rain, to jump down and meet his hunter.

Zero was on his way to the Moon dormitories to see his children, definitely not the bastard that caused him to miss classes, and was surprised when the aura of his mate met him. He heard a splash of one of the rain puddles and sure enough, Kaname stood just a short distance from him, not minding the rain that’s soaking him and his dark clothes.

“What are you doing, saving water for the bath?” the silverette jokingly asked as he walked towards his lover but he stopped as he saw the pain-filled expression of the brunette, he frowned, “Kaname?”

“Zero,” he began as he looked at the worry reflected in his beautiful lilac eyes, “there is something I must tell you before my courage fail me,” he paused before continuing, “and it’s the answer to all your questions,” he slowly walked towards his startled mate, “I shall tell you everything I’ve hidden, my deepest and darkest secrets. You would hate me I’m sure, please forgive me.” he finished as he stood directly in front of his hunter.

“What do you mean?” Zero faltered a bit nervously as Kaname’s expression scared him. He fears of what he might find out, uncertainty gripped his heart.

“Zero, I wish to tell you all this for I truly love you…” he entreated as he took one of his lover’s hands to place it over his heart, “and I wish for your trust and forgiveness.” He finished before granting his hunter a kiss on his forehead.

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“No matter what you learn, please know that I love you Zero.”

The silverette wasn’t able to reply as Kaname placed his forehead on his while muttering
unintelligible words he didn’t understand and suddenly, a blinding light attacked his vision coupled with a scorching sensation. He felt weak. He let go of the umbrella he was holding as he collapsed in his pureblood’s arms and the last thing he saw before darkness completely claimed him to instill intrusive images and memories fill him was the blurred image of his vampire’s painful expression and a drop of water tracing his lover’s cheek he oddly knew wasn’t a raindrop, but a tear.
Hidden Meanings

There was a soft clicking sound, signaling the door being opened gently. The door to his inner room opened to allow entry to his eldest daughter. He looked at her from his position besides the sleeping figure of his silverette mate on the bed, where he sat beside his hunter, taking one of his hands between his own. His distressed burgundy eyes met her knowledgeable lilac ones, there was a kind and reassuring smile on her lips; she undoubtedly knew what has come to pass.

Anne and her siblings were all drawn to the window of the lounge where they were having a silent afternoon/evening tea when they felt a slight tremor in the air and a surge of a heart-wrenching aura of their chichiue. Outside they saw the sight of their father cradling their daddy’s unconscious figure, holding him very close to his body, seemingly trapping him in his arms as if he’ll fly away at any moment. They couldn’t see it but they can feel it, their father is crying.

They made uneasy exchanges, they instantly knew what happened.

“A seal transfer,” Kohaku anxiously uttered, more to himself.

They didn’t say anything, too worried to think. They’ve been told of this particular moment. Anne could still remember that time when their otou-chan told them the story. He stared far away then, there was pain and hurt in his eyes and she remembered pressing her head on his stomach to comfort him. She recalled the sad and soft smile she was given in return. Though they knew that everything will be fine, still, it worried them as they knew just how much pain it will bring to their parents.

It was only moments ago when he transferred to Zero everything he has been hiding, all his memories and darkest secrets. After carrying him to his room, taking off all his clothes to avoid making him catch a cold, he promptly laid him on his bed. He’s been waiting anxiously for him to wake when Anne came to the room. She slowly walked towards him. He returned his gaze back to his lover before speaking, “He’s going to hate me, I’m sure.” dread laced in his voice.

“He’s going to hate me, I’m sure.”

“Hate and anger comes to everyone, even towards the person you love the most,” she mildly started, “In the future, you’ll have many more fights and arguments but you have stayed together for 80 long years and would stay together for thousands more,” she arrived beside him then she hugged his waist from the side, “Your relationship have survived this and so your other future trials and I believe you always will.” she smilingly added, “You even repeatedly told us that all those years were like a blink of an eye so don’t worry chichiue, everything will be alright.”

He looked at her daughter and smiled sadly, slightly unbelieving as he knew the weight of his sins against his beloved.

“I know father,” she said softly as if reading his mind and his doubt. She looked up, meeting his troubled eyes, “I know it will be because otou-chan loves you that much.” She added before tiptoeing to kiss his cheek, “Good night father.”

Kaname watched his daughter go, closing the door before going to the other room, before he returned his gaze to Zero. Her words gave him encouragement. He knew it will be chaotic once his silverette woke up but he’s determined never to let go of him, he’ll give him space, yes, for his sanity, but he’ll never let go.

He stroked his silver hair, moving away some strands that have covered his lover’s face when he moved his head, before giving him a soft kiss on his forehead.
“I would spend all my long years in penance Zero, just as long as you stay by my side…”

Splash, splash, splash

The sound of splattering water can be heard throughout the forest as the female prefect made her way deeper, unsure of where to go. She was making her rounds, more adamant in spending her time awake than asleep as her recurring nightmares of bloodshed haunts her. She’s exhausted, fearing sleep when she really needs to rest for she has yet to have a peaceful slumber after she had that first nightmare.

She’s scared as her nightmare seemed to follow her not only in sleep but even when she’s awake. She sometimes see blood in her hand which goes away after blinking but it seems to stay longer and longer. She’s frightened; she didn’t know what’s happening to her. Is she turning insane?

She trekked the forest, her feet unknowingly bringing her closer to the Moon dormitory where her comfort and sanity resides. Normally, she would think of her hero, Kaname-senpai, as her comfort but now, she’s unconsciously thinking of those soft bright golden tresses adorning the head of a cheerful vampire. She wished to see the relaxing smile on his face and the bright light in his emerald eyes as if containing the whole universe inside it. Her mind was filled with thoughts of his light and warmth as morbid images attacked her. She wants to see him, even a glimpse will do. Just for a while, just a little or she’ll really turn mad as she felt herself being sucked into the unknown darkness that hunts her.

She stopped horrified as she saw a puddle of blood then it was followed by a growling sound. A level E? Oh No! She immediately reached for her Artemis and swung it. She’s suddenly alert, trying to sense the impending attack, her heart going wild in her chest. She turned around, looking from side to side but then she felt her clothes soak and when she looked down, she let out a horrified scream as she saw blood envelop her body. “No! No! No!” she yelled repeatedly, beating her Artemis in the air as if fighting off the image she’s seeing.

“-ki! –uki! Yuki! Yuki-chan!”

She stopped screaming and thrashing around when she heard familiar voice she’s been longing to hear since earlier. She belatedly registered the sturdy body pressed against her, coupled with the calming scent of books and the stench of flesh being burned, both a bit lost because of the rain. She looked up and there she saw him, with worry and anxiousness swimming in his green eyes. Yuki felt like crying, relief flooding her system, as she stared harder, unable to believe he’s finally here. When she tried to pinpoint where the burning smell came from, it just registered to her that Ichijou was hugging her with one arm while the other was holding her Artemis rod, seemingly in order to stop her from swinging it to get closer to her, uncaring of the anti-vampire weapon that is burning him. She immediately let go of her rod as he did and wrapped her arms around him tightly, pressing him closer as if holding on to her vanishing sanity, trying to get warmth from him, unmindful of the rain that’s rapidly soaking them both as their umbrellas lay forgotten somewhere.

“Ichijou-senpai! Ichijou-senpai!” she repeated hysterically, not even caring if she was acting weirdly or too intimately as she did the only action she’s been thinking of doing which she believed was the only thing that could stop her descent to madness.
“Yuki-chan, what happened? Are you okay?” Ichijou entreated in a very worried tone. He’s been making rounds as ordered by Kaname because Zero won’t be able to do his duties. He was about to inquire more but the pain he saw in his friend’s eyes stopped him. He only nodded and proceeded in doing the prefect’s job when he heard the scream of a very familiar voice. He immediately came as he knew that horrified scream and there was something in it that made him more concerned. He found the prefect swinging her rod frantically in the air as if fighting an invisible enemy but he saw no light or recognition in her eyes and was further convinced that she was not in her right consciousness when she didn’t respond to his earlier calls and proceeded in attacking the rain even when he came close.

Yuki didn’t answer and only continued calling his name until she’s hoarse, her voice becoming barely audible and her embrace even tighter. It’s hard to tell because of his wet clothes and as she pressed her face on his chest, making him unable to see her expression but he’s almost sure she’s crying. Why? What happened?

“Yuki-chan, please, you’re scaring me. Did anything happen to you? Are you hurt? Is anyone after you? Please answer me, I’m worried about you.” Ichijou pleaded as he felt her small body tremble against his own. He hugged her tightly, assuring her with his actions though unable to comprehend the reason; he just knew she’s scared of something. “Shhhhh, I’m here, you can tell me anything.” He cooed and assured her.

“I think I’m turning crazy senpai,” she sniffed as she looked up to him, “I’m seeing images of blood everywhere.” She confessed in a frightened voice.

He wasn’t able to say anything as the declaration baffled him though he quickly assured her first, “You’re not going to turn crazy, silly, you’re going to be fine.” as he pressed her head against his chest, “Even if you are, I’ll stay with you and be crazy with you.” He whispered softly.

Yuki wasn’t able to say anything in reply, she only closed her eyes as warmth and relaxation filled her soak and chilled body. She felt light that it made her think she’s acting very silly and childishly but she can’t help but cling even more. The earlier episode seemed nothing more than a foolish illusion.

After staying in that position in silence, Ichijou untangled her arms to direct it around his neck before carrying her in his arms. It was done without any words but it felt the most natural thing to do and Yuki didn’t complain as she buried her face on the base of his neck, unembarrassed at the intimacy and closeness of their body and her childish actions.

She knew she’ll later tumble in shame at her bold and unabashed reaction but she didn’t care, she craved for this, she wanted it. It seems to be the only thing that can save her from madness. Only his presence calmed her down. With him around, the nightmares will be kept at bay, as if his mere existence shields her from anything vile and dark. She clung to him tighter, bringing herself closer.

Ichijou smile at her action, “Shall we go?”

He only received a nod and an even tighter embrace.
ceiling that greeted his sight before blinking a few times to clear his vision. He flinched when he tried to sit down, it hurts! It felt like being hit by a ten-ton hammer or being run over by a fast moving truck. He held his head between his hands, feeling like it will roll from his neck down to the floor, as he steadied himself in to a sitting position.

“Are you alright?” the familiar voice of his mate came.

“Fuck you.” He snarled as he was once again attacked by the images of his lover’s memories.

Ten thousand years old. What the hell.

Zero closed his eyes as he tried to rearrange the memories in his battered mind, of his lover’s past, of his actions up to now, of his previous plans, of his sins.

He groaned as he felt the pressure in his head, he grasped a handful of his hair, trying to alleviate even some of the pain but to no avail.

“It will pass Zero. Do you want some water?” Kaname spoke again, moving to give him a glass of water.

Zero felt his movements. He violently slapped away his lover’s outstretched hand that was holding the glass sending it flying to hit and crash on the wall, “Get away from me, you bastard.” He ignored the regret he felt as he sensed his lover stiffening at his words, obviously hurt at his actions and words, too angry to let himself be swayed, stopping his heart from going to his pureblood.

It can’t be helped and Kaname didn’t blame him. This action was far lighter from what he deserves considering everything he has done to his lover. For all those pains and crimes, he deserved nothing less than a bullet through his chest. He knew this. He was also told that everything is going to be fine, the future was already set and he’s still with his hunter, even the reaction was as expected but no reason seems enough to stop the bleeding of his heart as his hunter’s aura and action continuously tried to push him away.

Zero closed his eyes even tighter as the most painful of the memories came back to him. He was surprised, of course, after learning of the fact that his lover was already ten thousand years old and the ancestor of the Kurans, the very first vampire but he honestly didn’t mind. After all, it’s just a count of years.

He was also shocked to know that he was awakened by Rido, by sacrificing his own nephew to him, thereby making them master and servant by the call of the blood and bond. He was shaken as he watched the dried and disheveled look of the figure that devoured the innocent child that he was handed but as he knew it was something that Kaname had no control over and he didn’t blame him.

He watched the memories of his lover as he was taken care of by the kind Kuran couple, how he was suspicious at first as he has no doubt of their knowing what he has done to their precious son and baffled at their genuine smiles. How he was happy to be loved, feeling finally belonging and accepted somewhere. He watched him grew into a child; he felt his feelings of love towards his family.

He admitted feeling a bit jealous and conflicted as Kaname swore to protect his sister, his beloved, only sister, Yuki. He felt another pang in his heart as he was reminded of Kaname’s relationship with Yuki, his pureblood sister and his rightful fiancée. They’re supposed to be the perfect couple, the pureblood siblings whose union would ensure the purity of the Kuran Royal bloodline.

His heart ached even more as he watched the tragedy of the Kurans unfold before his eyes, through
his lover’s, as Kaname ripped Rido to impossible pieces that had they not been master and servant, then it would surely killed the devious vampire who killed his own brother as he coveted their own sister, Haruka’s wife, and Kaname and Yuki’s mother, Juri. He watched the heart-wrenching event of Juri using the last of her life to turn Yuki into human, leaving Kaname as the only person with the heavy and grievous memories, leaving him to carry the burden alone.

He stopped his heart from going to his pureblood’s arms, forcing fury to boil inside him as he watched the vampire create plans to protect his sister and kill his uncle. Everyone mere chest pieces on his large board game, his war, including him as his white knight, designed to be his queen’s protector and a weapon for his goal.

A tool, a piece, a pawn.

He was nothing but a chest piece.

Though through his memories, he also saw the change in the pureblood’s feelings and thoughts. He saw him agonize countless of times regarding the indescribable feelings budding inside him. How he would stay awake at night only to think of him, how he would watched him in secret, how he tried to hide the affections he was starting to feel, the agony he felt as he saw him in pain because of bloodlust and awe at his will as he suppressed it for years, his amusement at his continuous rudeness and retaliation, his happiness and eventual anticipation of their every meeting.

Zero felt light as he knew of Kaname’s feeling, he knew he should be happy at the evidence of the real and present feeling of his lover towards him but he can’t as the worst of all the memories came back to him. He watched horrified as the young pureblood stood in front of a large cage housing Shizuka Hio, the vampire that irrevocably changed his life, his parent’s murderer and Zero’s master.

He felt hollow as he watched Kaname freed Shizuka even with the knowledge of her madness and the possibility of her attacking innocent humans, feeling his confidence and arrogance through the memory, uncaring for the consequences or the results which ended up tragic for Zero’s family. Not even the fact that Kaname killed her because of her wish to take her servant back and to enslave Zero, even though he didn’t know of his feelings towards the hunter then, convincing himself that this was all so Zero can stay by Yuki’s side to be her protector, can warm him enough to forgive. He felt too cold.

The silverette felt weak as realization dawned on him. All this time he’s been in love with a man who used him, saw him as a tool, who let him be convicted for the murder he never did and most importantly, making the careless actions that led to his parent’s death and his doom.

“Why? How could you?” Zero started, his voice filled with anguish and sorrow.

“Zero, I’m sorry, please forgive me. I-,” Kaname apologized in agony, stopping himself from saying anything in defense for what he has done as it will only be intolerable excuses. He decided that he shouldn’t make any justification for what’s done is done and the facts stood, he caused his lover’s tragedy.

“Fuck you! Forgive? How could I when you’re the one who set her free!” he roared, shouting at the top of lungs as anger and pain-filled hatred exploded within him. “Why? Why is it you?” he finished a bit weakly as he drowned in sorrow.

Kaname was silent, for once not knowing what to say, no smart and smooth words to offer as he knew the charges laid in his door were far too heavy and too true to refute. He didn’t mind the accusation as he’s only filled with regret and pain as he watched the misery his lover is feeling. He could feel it in the air and through their bond, it’s crying and screaming. He watched the figure of his
lover hugging his own body, seemingly grow smaller as he shook in anger and in suffering, dying to wrap his hunter in his arms to comfort him but decided against it as he knew just how welcome his presence was right at the moment.

No more words were spoken, no excuses uttered. They stayed silent and unmoving for a while before Zero got out of the bed, aware but uncaring of his nudity. He went to the dresser to get some clothes, feeling the eyes of his lover follow his every movement.

Kaname made a step forward to approach his hunter but was stopped by Zero’s bitter words.

“Don’t come near me, you bastard.”

“We are inseparable Zero. Nothing you say can change that.” The pureblood quietly said.

“Watch me, asshole.” Zero challenged as he clenched his teeth.

He went to the door when he was finished putting on some clothes only stopping when he heard Kaname speak again.

“Zero, I won’t force you but neither will I let go. I am only giving you time but don’t think I’ll ever give you up. You belong to me and I’ll take you back.” He heard his pureblood declare softly but determinedly. He didn’t say anything in response as he opened the door to walk out of the room.

Feeling even emptier as he left his heart behind.

Ding. Dong.

There was a series of hurried footsteps before the door was opened to reveal a quizzical and cheerful looking chairman. He didn’t know who could it be at this hour and he was greatly surprised to see it was Ichijou-kun carrying his little princess.

“Ah! My daughter! What happened? Was she hurt?” the honey blond chairman immediately fussed around his princess and it didn’t escaped him how close Yuki clung to the vampire. It surprised him because Yuki is normally a shy girl and she was never like this with him or Zero, not even with Kaname-kun. He modestly snatched a peek at the vice-president of the Moon dorm and he had to marvel at the tender looked he gave his daughter.

Oh, okay, I see. He smiled sadly. How time moves fast, his children are all grown up. Two ensnared by vampires. Hmmmm, then the only mystery left is Ichiru’s love. Who is it? He wondered. “Please come in. You’re both soaked to the bones! Let’s run a hot bath. Come, quick!”

Ichijou smiled and followed the ex-hunter inside and he was led to the bath where the chairman proceeded to run the hot water to fill the tub. The young vampire then moved to let the prefect down and he was surprised when Yuki’s grip tightened while shaking her head, like a child refusing to let go.

“I won’t go anywhere, I’ll stay outside until you’re finished but you must warm yourself now, okay? I don’t want you to catch a cold. I won’t go anywhere, I promise.” He whispered to her ear, smiling as he did.
She nodded before finally letting go. She let her head hung, a bit embarrassed at how shameless and obvious she’s acting but she can’t quite regret acting as such. It felt so good and comforting to be near him. His assurances were like magic words that would keep anything evil away.

They were trapped in their world, unaware that they’re being watched by the only other person in the room who’s currently unsure of what to do, faking business just so he won’t look out of place even though he finished filling the tub. After a few seconds of silence, he took the chance to say something.

“Alright! The tub is full now my lovely daughter, hop on it, wash yourself and I’ll bring you some clothes. Ichijou-kun, come here, use the guest’s bath, you’re wet as well! Come, come.” The chairman jovially invited, hurrying to immediately get out of the awkward situation for him.

Yuki and Ichijou exchanged one more look and nod before he closed the door to the bath.

After a while, the young blond emerged from the chairman’s guest bathroom wearing what smells like Zero’s clothes. He stopped at that thought, maybe he should stay here for a while, just until the smell wears off or it could be lethal for his life. Kaname would surely not be happy with him wearing his mate’s clothes, he gulped a bit nervously.

He went back to the bath that Yuki was using when the door coincidentally opened to let out a dazed looking prefect, already in her night gown. She saw him and she smiled weakly as she went to him and wordlessly reached out to him. He instinctively carried her in his arms like he did while she wrapped her arms around his neck. He smiled though still a bit baffled. He’s happy, yes, of course, how could he not when she’s being so sweet and clingy to him but he worried about her.

“I think I’m turning crazy senpai,” she sniffed as she looked up to him, “I’m seeing images of blood everywhere.”

What could that mean? He looked down at the small figure clinging to him for dear life, he never saw Yuki this frightened or desperate that it unconsciously made him so worried and scared for her. He pressed her closer to him as he walked towards to prefect’s room to lay her on her bed but when he thought of how inappropriate for him to enter her room, his steps unconsciously faltered. Oh dear, should I?

He was still hesitating when he arrived in front of her bedroom door. He stood there for quite a while before asking, “Uhm, Yuki-chan, we’re here.”

When he heard no response, he looked down only to find a sleeping brunette. He stared for a while, unable to look away as he was entranced at her peaceful looking slumber, feeling relieved that she’s looking much better. He sighed in resignation before entering her room. He ignored the slight prick at the back of his spine as he knew that the chairman is watching his action from afar, to make sure he’s not about to do any highly improper action. He smiled wanly; at least he’s going to be reminded not to cross his boundaries.

He laid her down on her bed and after tucking her, he watched her sleep for a while before motioning to go.

“Ichijou-senpai.” she suddenly called out.

He turned back to find her large sienna eyes trained on him. She held out her hand.

“Don’t go. Please stay with me.” she pleaded in a very soft voice.

He stopped and hesitated, he has a feeling that the chairman is about to barge inside any minute now
but when he looked at her desperate eyes, he wasn’t able to say no. He moved closer to her again as if magnetized, he took her hand and sat next to her.

“I’ll be here. I won’t leave you, I promise.” He smiled kindly.

Yuki must have been really exhausted for no sooner than he said that and she closed her eyes, she immediately fell asleep again. He sighed, this is really too cruel. As he watched the defenseless, slumbering figure of his beloved so vulnerably exposed to him inside a room that’s filled with her intoxicating scent with darkness tempting him to jump at the delicious opportunity of bending down to claim her plump pink lips.

He looked at her and sighed. He must be born a masochist to allow himself to be tormented like this. He smiled as he sat down on the floor, placing his chin on top of his arm, the hand which is still holding on to hers, to watch her sleep.

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He felt so empty as he went down and trekked his way farther away from his pureblood. He’s in a daze, not even registering the vampires who were looking at him as he goes out of the Moon dormitory. He opened the door to the downpour and proceeded to head home, uncaring of the rain, as his mind and soul wandered somewhere else.

The hunter was only pulled away from his gloomy trance when he felt an arm wrapped around one of his. He belatedly registered staying dry as an umbrella shielded him from the rain. He looked to his side and he saw his eldest daughter looking right back at him with a kind smile illuminating her face, in her adult appearance. He stared; she really looked a lot like Juri Kuran but with a more cheerful aura with his own light lilac eyes. He wasn’t able to return her smile as he drowned in despair and grief.

“You should always take care of yourself otou-chan, this weather is treacherous to the body.” She commented offhandedly, understanding his silence.

“Why are you in that appearance?” he asked quietly, not knowing what else to talk about.

“Well, I can’t help it. I’m afraid I won’t be able to reach you in my normal height and you’re in great need of support and umbrella.” She explained with ease, trying to lighten the gloomy mood both caused by the weather and her daddy.

Zero didn’t say anything in response. He really didn’t want to talk about anything as he felt like an empty shell, too ruined to feel anything anymore.

They walked in silence with her arm wrapped around his and her holding the umbrella to cover them from the harsh, heavy rain, whilst moving slowly towards the chairman’s house. For long moment, there was only the sound of heavy rain drops on their umbrella.

After a while, she finally broke the silence between them, “Did you know otou-chan, there was once a time when Akira and I fought so bad that I told him he’s not my brother anymore?” she started as they continued in their slow pace, “Well, that idiot accidentally started a fire with his powers, as he was too young and foolish to control it, and it got so big that it burned my room to ashes! I was in a right fit of anger since I kept on telling him to be careful with his fire but he never listened so he accidentally burned all my treasure and belongings.” She reminisced, it might have been the reason
why she started storing her things inside her dimensions, “I knew that he didn’t mean it, he was too young but still, the deed was done. I was without clothes and all those I treasured and collected were burned to nothing but soot and cinders.”

Zero looked at her, trying to understand where the story was going.

“I told myself that I’m done with him. That kid was too unruly and no matter how much you reprimand him for all the stupid things he did, he’ll keep on making even more foolish things in the future.” She sighed before smiling again, “Ah, but did you know why I still love that little devil of a brother?” she turned to him before placing her head on his shoulder, “because someone told me to remember why I have loved him in the first place, not why I hated him.” She returned her gaze on the road, “then I remembered how very sweet Akira is, how he’ll stop himself from playing outside to stay with me together with Kohaku whenever I’m sick in bed. He would endure days of boring games so I’ll not get bored whenever I get sick. He would do the stupidest things to cheer me up when I’m down, he’ll always stand to protect me even when he was weaker than I am, he would even indulge my preferences of dressing both of them up just to humor me and once even went to the ball in their adult appearance even when they knew they’ll not enjoy it just because I asked them to. Akira and Kohaku both have been my best friends and partners in crime and I love them both very much.”

She smiled as she recalled the many fun memories of their childhood and after a short silence, “I believe one cannot walk this world without making any error, after all, you’ll only grow and know you’re wrong once you’ve done your mistakes but what’s important is that you learn from those errors and for those who were wronged, it’s to forgive and never to lose sight of what’s more important. That day after I saw the remainder of that great fire that took about half of the east wing with my room, I saw how serious it was and felt relieve that Akira survived it unscathed. Well, I guess he will as he controls fire any way,” she giggled, “and it’s not like he didn’t apologize, it was the first time I saw true guilt and repentance in his eyes and though I have all my belongings burnt, I was not left with nothing for I still have my brother who’ll continue to stay by my side every time I get sick or troubled.” She then turned somber before continuing, “Otou-chan, I know you’ve lost far greater things than mere clothes and material objects. Your life was ultimately changed by a moment of haughtiness and arrogance but before you make the decision of hating chichiue forever, I would like you to please think about the reason why you fell in love with him in the first place.” They stopped, already reaching the front door of the chairman’s abode, “I will not force you for any decision that wasn’t made solely by your heart alone will be meaningless but I also do not want you to regret anything as well.” She smiled kindly at him before tiptoeing to kiss his cheek. “Good night otou-chan.”

That was all she said before she left him to enter his guardian’s place, she left Zero who was still quiet while he contemplated what her story meant. Anne walked away, greatly wishing that the time when forgiveness dawned on his heart is near.

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He hurried inside the house, promptly shedding his black Day class coat and taking off his shoes at the genkan before proceeding inside his guardian’s house. He decided he wanted to stay in their annoying father’s house for a while as he didn’t want to be alone with his irritating and persistent guard for he didn’t share his dormitory room with anyone. He shivered as the cold weather chilled his fragile body.
“Chairman, I’m back!” he called out to his guardian, a bit quizzical that he was not there to make any annoying welcomes then jumped to all creature that would pass through the entry before making a pitiful display of saying he missed him/her very much.

He went upstairs to go his room before going to the bath for a change of clothes when he saw the chairman in a sneaky position of hiding his body behind a wall and taking a peek at the hall way where the bedrooms are accessed. The honey haired ex-hunter must be too obsessed with what he’s watching to not even notice him already behind him. Ichiru stood there for a few moments before finally saying something.

“What are you doing, you perverted old man?” he asked making the ex-hunter jump comically in surprised. What is he doing here?

“Ichi-chan! Don’t scare me like that!” Kaien exclaimed while clutching the fabric over his heart, his heart beating a bit fast. “You almost gave me a heart-attack!”

The silverette stared suspiciously at him before taking a peek at the hall way too, but it was empty. He looked at his weird guardian again who was still patting his chest as if to calm his heart. “What were you doing?”

“Eh? Nothing, ‘father’ problems.” He answered as he looked away to avoid the doubtful lilac eyes of his son. “What are you doing here? I thought you’ll sleep at the Day class dorm?” he inquired to divert the conversation.

“Why? Am I not welcome here?” Ichiru asked, not fooled but letting himself be diverted. The chairman has always been weird anyway.

“Of course that’s not it! You’ll always be welcome here my darling son!” Kaien was back at his usual odd self, “have you eaten? Should I prepare something?”

“No thanks, I only wanted to have a bath,” he answered but in actuality, he’s really hungry. He hasn’t eaten anything as he has lost all appetite but he’d rather starve than be poisoned, he decided he’ll just eat some cereals after bath. “Isn’t it too late for you to be up, sleep already chairman.” He coaxed, he wanted to have the chairman out of the way so he can eat his cereals without his guardian’s nagging and hurt lamentation of his children avoiding his cooking.

“Ah, you’re quite right but, uhhmmm,” the ex-hunter stopped for a moment, as if having an internal debate, before mumbling, “it should be okay, it’s alright… right?” he asked himself. He knew he can trust Ichijou-kun but men are all the same beast and he’s still quite conflicted if he should leave it be and if he should trust him. He sighed, it’s hard being a parent, as he decided to give his trust to the young vampire who he knew treasures his beloved daughter as much as he does. “Alright, I guess I should retire… I’ll just lock the door…” he trailed, a bit depressed.

Ichiru watched the retreating figure of his dejected guardian, honestly perplexed at his action which was a bit surprising as they all knew all his oddities by now but still, this is weird in a different sense. He was about to confront the chairman when a sneeze escaped from him.

“Ah-choo! I guess I really need that hot bath,” he muttered to himself as he sniffed.

He went to his darkened room and proceeded to take a change of clothes but before leaving for the bathroom, he went by the window to check on something. He took a peek and sure enough, his annoying guard is still there.

He felt a bit guilty as he watched Hanabusa Aido look up at him, meeting his eyes and even granting
him a smile as he stood outside besides a tree for further shelter, holding an umbrella to shield himself from the harsh storm. Ichiru ignored the pity he felt towards the blond vampire, forcing irritation to bubble even when he felt none, convincing himself that it was what that vampire wanted. Gah! I didn’t even ask him!

He moved away from the window to proceed to the bath, exercising an enormous self-control not to run outside and invite the vampire to the warmth of the chairman’s house.

Ichiru submerged himself in the hot water that successfully warmed him as he sported thoughts of his blond guard. He wondered how he was supposed to get a wink of sleep knowing that Aido-senpai was just outside, enduring the harsh weather just to watch over him. He shook his head, no, it’s not like he wanted to and Aido was only asked to do so. He reminded himself of the possibility that the vampire is toying with him, purposefully trying to get closer to him despite knowing his feeling towards him. Is he being smug? Argh! He didn’t know anything anymore. He’s so confused that he felt like he’ll explode at any moment.

In the end, he felt only heart-break and loneliness. It’s so hard to forget something you’ve always wanted and dreamed of.

After taking his bath, he wasn’t able to resist looking outside the window again and he wasn’t able to stop the disappointment he felt when he saw the blond gone from the spot he was last seen. He surveyed the surroundings but he’s really gone. He sighed, how foolish. He’s been trying to get rid of him and now that he left, he feels lonely. He’s really insane.

Ichiru shook his head, trying to shake away the depression he’s feeling, as he proceeded down to the kitchen. He was so dejected that he didn’t even notice the presence that was seated on one the chairs around the dining table. He just went to the kitchen blindly to get a bowl, cereals and the carton of milk in the fridge. He finally noticed him when he placed all the ingredients for his dinner on the table. He stopped and slowly looked at the opposite side of the table. He had to blink a few times, believing himself tricked by his own eyes, but there he was, with his amused pool of electrifying azure orbs, an elbow propped on the table with its hand supporting the chin on top of it, and a happy smile on his full lips. He even had the audacity to wave a hand at him.

Ichiru couldn’t help himself and immediately threw the carton of milk he was still holding towards Aido which the vampire very easily dodged, “What are you doing here!?”

“Hmmm, the chairman saw me outside and invited me to sleep here,” he answered easily, throwing the poor innocent carton a look before turning back to him, “He said it will be better if I’m near you, always.” He flashed him one delighted smile when he finished.

Grrrr! Chairman! He thought, his initial pity and disappointment fast retreating, and though he wanted to strangle his guardian, he can’t as he felt too happy and relieved but he’ll eat his tongue first before he admitted it. He sighed inwardly, yeah, he’s a lost cause.

“What are those?” Aido asked, eyeing the things he brought with him.

“What else? Dinner... and breakfast.” the silverette added when he remembered that it’s almost dawn. He went to retrieve the milk he threw, thank goodness that its close that was why it didn’t spill.

The blond vampire frowned at this, “Don’t you want real dinner?” he asked, not approving of his diet as he wanted the silverette to eat much more nutritious meals.

“Well, unfortunately, there’s only poison from the chairman and I’m not allowed inside the kitchen...
for…” he paused, not knowing what reason to say, “for…” Ichiru wasn’t able to finish his sentence as he didn’t want to reveal his clumsiness towards the blond vampire.

“Security purposes?” Aido smiled knowingly. Unfortunately for the prefect, he knows almost everything that is to know about him, specially his hopelessness in the kitchen.

The silverette glared at the vampire despite being chagrined. He also blushed, because of shame or that smile, he didn’t know.

“Wait here, I’ll cook for you.” The noble declared, already walking towards the kitchen.

This startled the silverette as he knew Aido-senpai to be quite spoiled being nobility and all. He unconsciously followed him and found him rummaging the fridge and the pantry. He can only stare at him as he moved about the kitchen with ease as if it’s been what he’s been doing all his life. He gathered a few ingredients and made way for the stove. He began to wash and cut the raw materials, heated the skillet where he then cook steak, then heated a pan where he then put in the other ingredients which he stirred and all. Ichiru was lost and could only watch his actions, find his smooth and knowing actions quite mesmerizing.

“I’m surprised that there are lots of ingredients here, it seems like the chairman cooks a lot.” Aido commented when Ichiru didn’t say anything.

This managed to wake the young Kiryū from his reverie. He looked away before answering, “He likes to experiment,” he answered shortly.

“Hmmmmm,” he hummed thoughtfully. Well, lucky for him then, at least he can show off some of his great skills. He doesn’t look it but like many other things, he’s been gifted with the natural talent for cooking. It’s really easy for him. Well, with his genius to understand and even memorize recipes and experience with mixing ingredients for his own experiments, it’s really no wonder why cooking was such an easy thing for him. It’s like simple science. He smiled; hopefully this would improve his image.

After about half an hour of waiting which was spent in stares (from the silverette) and smiles (from the blond), the finish product was then produced.

“Thank you for waiting, here’s your seared steak with caramelized onion, enjoy. Bon appetit.” He smiled proudly as he served the dish in front of Ichiru.

The silverette was of course very impressed but he stubbornly kept it to himself, “Hmph,” was all he provided in reply.

The young vampire returned to his seat with his own plate, smiling very brilliantly as he watched the young Kiryū eye him then the food suspiciously.

“What did you put here? Poison?” Ichiru asked, ignoring the delicious smell of the steak in front of him.

“No, love potion,” Aido answered before taking a bite.

This made Ichiru look up from his plate, “Was that a joke?” he asked with one quizzical eye brow arching.

The blond vampire didn’t say anything. He only gave him one alluring smile as he stare at his confused lilac eyes. His smile became even more enticing when he saw a blush form on the handsome face of his little Kiryū.
Damn you, Ichiru cursed, “Are you trying to seduce me?” he almost bit his tongue as soon as the words were out. He couldn’t help it, he’s really tempting him to do the most foolish things.


‘Hell yeah’, was the obvious answer but Ichiru will stab himself with his fork first before voicing it out. He turned away from the vampire in front of him, inwardly grimacing as he was further convinced that Aido-senpai really knew of his feelings and is only playing with him for amusement. Damn, damn, damn! He unconsciously tighten the hold on his cutlery, feeling embarrassment and humiliation flood him, defeat eating him so violently that he can’t help but clench his teeth in mortification when all these dark feelings was immediately banished by his senpai’s next question and words.

“What if I am? Seducing you, I mean.” Aido asked, intensely looking straight to his eyes.

Ichiru was caught off guard by his question. He gaped as he asked himself.

‘What could he mean by that?’
There was a soft knock before the door opened from the outside and Yuki’s worried face peered inside the darkened room of her adopted-brother and best friend.

“Zero?” she called out softly.

She’s been having a great day so far because she woke up from a very deep and peaceful sleep to find a slumbering vampire beside her bed; Ichijou’s head on his bent arms, with one hand still holding hers. He really kept his promise of staying by her side and not going anywhere else. She then remembered her shameless actions, how tightly she clung to him and how she asked him to stay with her. She blushed, the inevitable embarrassment finally attacking her system but as she watched his handsome face in peaceful sleep, she can’t get herself to regret anything, feeling too fortunate to have the opportunity to see him like this.

She was about to reach for his face when he suddenly stirred. She reflexively went very still, pretending to be asleep. Why? She didn’t know. She felt him wake up and she had to fight the smile that’s been persistently trying to form as she felt his movement, he was stretching, but no matter what he does, he still didn’t let go of her hand.

“Ungh, ah, I fell asleep,” he said in a husky voice that Yuki thought was very sexy, she wished her blush that she knew was there was not that obvious. Ichijou turned to the window to ascertain the time while rubbing his sleepy eyes with his free hand, the other still tightly holding his beloved’s, and saw that it was already morning. No wonder he felt so tired, it’s time for him to sleep. What should he do? He needed to go back but he didn’t like the idea of breaking his promise to Yuki, at that thought, he returned his gaze to the brunette still asleep on her bed. He sighed, well, it can’t be helped. *Hmmm, what a beautiful morning…Eh?*

Yuki is already itching to move but she didn’t know how or when. She cursed herself, *why must you pretend to sleep? Why?! What for?!*  

She was thinking of the perfect opportunity of when to ‘wake-up’ when she felt him sit beside her on the bed, her heart suddenly thudded violently inside her chest.

“Good morning Yuki-chan.” The blond greeted the prefect, he had the suspicion that she’s already awake or about to wake up, he then bent down to grant her a kiss on her forehead, anticipating what her reaction would be if she’s really awake.

Yuki jolted very visibly as she was caught off guard by his action. Her eye lids fluttered opened to reveal a very much awake sienna eyes. She immediately saw his bright smiling emerald eyes on her.

“What are you doing? Playing a game so early?” he asked, smiling down at her teasingly. *Yuki-chan can be so weird sometimes,* he mused.

“Eh, ah, I don’t know.” She admitted sheepishly, “Good morning, Ichijou-senpai.” She awkwardly greeted, giving him a very embarrassed smile on her blushing face.

“How are you feeling?”

“Eh? Ah, I’m better, thanks to you,” she said, feeling her face burn in shame at the reminder of her silly actions the night before. She sank deeper in the mattress in an attempt to bury herself alive, Oh...
the humiliation! She should have taken some alcohol so she could have something to blame it to! She thought regretfully.

“That’s good,” he smiled kindly, he knew she’s being shy but he can’t help but find her actions extremely cute that he reached out to brush away the dark brown hair that covered her face before tracing a finger on her soft cheek, not even noticing that he was already in a trance.

Yuki stopped her momentary journey of shame as she stared up at him, daze as the intimacy of his actions seemingly enchants her as well. They were instantly thrown in a world only for themselves, not even noticing how he kept on leaning closer to her, how her heart beat in anticipation, not even when an unwelcome guest intruded inside the room.

“Ehem!” the chairman had no choice but to rudely ‘wake’ them up as he’s been standing there for a minute already without being notice and as the atmosphere is getting steamier every second, he was forced to put all of them in an awkward situation, rather than just him.

The two immediately jumped out of the bed, “Chairman!”

“Uhm, uhm, I’ve… I’ve made some breakfast, would you like to have some? Yuki-chan, it’s almost time for classes so please ready yourself,” he added when there was no response, “I’ll… I’ll wait for you both downstairs, okay?” he went out the door, walking stiffly like he’s made of rocks, even before there was any response from the two teenagers.

Both Yuki and Ichijou blushed and grimaced, looking at the opposite directions, trying very much to calm themselves. How embarrassing! To be seen by the chairman of all people! They didn’t even do anything inappropriate, not yet, but it felt like they were caught red handed… doing what anyway? They glanced at each other then they turned away again when their eyes met, this is getting even more confusing.

Ichijou cleared his throat first before saying, “Ah, it’s late for me so I should get going already Yuki-chan. If ever anything happens to you, come to me, I’ll help you.” He turned to face her and smile again.

“Thank you Ichijou-senpai, you really helped me.” She spoke after bowing slightly to him to show her appreciation as well as to hide her furiously red face.

“You’ll always be welcome,” he said sincerely, reaching out to her to tuck a bit of her hair behind her ear. “It’s my pleasure.” He added before bending to give him another kiss on the forehead. He knew he’s being too close from the norm but he didn’t care, rather, it’s better to have his intentions and affections known to leave her of no doubt regarding his feelings. He wanted to confess already but he told himself to wait a bit more. He didn’t want to confuse her as she just had her heart broken, though unknown to him, it was already too late as she’s as confused about him and her feelings as can be.

Yuki watched him go out of her room as he declined her offer to walk him to the door for she needed to get ready for classes. She was left speechless and breathless as she felt her heart too light and heavy at the same time, she felt like there are butterflies in her stomach, she felt weak in the knees but energetic within, her body trembled in a pleasant way as desires embed itself in her soul. The young prefect threw herself on her bed, closing her eyes as she took a deep breath. She didn’t know what Ichijou-senpai did to her but she found she love the feeling. She smiled as she basked in the delightful feeling the blond vampire gave to her, suddenly, yesterday’s dark and bloody nightmare seem so far away as she felt her world illuminated, her heart strengthened and protected.

The cheerful brunette was bouncing with energy when she went down to the kitchen and even
greeted the chairman a great morning, the earlier incident and interruption already forgotten, before she seated herself by the table and proceeded to eat her breakfast, unmindful that she’s eating the chairman’s cooking and not noticing Ichiru’s dazed expression. When she looked around though, she noticed that Zero was not around, that caught her attention as she knew Zero is now being forced to sleep in their guardian’s house because of his pregnancy and because of Rido’s impending attack. She turned to their father to ask.

“Where’s Zero?”

“He’s inside his room,” Kaien frowned, “hmmmm, I think something happened with him and Kaname-kun because he refused to eat breakfast and… and he looked conflicted.” He came to his son’s room earlier to invite him to breakfast and saw him sitting on his bed wearing a look of anguish. He asked him multiple times if something is wrong but he didn’t even answer him. He has gone very troubled but didn’t nag further as he decided to leave Zero alone for a while to think and he knows that his children are smart enough to arrive to a conclusion for every challenge they face. He sighed, he wanted to do something for all of them but perhaps he also needs patience as it’s never good to force open a heart that’s not ready to share. He only hoped that they’ll come to him if problems get a little too heavy to carry.

This caught both Yuki and Ichiru’s attention. They looked at each other and became concerned about Zero as well so proceeded to go to their brother’s room.

Her apprehension intensified when she saw the expression on Zero’s face. *What could have happened? “Zero?”*

The hunter looked up and saw Yuki followed shortly by Ichiru.

“Nii-san? What happened?” Ichiru asked his brother, feeling troubled at the look of pure agony on his face.

“Zero, are you okay?” Yuki never saw him like this before. The expression reflected on his face is different from the pain she used to witness because of his bloodlust. These past few days, she can only see happiness in him that’s why she’s even more anxious and baffled at the suffering now drowning his lilac eyes.

“It’s nothing, I’m fine. Tell sensei I’ll not be able to come to classes today.” He said flatly with a tone of finality and a silent plea for silence and some time alone.

The two looked at each other again. Ichiru nodded to Yuki as a signal to heed and leave the hunter for now. He knew that tone, his brother really wanted to have some time for himself.

“Zero, you can talk to us, you know. Uhm, if… if you need us, we’ll be here, okay?” Yuki gently offered. They stayed for a while but since he didn’t answer, they were forced to leave him alone, internally debating if they should ask Kaname-senpai regarding this.

With a small click, the door to the room closed and the hunter was left alone in the darkness of solitude and misery.

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There were some slight movements in the darkness as the occupant of the room lay down on his bed
completely. Zero felt exhausted even though he didn’t even do anything since last night. He wasn’t able to sleep the whole time ever since coming back from his lover’s room as he thought of the memories, of Kaname’s promise and of Anne’s words.

He stared at the ceiling, not really seeing the white paint and the cobwebs starting to form as vision of his lover’s face, life and memories filled his mind. Why? Why of all the people must it be Kaname?

So he was the reason why Shizuka Hio got loose, it was because of the pureblood’s arrogance then. It hurts. He felt like drowning as he’s attack by the fact that Kaname was the ultimate caused why his parents got killed and why he was doomed to become the very creature he hunted. It also hurt that he thought of him as nothing more than a tool for revenge and protection for his beloved sister. He felt used and worthless though he also knew Kaname didn’t feel like that anymore but it was not enough to lift his spirits.

He held up his left hand in front of him and looked at the red ring around his pinky. It felt heavy and warm, almost as if trying to remind him of the eternal promise and relationship he shares with that vampire. He didn’t know why but he couldn’t find the energy to take it off no matter how angry he was.

He roll to his side and closed his eyes as he contemplated what will happen from now on when the words of his eldest daughter came ringing inside his mind.

“Otou-chan, I know you’ve lost far greater things than mere clothes and material objects. Your life was ultimately changed by a moment of haughtiness and arrogance but before you make the decision of hating chichiue forever, I would like you to please think about the reason why you fell in love with him in the first place.”

“Reason, huh?” he numbly uttered to himself as he opened his eyes, not sure if he wanted to review the reasons of how and why he indeed fell for his pureblood vampire despite everything else.

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There were series of hurried footsteps that can be heard throughout the hallway leading to the chairman’s office and after only a moment, without knocking, an ash-browned haired man opened the door to find the honey haired ex-hunter and a brunette little girl in earnest conversation.

“Chairman!” Kaito shouted but started at the sight of the little girl that Kaien is conversing with.

“Ah, Kaito-kun, thank you for coming, please sit down, I’m finish talking with Anne-chan.” Kaien said cheerfully. He called for his eldest granddaughter to ask about Zero and Kaname and he was just informed that they’re currently facing one of the trials in their relationship but was given nothing more regarding the matter. He didn’t inquire further as it looked like quite a personal and private affair. He let it go as he was also assured that everything will be fine. He smiled sadly, hoping that would be soon as it’s unbearable to see the despair in his darling son’s eyes. He also called for the young hunter to ask him to protect the students and keep an eye out for anything unusual as an extra precaution for Rido’s impending attack.

“Uhm, I heard that a vamp attacked last time, why didn’t you tell me?” Kaito accused. He was out at the time to make a few rounds in the city that was why he was just informed of the attack that
happened. Damn, a good opportunity just slipped by! And to think I could have legally shot down a pureblood vampire even! Tsk!

Anne chuckled as she watched the expression on the young hunter’s face. She just knew what could be going through his mind right now if she judged right based on what she knew of his character, “You’ll get your chance, Kaito-san.”

Her lilac eyes instantly met his brown orbs and she slightly frowned when he averted his gaze as if being electrocuted. She was baffled at this because the Kaito she knew would never avert his gaze even when faced by a foe stronger than him. He faces them without fear so she was a bit troubled by this action. She was about to ask if anything was the matter with her favorite hunter when her grandpa spoke again.

“Well, let’s talk about enhancing the security then,” then he faced his granddaughter, “thank you for your time, Anne-chan. Please talk to me if anything happened, alright? You should retire now as you still need to sleep. You have classes tonight.”

“Eh? Oh, I understand grandpa. Uhm, I’ll- I will leave first then.” She excused herself and proceeded to the door but without first throwing an inquiring look at the hunter which the latter didn’t even notice as he was busy looking anywhere else but at her. “I’ll see you later, Kaito-san.”

The only thing she was given as a response was a grunt of acknowledgement from the hunter. It took all her will power not to barge inside again after she left and closed the door of the room. Hmm, what was that? She thought, a bit irritated at not knowing the answer.

Anne has to sigh; men could be such a mystery sometimes.

“Hah~…” a long sigh came from the pretty little brunette that was slumped on her seat in their class. She’s feeling exhausted and though she’s as happy as she’s feeling fortunate that a certain vampire would come visit her for a short while every day to ask how she’s feeling since that certain embarrassing rainy day, she’s still troubled by some other things.

Yuki blushed as she remembered how Ichijou-senpai whispered to her the day after during the night parade that he’d wait for her at a certain time and place inside the academy forest. She was really nervous then and was really curious for the reason why he called her out, it turned out it was to ask her if she’s feeling completely well already and if she’s still seeing her bloody visions. She was indeed having these strange visions but unlike before, she’s a bit calmer though it would still scare and shake her. She honestly didn’t know what’s happening to her anymore but she believed it part of her forgotten past but then why is it coming back now? Who was she? Why was there blood everywhere? There was a part of her that’s very afraid to find out the truth should it be as horrifying as her nightmares.

The vampire then proposed meeting there every night to check on her which she eagerly accepted. Yuki felt she’ll really be fine with the assurance of seeing him every day and it’s the reason why she can keep her calm even when red obscures her view. She felt lucky to have his company and it saved her sanity but her happiness couldn’t be completed. She sighed. The reason was because of her adopted brother.
She turned her head to look at the back of the class where her troubled silver haired best friend seated himself. It’s been a week already and he’s still in the same gloomy and melancholic mood. His brooding expression prevented her from feeling the happiness that is within her already. She felt extra worried as it’s also been a week already since she saw Kaname-senpai. The one to lead the Night class these last few days was Anne. It surprised the Day class students as well as Ichiru and herself. She didn’t even think Zero knew about it as he hasn’t been attending to his prefect duties during the class exchange, no doubt trying to avoid Kaname-senpai. But why? What happened?

She sighed, she’s getting even more troubled because of this for they have no idea what happened to both as they refused to say anything because according to Ichijou-senpai, Kaname-senpai was also grave and silent which worries the whole Night class. They would spend hours trying to reach a conclusion as even the children refused to talk about and no one dared to pry even more.

She took a deep breath to calm and stop herself from marching up to Zero to demand the answers from his own lips. She knew it won’t do to force him to spill. She smiled sadly, sometimes really, she just hope that he’d rely on her or Ichiru or even the chairman and not bottle it up like this.

She looked up at the ceiling then closed her eyes. Anne-chan said that everything will be alright. She hoped it would be soon as she can’t bear to see her favorite people fight like this.

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“Chichiue?”

“Kaname?”

These came from the blond vice-president of the Moon dorm and from the two young twin brunettes that opened the door to his study. They peered at the completely darkened room and saw Kaname seated by the large table, looking outside the balcony. They looked anxiously at each other for it was the same position they left him before.

He never moved from that spot, as if waiting for something, no, waiting for someone.

“Chichiue, please eat. We’ve brought some food for you.” Kohaku offer softly after Ichijou laid the tray with his dinner on the table, “You’ve barely eaten and slept these past few days. Chichiue?” he repeated when there was no answer.

“Ah, forgive me for worrying you like this, but I’m really not hungry.” Kaname gave a small smile to his young twins which only managed to look painful and weak.

“Demo, chichiue…” Akira began but couldn’t continue. He looked at their exhausted father and had to fight down any retort for worry that it might just add to his burden. They witness many of their parents’ fight but most never lasted this long. Most were also just petty arguments because of either side’s stubbornness and they very rarely see it escalated in such a scale that it took days to be resolved so it concerned them greatly. Their sister would often go to their daddy’s side to see how he’s doing to make sure that he’s eating at least and they’re task to do the same for their father. However, it seems like nothing can console either side, especially their father who sees the situation completely hopeless but they knew he’s just bidding his time and is using all his self-control not to barge in to their otou-chan’s space to force him to his side again.

“Worry not, I’m fine,” Kaname assured them again but it did nothing to alleviate their worries.
“Then, we’ll leave the food here. Please eat it whenever you’re hungry father…. And we’ll take these,” Kohaku offered and motioned to take the stack of papers that accumulated at the side of desk that the council still sent.

“Ah, there’s no need, I will do it at another time.”

“It’s alright chichiue, let us handle it. You need to rest. Do not trouble yourself over such things. It will be done in a moment.” Kohaku reassured which was supported by his twin’s continuous nods.

“Thank you. Leave the things you cannot handle and I’ll do them later.”

“Uhm, rest well then father.” Both brunettes nodded and they tip toed to give their chichiue a kiss before they exited the room.

Ichijou watched the two young ones close the door before turning to Kaname, “Would you also be skipping the class tonight?” he asked apprehensively.

“Yes, have Anne lead the Night class again tonight. There have been no problems, correct?” he answered, his gaze returning outside.

“None, the Night class still walks proudly behind her….” He paused before continuing, “will you be okay Kaname? You look terrible… How about going to class this time? The others kept on asking what happened.” He persuaded. It was not a secret that something is afflicting their president as it can be felt inside the whole Night class dormitory. The lower class vampires have been asking if something was the matter and only the children’s assurances was able to calm down the otherwise chaotic confusion that might have arisen from this. He sighed. The air was so heavy, it’s hard to even breathe as even the children’s mood and aura became so depressed. It was hard enough with only one gloomy pureblood but with five depressed hybrids, the pressure is almost solid. It’s like the ceilings are so low on all of them. He wished that everything will go back to what it was, for his friend’s and the entire Night class’ sake.

“No, I’m trying to give Zero some time and space. I do not want to hurt him further.”

“But Zero-kun is not even present during the night parades.” The noble hastily informed as he might just convince his friend to finally emerge from his room.

“What?” This made him turn to his vice-president.

“Oh, he… uhm, we haven’t seen him yet since that night.” He explained. Ichijou forgot that Kaname didn’t know about it as they avoided talking about the hunter in front of him and he only knew from Yuki that Zero is also brooding in his room and was only forced out to attend classes but never the prefect’ job at the night march though he does takes his rounds around the academy.

“I see, then I’ll wait some more.” Before I take him with me. Kaname asserted and Ichijou wasn’t able to say anything more to his friend’s answer as finality was in his low but firmed voice.

The blond went away to the classes and he heard the door close behind him.

Kaname closed his eyes, his patience is wearing thin. He wished that Zero would come first to him so there’ll be no need to drag his lover back. In his heart, he wanted his hunter to forgive him completely so they’ll be no need to force him that’s why he’s been giving him time but every day seems like a century, every minute like a prick in his exhausted composure and every moment that passes without his mate by his side seems to freeze a part of him. How long must he wait? He’s almost at the end of his rope.
He opened his burgundy eyes again. He’s been fighting the urge to intrude upon his hunter’s space that he didn’t even try to connect to him though their bond. Zero must arrive to his own answer alone or it will be meaningless. He let out a deep sigh.

*For you, Zero, I can loosen my hold. But I can definitely not grant you your freedom. Come to me soon or else you’ll wake up and find yourself imprisoned in a golden cage.*

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“What if I am? Seducing you, I mean.”

He halted his steps as the words and that piercing gaze kept coming back to attack the fragile defenses he put around his heart.

*Damn it! What could that mean?*

Ichiru was haunted by those words day in, day out and he didn’t know how seriously he should take them. Really, what is that vampire’s game? Why, if he’s hated, would he say those words? Would he take his joke this far?

He honestly didn’t know.

Ichiru only knew that if, by any slim chance, Aido-senpai was being serious about his words then he is certainly crazy. Why him? Why would he like him? He couldn’t think of one single thing that’s good about him. He’s fragile and weak. He’s only so-so in other studies while greatly lacking in mathematics. He’s also pathetic in sports and combat. And above all else, he’s disgustingly sickly and feeble. He sighed. He can’t think of one good characteristic about him that could possibly seduce a handsome, genius, charming, popular and rich noble vampire that’s why all conclusion could only lead to his being played at.

He balled his fist, trying to get a grip of himself and reality.

There’s no way, it can’t be.

Who was he fooling? Aido-senpai is perfect and he’s a man, why would he fall in love with a pathetic person like him and a male on top of that?

He took a deep breath. Irritation building up inside his chest as he’s both annoyed at his own words and at how true those words rang to him. He was only jolted out of his inner torture chamber when a voice called out to him.

“Ichiru, how long do you plan to stand there? It’s getting colder; let’s hurry to the chairman’s house before you catch a cold.” Aido’s voice was suddenly behind the young silverette that it made the poor prefect jump out of his skin.

“Fuck, don’t surprise me like that, you bastard!” Ichiru exclaimed while clutching his uniform, his heart beating furiously inside his chest.

“Fuck, don’t surprise me like that, you bastard!” Ichiru exclaimed while clutching his uniform, his heart beating furiously inside his chest.

“I’ve been calling for you for a long while, you’re the one who spaced out and didn’t answer.” The blond sighed, “Enough, let’s go.” He then took one of Ichiru’s hands and proceeded to lead the prefect instead.
“Wha-! Don’t get familiar with me. Hey! Are you listening? Let go of my hand, you asshole!” the silverette ranted while attempting to pull his hand free of the vampire’s grasp.

But Aido’s grip was like steel. No matter how much Ichiru pulled, he didn’t let go. The prefect was left squirming and even ended up panting because of the effort but all to no avail. He looked up and saw the noble’s proud golden tresses swayed as he trekked the way to the chairman’s house, unmindful of the actions of his rebellious charge who was trying to escape.

The silverette looked down again on his captured hand. Ah, how he wanted to close his own fingers around this vampire’s. He stopped himself as he knew he’d come to regret it should he make a bigger fool out of himself. He felt miserable as the noble’s actions repeatedly threw him in the myriad of confusion that he wasn’t able to stop himself from speaking.

“Enough already. Stop it.” The prefect started.

This managed to snatch the vampire’s attention that he stopped his steps to face the dejected silverette, “Stop what?” he inquired, arching an eyebrow.

Ichiru looked up at this. Damn this bastard! “If you know already then that’s enough! There’s no need for you to rub it on my face! If you want to laugh, laugh by yourself, there’s no need to gloat!” he shouted angrily. He didn’t mean to explode and finally say everything but it’s all too much already. He can’t take it anymore. If Aido already knew then there’s already no use trying to ignore it and let himself be subjected to such games for amusement. He gritted his teeth at the look of pure surprise and bafflement on the blonde’s face, “You bastard, you might think it’s disgusting but I never regretted having those feelings! It’s true for me so don’t you dare play with it!” He exclaimed, a bit breathless but still staring unfalteringly at those enchanting blue eyes that has haunted him ever since he first sighted them.

“Ichiru, what- what are you talking about?” Aido asked a bit worried. He didn’t understand the meaning of his words but it seems like Ichiru thought he’s playing with him… but what game?

“I said enough. You already know right? Don’t play dumb. You’re a genius so there was no way you wouldn’t find that out,” he answered, bowing his head slightly, “Don’t confuse me anymore than you already did. If you hate me then just hate me but don’t… don’t make me fall even more…” being further humiliated as blush formed on his pale skin.

Suddenly, the wind’s howl was too deafening as silence blanketed the two students. Everything in them went very still except their thundering heartbeats.

Hanabusa stared at Ichiru, unable to believe what he’s hearing. Is this real? Did he really hear those words? Does it have the same meaning as what he believed they do? Is Ichiru really telling him that he’s been in love with him all this time? But wait, what? That and with his earlier words… did he mean that Ichiru believed that he’s been toying with him? Him?!

The vampire felt a vein popped inside his brain. What-the-fuck! Did he suffer for a long time because of this misunderstanding? Who’s to blame?! Who!?

“Wait, what are you talking about? Why would I play around with you when I’ve been chasing you for so long?!” he exasperatedly replied a bit too loud with a deep frown that his eyebrows almost met.

This made Ichiru raise his head, “Don’t play dumb! I know you hated me! I’ve watched you since… since years ago so… so I know…” he added the last words in a softer tone, embarrassed at finally revealing his secret.
The blond noble wanted to kick himself at this. Shit! What the-! Yes, that was true but it’s been long reversed! He wanted to scream in indignation. He can’t believe it that he’s been one of the reasons for his own suffering. “If you’re watching then you should know that it’s been long since changed!”

“Ha! What changed? Didn’t you continue to hate me even now?!?”

Grrrr! Aido felt so frustrated. It’s because Ichiru kept on flirting! “Isn’t it because you kept on seducing girls?!”

“Hmph, says the Idol of the Night class.” The silverette muttered, turning his head to the other side.

Argh! He can’t refute that. He took a deep breath, trying to calm himself. What an utter failure. They just completely missed each other. He wanted to hang himself as he was really to blame for half of it but he did made his intention clear specially these past few days, wasn’t that enough?

“…….” Wait, maybe that was not direct enough. He looked at the silverette who’s looking away from him. Ah, that’s right. He forgot. Ichiru is a great pessimist. How could he forget that? He never did see what’s so good about himself. “You’re such an idiot.” He softly whispered but without any meaning to insult.

“What was that, you-,” Ichiru sharply turned back his head at Aido. He was about to curse him again but stopped at the sight of his blue eyes on him, with intensity that drowned him for a moment and knock out his air completely.

“I love you and if that’s not clear enough, tell me. I’ll repeat it again and again.” Aido sincerely confessed out of the blue. He should have done this a long time ago instead just showing it to this dense silverette.

The young prefect gaped at the vampire’s words. For a moment unable to comprehend what it meant. He didn’t trust himself to believe, feeling that it would be too good for him. How is it even possible that he can have him? Before he can utter one word, the blond spoke again.

“How could I even hate you when I can’t even breathe without you?” he forthrightly admitted, placing his forehead on the silverette’s shoulder as if he’s too exhausted to even stand straight. “I’ve been whacking my brains for methods to seduce you so that you’ll notice me even just a little so how was it that I’m playing with you? You don’t know how much you torment me. I want you so much it hurts.” his voice was so full of emotion that it paralyzed Ichiru on the spot.

The prefect can’t believe he’s hearing those words. How? When? Why him? Can he really believe he’s fortunate enough to have caught his attention? Is it real? And before he can even ask any of those questions, Aido raised his head, a hand below his jaw line, forcing him to look up. His breath got stuck in his throat at the sight of his face descending slowly to his. He almost closed his eyes, his heart honestly anticipating tasting his lips on his again when a feminine voice calling his name suddenly shook him out of his trance.

“Yuki! She’ll see.” The young prefect panicked. His hand shot up to stop the vampire’s movements.

“As if I care,” was all Aido said before he claimed his beloved’s mouth and kissed him passionately. He wouldn’t care even if the whole Academy sees. As long as he can make sure that he really holds this stubborn prefect’s heart then it’s fine. He wanted to make sure that no misunderstanding will be left of his intentions and feelings towards the younger Kiryū or he’ll really hang himself.

Ichiru was lost and he instantly forgot all about his adopted-sister’s arrival at the scene the moment he felt those enticing lips on his. It’s as bewitching and intoxicating as he remembered from the first time
he felt them. He could only instinctively wrap his arms around the vampire’s from under Aido’s arms, his hands clutching his senpai’s white uniform to draw him closer.

The entire world has been forgotten as it contained only them. They could hear and see nothing, not the trees, cold wind, full moon or even the female prefect who indeed happened upon the steamy scene and whose mouth was promptly covered, to stop the exclamation she would have uttered, by the other blond vampire also at the site.

The two newly arrived, unwelcomed guests exchanged big smiles on their furiously blushing faces before quietly leaving the two for a more private time, feeling a bit awkward and too conscious of each other as they did.

He opened his lilac eyes to find his surroundings completely dark. He got up and sat down, brushing away the hays that stuck to his clothes with his hand while he blinked multiple times to drive away the remaining sleep in his eyes. He sighed. He hasn’t been able to sleep well since that evening and it’s been about a week already. No wonder he felt so exhausted.

He heard White Lily neighed as if trying to get his attention. He looked up and reached out to her mane to pat her, “I’m feeling better, thanks.” He said softly. It’s the only place left for him where he can sleep peacefully as the prick of the bond tormented him. He almost forgot that it’s been days since he last fed from Kaname and their budding bond obviously didn’t appreciate that. It screamed at him and wailed like a child. He sighed. One of his hands shot down to feel his stomach. He hesitated. It can’t be good for Anne too. He knew that but he can’t help himself.

He looked up blindly. It’s been so long since he needed to worry about bloodlust. It’s not that he really craved it like before, like he was about to lose his mind as hollow coldness filled his body that he would have given anything just to quench his thirst. No, not like that anymore. He’s just plain hungry but no other blood will sate him other than his. No other blood appealed to him. He only wanted Kaname’s. He grimaced. What happened to him?

He knew he’s fortunate never having to go through that painful experience of terrible bloodlust. He was saved from that as his mate’s life and sanity will keep him from ever descending to that level. He need not become a monster anymore. He’s lucky; he didn’t need to pull the trigger of his gun to end his own life but why is it still so hard?

He closed his eyes as he sighed. He was told to think about why he fell for that bastard in the first place. Why indeed?

He’s an arrogant bloodsucker who got on his nerve every fucking time and seemingly designed his every day to torture him with his condescension and disdain. He hated that arrogant prick so why did he fell so hard for him? When did it start again?

Was it because of his challenges hidden behind his haughtiness that pushed Zero to fight his bloodlust? Was it because he always seemed to save his neck even when he didn’t ask to? Was it the time when he offered his pure blood to save his sanity? Or was it simply because he’s Kaname?

In this life, what did he gain? What did he lose?

“It’s not love at first sight and to be honest with you, I do not know when it started or how it began.
How an extremely cheeky hunter managed to capture my heart when no one else did. I asked myself over and over again that very same question. I found I didn’t need to know how or when it began because everything about you makes me crazy, sometimes irritates me, enchants me and makes me ridiculously happy. It’s only you who made me feel, makes me breathe, only you who shook my very soul. Your every move, gaze and words seduces me every time to the point where I’m beside myself.”

Was this a lie? It’s not… right?

“Zero, I can’t promise you a completely rosy life, for if you’ll be with me that would mean endless challenges and struggles. I can’t promise our union to be all but happiness, I’m sure there will be hurt and pain but if you’re willing to face that with me as I will be willing to face all your troubles and carry your burdens then choose me. I promise to stand by your side until the end of my life.”

At least he didn’t give him false expectation about that, so this is true, right?

“I will postpone putting a band on your left ring finger but I would like you to put this on, this is the only thing I can give you. I will not get down on my knees but I would still ask you to share my life all the same.”

He slumped, his hands grasping a handful of his silver hairs, his elbow on his bended knees.

It hurts. He wanted to run to him, very badly so but what would his parents say? Would they feel betrayed for he loved the man that indirectly caused their deaths? What would Ichiru feel? What if he hated Kaname? What should he feel? Can he even truly hate and forget him?

He can’t and he hated himself at his inability to do so.

It’s his arrogance that caused the greatest tragedy of his life. It’s what turned him into a monster in the first place. He’s the reason why Ichiru and he are now orphaned. So, why? Why can’t he hate him? He knew he used to but why not now? Even after knowing all those things he did in the past, why can’t he, for the fucking life of him, hate that bloodsucking vampire?

Fuck, it’s really just because of that, huh?

He loves him.

For better and for worse.

It’s too late, he knew it.

Even if deception clearly reflects in his eyes, it’s too late.

But Kaname didn’t even lie to him. He told him because he didn’t want to hide it from him, because he wanted his trust, because he cared… right?

He opened his eyes, determination and resignation burning in his lilac orbs.

He stood up, there’s no point of even prolonging both of their agony. He sprinted towards the Moon dormitory even before he realized it.

He knew he has long lost the war even before the battle started. He honestly didn’t know what his parents or Ichiru would feel, the only thing he knew was what he would feel. He decided he’ll apologize countless of times to his family but he’ll still chose to be with him because he knew he’ll regret it. He’ll regret it until he dies if he let it end here, if he were to face life without him and if he
were never able to see that future with him.

“I’m sorry mother, father, but please let me make this choice.” *as my happiness could only be with him.*
It was already late into the night. The moon was high in the sky, illuminating the otherwise pitch black world. The air was cold as late autumn wind prepared to give way to winter. The surrounding was quiet and the only sounds that can be heard were the rustling from the tall trees that do not shed their leaves and the harsh breath that came from a sprinting silver-haired prefect.

He’s running as fast as he can yet he felt his legs aren’t carrying him quickly enough. He wanted to fly straight to his lover’s side. He wanted to see his face. He didn’t want to admit it, and never will to anyone but himself, but he missed that bastard. He wanted to hear his voice, to feel his touch, to bask in his heat and to look into his burgundy eyes.

The silverette was panting at the effort of running as the cold wind bit his pale white skin but he didn’t care, he only wanted to reach his destination as soon as possible and he wouldn’t have stopped had it not for the two people he encountered on his way as he made a turn to the bridge going to the Moon dormitory.

Ichijou and Yuki were surprised when Zero almost crashed into them. They were just walking towards the Sun Dormitory as the vampire escorted the female prefect back when they were shocked at the silverette’s sudden appearance.

“Zero!” Yuki exclaimed, startled, “What happened to you? Where are you going?”

“Nothing,” he panted even harder as he abruptly stopped his sprint, “Later, Yuki.” He added shortly before he continued to run.

Both can only stare at his retreating back and it hit them as they watch the direction of his goal. They looked at each other, wide eyed with exhilarated smiles on their faces. Yuki unconsciously covered her mouth with her hands as she trembled in excitement and anticipation. Finally!

She closed her eyes briefly as she uttered as silent wish to let everything be settled this time. Ichijou watched her silently before turning his head towards the Moon dorm, thank goodness for this. ‘I’m happy for you Kaname.’ He mentally wished his friend good luck.

“How wonderful.” The blond vampire sighed in relief.

“Uhm! I bet Kaname-senpai will be happy.” Yuki cheerfully supplied as she nodded.

“I hope they take their time,” Ichijou implied with a hidden smile, “ah, it’s good tomorrow is a rest day.” He added subtly which made the female prefect frown. “Shall we continue on, Yuki-chan?” as he smiled a bit mysteriously.

Though a bit confused at her companion’s words and that smile, she simply nodded.

Only after a while, they continued on their way, feeling that the day has become a blessing for many of their friends and important people.
There was still a buzz that could be heard throughout the main building of the Cross Academy as the Night class students went to take their break. It’s rare to see the students so motivated about going to classes but no one can blame them as it became a bit suffocating to be inside the Moon dorm this past week what with the depressing atmosphere that permeated the air inside their dormitory so right now, they’re enjoying the rare peace they’re having though they’re all still very worried about their pureblood leader.

“Hah~…” a little sigh escaped from the pretty honey blond vampire who sat beside her orange haired cousin. She’s been trying to think of ways to solve the miserable situation her beloved pureblood is in though the problem is actually not that clear but one can guess the root cause of all of this. It’s because of that silver haired hunter. “What did that hunter do this time?” she said with a tone of irritation.

“Ruka,” Kain scolded her, warning in his low tone while looking around to check if their little princes and princesses heard her.

“Don’t worry, they went out in the garden. They said they’re not hungry.” She said sighing again. It’s a good thing that the children are at least less depressed every time they go to class since they worry about the lower class vampires and are careful with their auras so everyone can relax during classes. “But what should we do for Kaname-sama?”

“Want to kidnap Kiryū then?” the devious plan was unexpectedly voiced out by the sleepy copper haired vampire. What’s more surprising was that he looked almost serious while he suggested this.

“Want to lose your head?” Kain shook his head.

“That might be a good idea,” Ruka distractedly whispered, seriously contemplating the idea. Desperate times calls for desperate measure.

“Ruka!” the orange haired vampire was exasperated that they’ll even consider it.

“We can wrap him up very nicely,” Rima suggested impassively before taking a bite at a strawberry flavored pocky.

“Rima!” Kain called out warningly.

“With a big ribbon for the presentation,” added Shiki as he took a pocky from Rima’s box.

“Shiki!” Kain is now a bit panicky for the three looked really serious by now.

A laugh suddenly came and shook them all out from the evil plan they’re beginning to hatch and they turned to see a jovial green-eyed vampire that just came inside the room and made the red head vampire almost sigh in relief.

“Now, now, I don’t think there’s any need to dirty our hands to fix this,” Ichijou continued while chuckling, slightly surprised that the normally sensible nobles would actually consider something so ridiculous. “If Kaname was planning on forcing him, he could have done it very easily. Come now, leave them alone. They’ll fix it and perhaps everything will go back to normal by tomorrow.” He declared and something in his voice sounded so certain that it made the other vampires a bit suspicious.

“Where have you been, Takuma-san?” asked the copper haired vampire to his roommate.
“Uhm, well, somewhere…” he trailed a bit suspiciously, “huh? Where’s Aido?” he asked to distract the others.

“There, by the window,” Kain pointed at his cousin with his thumb, “in his own world yet again.” He added with a frown. Aido has been really weird lately. Well, he knew that Kaname asked him to guard the younger Kiryū. He sighed. Hana is such a simpleton. ‘He’s that happy huh?’ he mused as he also watched the bright expression on his blond cousin’s face. He can’t help but smile while watching his cousin’s blissful expression. ‘I hope it went well.’

“How lucky,” Ichijou muttered absentmindedly in a low tone that still managed to be overheard by their group.

“What was that Ichijou-san?” Ruka inquired.

“Huh? Oh, it’s nothing,”

They looked at each other at the weirdness of both of the blonds but asked no more.

The vice-president just proceeded to the classroom for the next class is about to start, feeling light as his friends found happiness and wished that his will have the same lucky outcome.

He ran pass the guard post then proceeded inside the dormitory without knocking and run up the stairs until he was in front of the familiar wooden door that houses his heart. That was the only time he stopped. He took deep breaths and attempted to calm his heart as it beat mercilessly inside his chest both because of the exercise and nervousness.

As he stood there waiting for his breath to even out, he remembered something odd at the situation and he was suddenly struck by the idea that normally, the door would automatically open every time he went there. Zero almost banged himself on the door. Stupid! He has completely forgotten the fact that at this time, Kaname must have been attending his classes!

He sighed, he wasn’t thinking right, it’s because his head was up in the clouds. He was unmoving for a moment and was already in the act of leaving though his very inside opposed the mere thought. He then decided to just wait. The silverette looked around and found that he didn’t like the idea of being spotted by vampires while waiting for the pureblood so he decided to enter inside the Moon dorm President’s room even without permission, something only he can do and get away with unscathed.

So without knocking, he opened the door and entered the completely darkened room of his mate and had he been a normal mortal, he would have never seen the figure slumped on the chair behind the big oak table. He would have never noticed Kaname if not for his vampiric vision and the moonlight that illuminated the unmoving body of his beloved.

He stood still for a moment before he uttered, “Kaname?” and when he heard no response, he proceeded to walk very slowly towards him and sure enough, he found his lover sleeping in an uncomfortable sitting position, with his head hanging a bit to his left side that sent his long brown locks to cover a bit of his face, his eyebrows drawn together in a deep frown.

He stared as he swallowed, a bit worried; he has never seen the pureblood like this before, trouble
clearly reflected on his face even as he slept. He looked exhausted and distressed. The hunter just silently watched the vampire for a few moments as something heavy weighed down his heart at the look of agony on his lover’s handsome face. He was so affected by the sight that he wasn’t able to stop his hand as it unconsciously reach out to set aside the dark brown strands that cupped his mate’s face when he felt his lover stir from his sleep.

Kaname felt a presence inside his room, a comforting aura, and for a moment, he was lost and detached from the current happening as he felt his body heavy from exhaustion from lack of sleep and sickness of his heart and soul. He didn’t even notice that he has already fallen asleep and currently waking up but when he caught the whiff of the intoxicating smell of night dew that he’s been craving for the whole time and then felt the warmth of the familiar touch he’s been desiring, all sleep instantly flew away from him that his eyes shot wide open to reveal startled red wine orbs as he turned to the person caressing his hair.

“Zero,” he whispered in disbelief as he stared at the equally surprised hunter who went very still.

The hunter was frozen on the spot, seemingly embarrassed at being caught red-handed while he caressed his lover. He was in the act of retracting his hand when his pureblood’s hand shot up to snatch his wrist and pull him closer. It caught the silverette off guard that he lost his balance and ended up falling face first towards the vampire.

Kaname caught him and instantly embraced him, tightly trapping him in his arms, with Zero’s head below his chin. Kaname can’t help but bury his face on his mate’s silver hair as he took in the comforting smell of the night wind off his lover, unable to believe he’s here at last. “Zero, Zero, Zero…” he repeated softly again and again as if chanting, murmuring against his hunter’s silver locks.

“Fuck Kaname, don’t scare me like that,” the hunter barked to hide his embarrassment though he made no attempt to escape from his lover’s grasp.

Then a moment passed without any movement from the two occupants of the study as both tried to ascertain the other’s feelings. Nothing can be heard and silence permeated the air until the pureblood spoke in the softest voice Zero has ever heard from him.

“Forgive me Zero, about everything, I-,” his words were abruptly stopped by the hunter.

“Enough, I didn’t come here to hear that,” he interrupted but without any hint of irritation or anger, “I know, so it’s enough already.” He placed a hand on Kaname’s shoulder and propped himself away to look at the pureblood properly.

“Then why have you come?” the pureblood asked a bit warily as he looked at his lover’s lilac eyes. The idea that the hunter might have come to break up with him hit him, sending cold fear to grip and squeeze his heart painfully. “Do you forgive me?” he asked a bit hopefully.

There was a short silence before the silverette spoke again as if trying to sort out his speech though his thundering heartbeat messed up most of his thoughts. He could only looked at his burgundy eyes and drowned inside them making it almost impossible for him to provide any coherent answer but the voice that was inquiring him begged to have the answer that would build or destroy him completely.

Zero couldn’t help but be in pain as well as he saw the desperation that unconsciously reflected on his pureblood’s face.

“I love my parents very much, they were my whole world,” he began as he dazedly brushed away the dark brown threads that curtained his vampire’s face who became very stiff at his words, “and it hurts to have them taken from us,” he continued, not breaking eye contact with the brunette, “and I
should really hate you for this …”

Kaname was wide eyed for a moment. He’s almost sure that his fears are being confirmed and was about to say something, anything that might prevent his hunter from leaving him when Zero spoke again, cutting out whatever eloquent speech he could come out to.

“But I can’t.” Zero continued as he turned his gaze downwards, blindly looking down, sadness reflected in his silver lavender eyes, “I love my parents Kaname, very much,” he said emotionally before returning his gaze to look unwaveringly at Kaname’s while his eyebrows drew together as if he’s enduring something a bit painful and whispered in an almost inaudible voice, “but I love you too…”

Once again, there was silence as both can only stare at each other, especially the pureblood who could only gape at his hunter’s words, for a moment, unable to comprehend his words.

It seemed like a century has passed before Kaname’s hand moved. Both of his hands reached out to cup his lover’s cheeks which were frozen because of the cold night wind, and without words, pulled his mate closer as he also moved to meet him halfway to share a kiss, something that was clearly missed, as they close their eyes. It was light and gentle.

Zero felt his lover’s soft lips brushed against his as if merely trying to test his reaction or to see if he’s real and not an illusion brought forth by a weary heart. It stayed like that for a while before he felt Kaname’s tongue brushed his close mouth as if seeking permission which was freely given as he opened to allow his mate to explore and delve further inside.

Kaname can’t help but tighten his grip as it swam from Zero’s cheek to his silver hair and nape. He meant to grant only a light kiss but the flavor of his hunter tempted him to taste even deeper and feel more of his heat as he basked in the delicious sensation of Zero’s reciprocation.

When he broke the kiss to look at his silver haired mate, wanting more than ever to be forever part of his soul, to steal his heart and trap his stubborn lover somewhere he can never escape from, he wallowed at the feeling his last words gave to him. He pulled him close again to crush him in a hug which again, startled the silverette.

“I’ll make it up to you. I’ll not be able to bring back what you’ve lost and nothing will be able to replace them but I swear I will love you more than anyone will ever do,” Kaname promised as he stoke Zero’s hair, “I’ll do everything in my power to grant your every wish, I won’t cause you any regret and I’ll be by your side until the end of my time,” he pledged so passionately which made the hunter stiffened as he caught his breath, “I’ll give you my life,” he added softly, “so stay by my side.”

The hunter closed his eyes, unmindful that Kaname’s hug was so tight that it almost crushed him, as his own hands wrapped around his mate’s body. “I know already, moron.” he grumbled as he hid his embarrassed and flushed face on his lover’s shoulder, his body relaxing in Kaname’s arms.

They stayed in that position for quite some time, with Zero almost kneeling while Kaname leaned forward to be trapped in each other’s embrace, both very much contented with the silence as no more words needed be uttered to confirm forgiveness or acceptance.

Kaname continued to softly stroke his mate’s hair while Zero remained pressed against his pureblood, unable to move as he continued to hide his embarrassed and flustered face. Such moments weren’t really made for him though he felt satisfaction course through his whole being.

Nothing passed from another’s lips until Kaname spoke again as he remembered something he
wished to hear once more.

“Zero,” the pureblood spoke, with energy and playfulness as he felt light having his hunter again, “say it again for me, will you?” he loosened his embrace to look at his lover’s blushing face.

“What?” Zero inquired with a frown,

“What you said earlier. You said you love me,” Kaname answered with a teasing smirk which made his hunter’s blush a shade darker.

“Baka!” the silverette exclaimed, flustered as he attempted to escape from the brunette. Why does Kaname love to put him in an awkward situation even when his mate knew he’s very bad at it?

“Why are you so embarrassed? It’s unfair that it’s only me who’s saying it, or are you just lying then. My, how lonely. I’m wounded.” Kaname said trying to act pitiful though his eyes lit up in amusement as he tighten his hug yet again to imprison his now struggling mate.

“Kaname!” the hunter yelled in warning which was lost as his vampire watched his chagrined expression. Knowing that any form of struggle is futile, he just conceded, “You really are a bastard. Fine! I love you!” he harshly vociferated in resignation as he looked away.

Kaname smiled as he reached out to his face to force Zero to look at him again, “One more time,” he requested again but this time, Zero’s complaints were silence as his lover gave him a look of pure desperate longing.

Bastard, that’s foul play. “I love you.” in a gentler tone.

“Again.” Kaname repeated as he gently put his forehead on Zero’s while he closed his eyes, as if trying to embed the memory of Zero’s voice as he said the words he’s been wanting to hear for a long time for he realized that it was the first time that his lover ever said he loves him. It’s music to his ears.

“I love you, you bastard.” He sighed in surrender, how can he even deny Kaname anything if he was given that expression. That’s really foul play.

Zero watched as a smile form before Kaname’s lips crashed into his. He closed his eyes as he let himself be drowned at the wonderful feelings his vampire grant him. He opened his mouth to allow his mate entrance which was most eagerly accepted.

Kaname groaned in delight as he delved deeper to taste the lush heat of his hunter, relishing on the fact that his Zero is finally here, again, even after everything that has happened and that he loves him, wretched as he is, even with all his vile darkness and repugnance. He let himself explore deeper and demanded to know every part of his lover that may be unknown to him, claiming his mark and possession.

The cold night wind was instantly lost as intense heat spread throughout the study. Kaname very easily stood as he guided his mate to do the same without breaking the searing kiss they share. They blindly struggled to find the way to the main bedroom while Kaname made short work of Zero’s school shirt and promptly shedding it off his pale body as they go, bumping to walls and furniture in the process, not stopping even though they made quite a mess in the study, hearing some books, papers and something that might be the lamp falling here and there, but still not caring as their clothes littered the floor. When they wrestled each other on the bed, they were already topless and half-naked.

It was only then that the pureblood broke their kiss to stare down at his lovely mate, still completely
flushed and panting below him and allowed himself to trace finger on his smooth pale skin. He smiled, he really missed the sensation of having him, “I wouldn’t mind doing it there but you might become uncomfortable. Staying there for a long time will be bad for your body.”

“Tch,” Zero turned his head sideways while he raised an arm to cover his mouth in an attempt to hide his undoubtedly red face from his mate that intensified even brighter at the hint of making love multiple times, “You sure say a lot of things,”

“Get use to it,” Kaname purred as he lowered himself to his hunter while removing the arm between them and turning his lover’s head towards him so he can claim his lips once again, already a bit impatient to take him fast, to embed himself deep within him, to be part of him.

The cold wind continued to rustle the leaves of the tall trees outside but none of it was heard as the two remaining occupants in the Moon dorm immersed themselves in the heat of passion that ensued which continued even when the first light of the morning came.

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It’s too late into the night and dawn is almost breaking. He finished his patrol already but he’s still very much awake and was in no mind to rest, too flustered to actually feel sleepy. He didn’t even notice that he was already pacing here and there until Yuki came in and found him in his distracted state.

Yuki stared at her adopted-brother for a while before finally speaking, jarring her brother out of his musings, “What are you thinking about, Ichiru?” she asked though she already knew as his obvious blush almost screamed out his thoughts. She fought really hard to hide her smile.

“Yuki!” Ichiru almost jumped at the sight of the brunette. He’s been thinking really hard about what happened earlier today and if Yuki had seen them. He blushed. He wanted to ask but looking at her innocent face, words can’t seem to come out.

The brunette watched in silent amusement as Ichiru’s mouth closed and open only to close again while embarrassment and conflicted emotions danced across his face. She just knew what’s going on his mind and knowing how shy he could be, she was resigned to help him sort out his words. “How was your day?” she began mildly at first.

“Eh? G-good, good. H-how about yours?” he stammered as he asked back, valiantly trying to act normally though he’s as good in acting as he’s proficient in Math which is frankly, nothing more than a dream.

“Heh? Only good? Are you sure?” she asked back, leaning a bit as she let a teasing smile graced her features.

He leaned back as Yuki leaned forward. Her smile answering his earlier inner question and he wanted to hide in a hole because of extreme embarrassment. Yep, no need to ask, she saw. “You saw that, huh.” he stated more than asked as he looked away with a blush darker than before.

Yuki giggled before answering, “Yep, I knew for a while already,” she saw Ichiru turned at her with wide lilac eyes, “Anne told me.” she explained.

“Ichiru wasn’t able to stop the grunt of embarrassment that escaped him as he covered his
face with his hands which made Yuki giggle even louder.

“Maa, maa, It’s okay. You look good together.” She smiled kindly at her blushing brother before continuing, “No need to be embarrassed, you’re happy now, right?”

This stopped the young silverette from wallowing in shame and he slowly removed his hand. He only nodded a bit in agreement which made Yuki go ‘Kyaa~!’ as she tackled her cute adopted-brother.

“I’m really happy for you.” She whispered sincerely. She sighed with satisfaction as she looked up at him, “And now, with Zero and Kaname-senpai making up, everything’s perfect!” she cheerfully added.

“Eh?” he blinked and he was told the wonderful news that almost crashed them earlier.

Ichiru looked out the window and sighed with a smile, “Then we should lock the door already, I think nii-san won’t be coming back tonight.”

“Oh? Oh?!” now it’s Yuki’s turn to blush as she finally got what Ichiru (probably Ichijou-senpai as well) meant. She covered her mouth a bit flustered making her laugh a bit unnaturally. She marveled a bit as she realized that she’s not hurt even after being given the hint of the possible happenings tonight. She sighed as she smile. ‘I’m happy for you Zero.’

Ichiru looked at her and had to smile as he saw her expression. ‘Ganbatte, nii-san.’

There was a soft groan that came from the silverette that is languorously trying to wake up. He felt absolutely tired but his body also felt light at the same time. He could hear the chirping sound of the birds and feel the morning heat infiltrating the large room where he’s in.

When he finally opened his eyes, he was greeted by the smooth, creamy white flesh of the body that he only just notice is currently holding on tightly to him. He felt a hand tangled on his silver hair that held his head in place on the nook of his pureblood’s neck, Kaname’s other arm is wrapped around his waist, bringing their body closer even in sleep. He felt his own arms loosely hugging the brunette, one of them has lost all feeling as it was trapped underneath his lover’s body but he only sigh, not caring even if it was amputated all together as he let himself relax. He wanted to sleep again but he felt himself completely wake and he felt hungry. He sighed again; guess it’s time to get up.

He was a bit surprised when he successfully managed to gently untangle himself from Kaname. He looked at him for a while and saw just how deep into sleep he was. He must have been really exhausted as well. He let a small smile appear as watched the innocent face of his slumbering mate though he knew better than to be deceived by this angelic form as he knew how beastly he could get. His expression became a bit disgruntled at the memories that he shook his head almost harshly.

He trudged towards the bathroom a bit clumsily as he felt the pain in his hips that forcefully reminded him of the events from the night before that turned his pale white skin into beet red. He grimaced a bit, it’s not like the first time but it still never fail to leave him flustered every morning after. He waived the embarrassment away as he proceeded to the bathroom and had his much needed bath.

When the hunter emerged wearing a bathrobe while he pat his hair dry with a towel, all fresh and
clean, he found the pureblood already stirring and about to wake up. He smiled, amused, as he saw Kaname’s hand blindly patting the empty space in front of him, no doubt trying to find him. He leaned on the bathroom’s door frame as he watch his mate propped himself up with his elbow and turn to find his missing hunter. It didn’t take him long to find Zero by the bathroom’s door, then let himself lie again completely as he beckoned his hunter forward.

The silverette went near to sit next to the pureblood; Kaname immediately wrapped an arm around his waist from behind.

“It’s too early, sleep some more.” Kaname urged as he closed his eyes again, still feeling a bit sleepy, inhaling the fresh scent of his lover deeply.

“What are you saying? It’s already afternoon, sleep some more if you want. I’m hungry so I’m going back.” The hunter supplied as he watched his pureblood about to sleep again.

But Kaname shook his head and opened his eyes again, “No need, eat with me. I’ll ask for food to be sent up.” He pressed as he sat up, sending the sheets cascading down to reveal his fascinating upper body.

“It’s okay, sleep some more if you’re tired. I can just go back.” He frowned, there’s really no need for Kaname to go through the trouble.

“No, just wait for me, I’ll just take a shower,” the brunette insisted, already walking towards the bathroom, “and the children will be happy to see you,” he added to convince his hunter. “You can use any of my clothes if you want.”

“Pushy bastard,” Zero muttered under his breath as he walked on to find his clothes. He put on his boxer and pants he found lying on the floor. He didn’t feel like borrowing those from Kaname, his pants are a bit too long which greatly impacted Zero’s manly ego, but went to the dresser to take a shirt. Once dressed in his school pants and a cotton white button up shirt, he proceeded to the study to collect his clothes and had to grimace as he saw the chaotic state of the books and furniture.

By the time Kaname emerged from his room, all dressed in his usual black pants and ruby red shirt, he found his lover already finished cleaning the mess they left from the night before and currently sitting on the couch seemingly not knowing what to do.

“Do you want to eat here or do you want to go down to the dining area?” Kaname asked.

“Here,” he answered quietly, even after everything, he’s still a hunter and he can’t imagine himself eating all chummily with a swarm of vampires.

Kaname understood this and he didn’t blame his hunter. He knew just how much he was given, how many rules and principle his lover has given up just to be with him and he really appreciated that. Considering how Zero was before, it’s really a miracle that they could still be together after everything that has passed.

Kaname smiled at Zero, “You can check the children first while I asked for breakfast,” he suggested to which his lover nodded in agreement.

The pureblood was about to go down when he was greeted by all his five children with the three eldest are carrying trays with breakfast.

“Good morning, chichiue,” they all greeted him very brightly. They decided to eat breakfast with him as they felt a change in his aura when they returned from classes earlier. They instantly knew that something great has happened to him and they strongly believed that their parents have already
“Otou-chan!!” the two silverettes immediately rushed to Zero when they saw him emerged from their father’s room as he was about to go to the room across to check on them.

“….!” Zero wasn’t able to utter a single word as he was tackled by his youngest. He smiled down as the two hugged each of his legs. He bent down to pat their heads, feeling a bit guilty that he wasn’t able to visit them in the past week. “How have you been?”

“I’ve been a good girl, otou-chan.” Suiren mumbled as she hugged his daddy’s leg very tightly. She really missed him.

“Oh, they behaved very admirably, no need to worry about us Otou-chan, we’re fine.” Anne supplied in a very cheerful tone,

“Would you like some breakfast?” Kohaku offered in an unusually lively tone.

“It’s great that we chose to have more. We thought otou-chan might be here. I’m glad we’re right.” Akira said, feeling extremely energetic.

“You have perfect timing; we were just about to have some breakfast.” Kaname smiled as he took the tray that Anne was carrying and proceeded to get back to his room.

There’s a variety of sandwiches ranging from egg, ham, bacon, peanut butter and strawberry jam sandwiches, pancakes, waffles, unopened cereals, milk, coffee, and hot cocoa.

“Would you like to have some Japanese style breakfast chichiue, otou-chan? I can get some from the kitchen,” Anne offered.

“I’m quite fine, how about you Zero?” Kaname immediately turned to his mate who’s eyeing the food quite quizzically.

“Huh? I’m fine,” Zero answered as he took one sandwich with strawberry jam with a thoughtful look.

“The food is delicious; did you ask someone from the staff to prepare them?” Kaname conversationally asked his little ones.

“We made them! I made the peanut butter sandwiches!” Naoto proudly said.

“Me! Me! Ham sandwiches!” Suiren quickly followed.

“Egg sandwiches.” Kohaku quietly informed as he raised his hand.

“I made the best bacon sandwiches! Please try them!” Akira immediately advertised his.

“My masterpieces are ones with strawberry jam,” Anne declared as she took one of her creation and ate it.

“Nee-chan only made it because it’s easy,” Akira muttered.

“I made them because I like them.” Anne retaliated, “Otou-chan, you won’t believe how many burnt bacons were left in the kitchen, such a waste! I pity the staff who were left to clean after him.”

“Hey! It’s not that many!” the little brunette quickly raised his defense.
“Just half the pack.” Kohaku supplied, “Nee-chan, it’s already a great improvement from his previous attempts where he burnt the whole pack.”

Anne looked at Akira with pity in her eyes, “That’s why I told you not to get too excited, fire reacts to your mood.” She sighed, what a waste of meat, “You just never learn.”

Kaname chuckled, “All of you seem to love to cook.”

“Because otou-chan taught us!” Suiren informed as she climbed besides her daddy’s space.

“That’s why all of us are good at it!” Naoto said but fell on a short pause when he saw his big brother Akira so he added, “…………well, supposedly!”

“Hey Nao-chan, why did you look at me and said that?” Akira asked in disbelief, a bit shock. Even his little brother is bullying him!

“Nice one Nao.” Kohaku quietly praised with a thumb up.

Their parents smiled as they watched their children banter.

They were all enjoying a rather lively breakfast in Kaname’s study while they talked about stories from their childhood and what they did the past week, especially the slight changes they noticed from Takuji and Hana-jiji who were noted to be acting very weird, each child giving out their opinions from time to time.

“And Hana-jiji was so happy yesterday. We were almost blinded by his aura.” Naoto narrated.

“Heh, I’m sure it’s because of-,” Akira’s words were cut when there was a knock on the study’s door.

“Takuma, enter.” Kaname said and willed the door to open.

“Oh, good morning, Kaname. I’m sorry. I didn’t know you’re having a lovely gathering here.” Ichijou started a bit awkwardly. He really hated to be the bringer of bad news. He silently cursed the fates, why now? When everything was just starting to get right again for his friend?

“What is it, Takuma?” Kaname asked. He frowned when he saw anxiety and trouble filled his normally cheerful vice-president’s face but then he felt a new presence inside the Moon dorm.

“You have an early visitor, Kaname.” The noble informed a bit miserably.

“Ah, very early indeed. My, I can’t believe how rude he is to be calling on us so early.” Kaname instantly turned grim, completely identifying their annoying guest. He forgot all about their impending visit because more important matters occupied his mind. He looked at Zero who was looking back at him with an inquiring frown on his face. He sighed; he didn’t want that old man to see his mate because for sure, they’ll be conducting new schemes to possess him for their own goal and greed. He almost betrayed himself by showing the fury starting to bubble deep inside him though he stopped himself at the troubled looks of his children and mate.

Before Kaname could even give the order to direct their guest to another room, a knock resounded inside the room. The pureblood felt his irritation build higher when he sensed the vampire just outside the door. Damn this old schemer!

“Kaname,” Ichijou whispered, very concerned. He knew it’s his grandfather.
“Kaname? What’s happening?” Zero asked suspiciously. He just felt his mate’s very pissed aura though their bond as he felt the presence of an old noble outside the door.

“It’s the head of the vampire senate widely known as Ichiju, Ichijou Asato. He seems adamant in wanting to meet you.” Kaname explained with a wry smile. He’s irritated at the aristocrat’s insistence on meeting his lover and children.

When the knocks ceased to stop, Kaname had no choice but to will the door to open even when he’d rather just leave it be, “Enter,” he ordered in hard voice.

The door opened to reveal an astute and dignified looking vampire who surveyed the room with cold interest, “Forgive my rudeness for intruding so early, Kaname-sama. I thought my grandson might have forgotten to inform you of my arrival so I came up already.”

Kaname more than ever wanted to snap at the audacious vampire that obviously came up so he wouldn’t have the time to hide Zero and the children, “You’re indeed right, it’s quite early and as you can see we’re still in the middle of our breakfast so I would like to have our talk in another room. It’s not polite to talk about such formal matters during a meal.” He coldly expressed as he stood up.

“Oh of course Kaname-sama but before that, may I give my greetings to Zero-sama and…to your lovely children?” Ichiju boldly requested knowing that at this point, there’s no way that his king could still deny their meeting.

The old noble already moved forward to Zero’s seat which was beside Kaname’s even before the pureblood could answer. He bowed slightly as a sign of respect which put out the hunter before introducing himself, “Greetings, Zero-sama. My name is Ichijou Asato, head of the vampire council. It’s a pleasure to meet you at last.”

Zero was frozen when the vampire reached down to grab his hand and kiss the back of his palm which sent shivers of disgust on the hunter’s spine that made him harshly snatch his hand back as he glared at the aristocrat. Kaname was immediately between them, “Ichiju, do not treat him like a woman.” Quiet annoyance is very clear in his wine orbs.

“Ah, forgive me. He’s your mate that’s why I did what is only proper. That was thoughtless of me. Please forgive me Kaname-sama, Zero-sama.” He offered unrepentantly then move to face the children who were looking at him with polite indifference, “And these are the little princesses and princes, correct?” he noted while he scrutinized the young ones, “they’re indeed very enigmatic and adorable with a quaint and powerful aura,” he added before he introduced himself in the same manner.

The children all stood up and introduced themselves after granting a small curtsy. Anne and Suiren gave their hands so Ichiju can kiss their hands, as per the normal decorum in formal introductions.

“My, how well mannered. Truly befitting royalty. I’m very happy for you, Kaname-sama, to be blessed by such a lovely mate and wonderful children.” There was genuine amazement and hint of envy in his voice that hasn’t gone undetected by Kaname’s ears.

“Oh of course, I’m proud of all of them. Now, let us proceed to the drawing room to leave them to enjoy their meal.” The pureblood coldly commanded.

“Very well, Kaname-sama.” Ichiju then turned to the children and to Zero, “I would take my leave now, let us meet again during the winter solstice in the Kuran castle. The vampire society would be very happy to meet you.”
“Likewise. Goodbye.” Anne replied after one more curtsy before Kaname led Ichiiou and Ichijou out of the room to leave them and their daddy alone in the study.

Ichiiou stole one last glance towards Zero’s way before completely following his king. There was a sigh that escaped from Akira’s mouth the moment the door closed completely.

“Oh man, a ball?! I thought we’re at least safe from that in this time!” Akira groaned even more loudly. He hates formal functions, especially balls.

“Why? Can’t we just not attend?” Zero absentmindedly asked while still glaring at the closed door as if he’s still looking at the old vampire. He didn’t like the look in his eyes and his mate’s irritation that pulsed through the bond only confirmed that he’s really not someone to be trusted.

“We can’t, otou-chan. The Winter Solstice, like the one held every summer, is a tradition that is yearly made. As the royal family, it’s our duty to attend it and if the vampire society already knew of our existence, they will expect us to be present.” Anne sighed, frowning in confusion. How did word got out? They were present when their father gave the express order of not letting the information about them be spread through the outside world. Something is clearly amiss.

“What a pain,” Zero grunted then stopped when he remembered something, “Do I need to attend? I’m not part of the royal family,” then quickly added when he saw the sad frowns of the youngest twin, “yet, I mean, not yet.”

“Hmmm, but you’re already mated to father, right, otou-chan?” they were silently amused when they saw the blush that spread on their daddy’s face, “and if it’s already known, they would expect you too.” Kohaku continued.

“Some of them will most likely go only so they can see you, otou-chan.” Akira speculated as he put his hands behind his head.

“That’s right, otou-chan. I don’t think anyone would be able to avoid it especially since the council head have already personally invited us.” Anne supplied.

Zero groaned. Now, he really doesn’t want to join whatever that party is. It will be undoubtedly a pain in the ass.

“Don’t worry. I’ll protect, otou-chan!” Naoto very energetically offered.

“Me too! We’ll protect otou-chan!” Suiren followed as she hugged Zero, not losing in chivalry.

“That’s right! Don’t worry, otou-chan! We’ll protect you from those clingy nobles that would dare approach you!” Akira announced with determination burning in his eyes.

“Worry about yourself first, Akira,” Kohaku turned to his twin with a deadpan look. He can almost see Akira’s troubled face once the nobles swarmed around him. He shook his head when his twin stiffened at his words.

“Don’t worry, since you’re just children in their eyes, they won’t be pushing their daughters to dance with you. We’ll only be decorations there.” Anne encouraged matter-of-factly. Well, I hope…

“I’ll be fine. Don’t worry about me,” Zero smiled while he patted Akira’s head, thinking he could always just slip out. He didn’t even think he’ll go for there’s no need for him to attend.

The hunter looked towards the door again. He can feel through the bond the annoyance that Kaname was feeling right then. He wondered what they could be talking about.
“He’s a really handsome man. Let me congratulate you yet again for your choice of mate. Truly an excellent taste, Kaname-sama.” The old blond vampire complimented once he seated himself in front of the pureblood inside the drawing room.

“Hmmm, and I was so sure that you would disapprove,” Kaname smiled wryly, “a hunter and an ex-human, I would have thought that you would storm in to condemn my choice.”

“I would never. Since you chose him yourself, I would imagine that you are very fond of him to have formed a bond and your happiness matter to us, first and foremost.” Ichiou denied without breaking eye contact.

“How noble. I thank you.” Kaname coldly uttered, not at all believing the felon’s words. He knew that had Zero been but a normal hunter and ex-human, and not possessing the ancient blood of Suzaku, oppositions would be raining down from the council, “Why have you come?”

“Only to see to your well-being, Kaname-sama and of course, to introduce myself to your future family. They’re very admirable. Your children are extremely well-behaved. The aristocrats can’t wait for the yearly Winter solstice ball to meet them. Such extraordinary vampires and to think that they came from the future. How completely unbelievable.”

“You seem to have readily accepted the facts considering how unbelievable they are. Tell me, where have you heard of this knowledge?”

“From mere gossips. Some nobles have been chattering about it because they heard it from their children who’re students of the Night class and I merely made a short and small investigation to find out the truth.”

“I see.” was what only Kaname said in reply to the smooth and clearly rehearsed answer from Ichiou. He knew that cannot be it for no one from the Night class would dare disobey him.

“Well then, Kaname-sama, I have intruded upon your hospitality enough already. I will go now. Let us meet again during the ball. I’m looking forward to it.” Ichiou made a final bow before leaving the room. He was followed by Takuma who only stood silent the whole time to see him out.

Kaname slowly walked towards the window to watch the old noble as he entered the classy black car that was parked just outside the Moon dorm. He was deep in thought while staring at the car as it drove away to exit the academy, “The Winter Solstice, hmmm…” he uttered to himself.

“He seems adamant in having us attend the Winter solstice ball. What is he planning?” Takuma asked Kaname when his grandfather left and he returned to the drawing room.

“We’ll see.” was Kaname’s only reply as he watched the retreating black car from the window of the room. You won’t get him.
When Zero opened the door to his guardian’s house, he was greeted by the sight of his twin brother who was at the moment just descended from the stairs.

“Ah, nii-san! Welcome back!” Ichiru greeted his older brother. He just woke up himself and was quite surprise that it’s already afternoon.

“Tadaima,” the hunter announced while he took off his shoes. He followed his brother who went to the kitchen to get something to drink. He was watching his twin rummage the refrigerator when he thought of something important he needed to inform him. He became slightly uneasy as he thought of the possible violent reaction from Ichiru regarding the matter of his mate’s past that was related to their family. He really wished that Ichiru wouldn’t get angry at Kaname.

“Ichiru, I need to tell you something,” Zero started.

The serious tone of his older brother’s voice made Ichiru stop his search for breakfast (or lunch). “What is it, nii-san?” he asked a bit worriedly.

“This… well, this is regarding the matter of Shizuka Hio’s escape.” He began as he looked as his brother’s lilac eyes that instantly expressed fear at the mention of the vampire’s name and very slowly and as gently as he’s able to, he told Ichiru how his own mate was responsible for the mad vampire’s escape from her prison which led to their family’s tragic fate.

When Zero was finished, he watched as Ichiru gape at him, a bit stun, then stepped backwards to lean his back on the kitchen counter’s edge.

“Oh, I see, I see…” the younger silverette uttered somberly, “was this the reason for your quarrel?” he turned to Zero who nodded. He smiled sadly then turned his head slightly upwards as he sighed. “It must have been hard then but you made up, right?”

“Are you angry?” the hunter asked as he looked down.

“Why would I be?” he was caught off guard by the question.

This made Zero look up and meet his brother’s gaze, “because I still chose… to be with him… even though it was because of him that… that our parents are dead…”

Ichiru granted him a frown and a smile, “Oh nii-san, I understand that he might have indirectly caused it but I really can’t blame him for their death.” Then he sighed, “Who could have said for sure that Shizuka will not escape by herself? Or that they’ll still be alive right now if… if not killed then? They’re hunters after all… and it’s not like it was intentional… after all, who would have thought… right? She’s mad anyway… and besides, aren’t we happy right now?” he turned to Zero who’s looking at him a bit startled at his easy understanding.

“Think about it, we might have lost many things but we have also gained many more,” Ichiru continued as he walked towards his brother, “Just imagine, our being here might have been a blessing in disguise for many people.”

“What do you mean?”

“Hmmm, like saving Yuki from the chairman’s cooking. You think anyone would survive that for years?” the younger Kiryū replied with a laugh, “And you might have become an overly serious and miserable hunter.” He added as he embraced his brother, “Our lives might have been different had he not done that but aren’t we blessed right now? Aren’t you happy right now? From now on, we can look forward to a better future and the proof is even present now.” He smiled as he leaned his forehead on Zero’s, “We might have lost our parents but we’ve gained… well… an idiotic father and
“sister,” they chuckled, “and you’ve gained five children and a boyfriend.”

“Don’t say boyfriend,” Zero hissed a bit embarrassed at the word as he pinched his brother’s cheek.

Ichiru laughed, “A boyfriend is a boyfriend, nii-san. You wouldn’t want to be called a girlfriend, right?”

“Shut up.”

“Ow, ow, ow!” he tried to detached his brother’s hand from his cheek as he was squeezed harder but then he was surprised when Zero let go to put his head on his younger brother’s shoulder.

“Thank you,” Zero sincerely whispered. He honestly didn’t know what to do should Ichiru swore vehemence against his mate.

“Why nii-san? Scared?” he chuckled. He knew Zero must be feeling conflicted about loving the man who freed their parent’s murderer but for Ichiru, his brother’s happiness mattered more than the departed. He has learned to treasure those that are still alive though he made sure to never forget their beloved parents’ memories.

“Stupid.” was only what the hunter replied.

Their moment was cut short by a gasp that came from the female brunette that happened upon them, “What is this infidelity? Kaname-senpai will not be happy, Zero and you Ichiru, you’re cheating on Aido-senpai this early?” She teased, breaking the awkward situation she has walked herself into.


“Ah! Yuki, what are you doing here!?” Ichiru immediately diverted the situation and turned to his adopted-sister who quickly covered her mouth, cursing herself at the slip of tongue she has undoubtedly put herself and her brother into.

“Ah, ah, ah! The chairman is looking for Zero! It’s something… something about a doctor’s visit! Right! That’s right!” she explained all too fast with evident panic in her voice.

“Oh nii-san, you must go to the chairman quickly!” coaxed the very flustered Ichiru.

“Wait you two, what did you mean by cheating on Aido,” Zero asked with menace in his voice as he tightly gripped Yuki’s and Ichiru’s shoulder when they attempted to run away.

Ichiru glared at Yuki who whimpered.

Oh dear, they’re dead.
“Uhm…. What happened?”

These words came from the bespectacled chairman of Cross Academy who happened upon a strange scene when he went back home to look for his older son, Zero.

Upon opening the door, he was greeted by the sight of his pissed off son who he was looking for, seated on the sofa while his other two adopted children, Yuki and Ichiru were seated in a formal style on the floor. One look and he knew that the two are being scolded for he saw the guilty expressions of the brunette and silverette.

“Why didn’t you tell me? Are you trying to hide it from me?” Zero asked the two who’re looking at two different directions. “I-chi-ru.” He pronounced menacingly when his brother didn’t reply.

“No, nii-san! Of course not! I wouldn’t! It’s… it’s just that… well, I’m just… embarrassed… that’s all… and I didn’t know… how to… how to tell you… and anyway, it just happened yesterday…” he haltingly explained, a furious blush forming on his cheeks.

“That’s right, Zero! And you have no right to oppose! Since you’re the same!” Yuki bravely defended, trying to help her brother since it’s her fault that they’re in this situation.

“What are you talking about?” the headmaster repeated his question, looking a bit pitiful for he seemed invisible to all his children.

“Ah, chairman,” Yuki greeted, finally acknowledging his existence.

“Call me papa.”

“It’s regarding Ichiru’s boyfriend,” Yuki cheerfully informed, ignoring his last words as if he didn’t speak in the first place.

“Yuki!” Ichiru exclaimed, turning a shade redder than before.


“It’s Aido-senpai.” Yuki still managed to answer before Ichiru landed a not-so-gentle blow on her head. “Ow! What did you do that for?”

“Stop spouting it out!” Ichiru yelled, near tears.

“To a vampire again?” Kaien exclaimed. He’s happy for his son but a bit surprised because he knew Ichiru only ever dated girls from the Day class. When did that happen?

“Why? It’s the truth!” Yuki retaliated while massaging her head, her eyes watery from the pain.

“But there’s no need to spread it out!” shouted the young silverette almost hysterically.

“Were you seduced!?” the chairman finally cried out as he kept on being overlooked, “Please don’t ignore me!”

Zero groaned, “Enough!” he sighed when the three looked at him again before he continued, “Are you serious about this?” he looked very seriously in his brother’s eyes who met his gaze with equal determination and nodded. He sighed again before muttering, “Then that’s fine.”
There was a loud exaggerated gasps that came from Yuki and the chairman at Zero’s words, not at all believing that he’ll accept it that fast knowing his strong opposition against vampires especially towards the said blond who he has long believe to be stupid with his flirtatious attitude. Well, guess it’s different when he’s also mated with a vampire himself. Kaien looked at his children and had to smile when he saw the positive changes in them. He’s very happy for all of them.

“What do you want?” Zero finally turned to his guardian who’s smiling at them like an idiot, only now acknowledging his presence.

“Ah, I’m looking for you, Zero-kun. Please make sure to be here tomorrow afternoon because a doctor will visit to check on you.” The ex-hunter reminded his son that Kaname arranged a physician to look at his present condition.

“Fine, it’s not like I’ll go somewhere today or tomorrow.” was Zero’s only answer.

The young hunter missed the looks from the other three at his words, they quietly sighed: he forgot.

“What a waste! Are you sure you don’t have anything to do? It’s the 23rd today, you know?” coaxed his guardian as if hinting something.

“Uhm, I need to go to the mall.” Yuki announced and met Ichiru’s eyes who nodded.

“Ah, me too. I almost forgot. I need to buy something.”

Kaien smiled in understanding. His gaze fell on the calendar hanging on the wall. Of course they remembered.

Zero only contemplated if he should also go out with the children to make up for the past week he didn’t visit them, not at all catching the meaningful glances of the three stooges in front of him.

“Maybe I should as well.”

-Kancolle-

“What are you two looking at?”

Kain asked when he saw his cousin and Anne looking intently at the calendar hanging on the wall in the lounge.

“What should I get him?” Hanabusa muttered under his breath, not even hearing his cousin’s question, thinking deep and hard about what he should present to his beloved. Which of the gifts he prepared should he give him?

“Oh dear, where should we get the money? It’s going to be fraud if we use the currency from the future, right? Oh dear, what should we do?” Anne also mumbled to herself, not hearing her uncle’s question.

The orange haired vampire just blinked at being ignored. He also looked at the very plain calendar of October. Nothing seems to be out the ordinary in this piece of paper. He was about to inquire again when their leader asked the same question.

“Anne, what are doing there?” Kaname walked in to the room accompanied by the two brunette
twins when he saw the serious expression of his eldest.

“Ah chichiue!” she immediately run to her father for help. There’s really no choice but to ask their father for some money, “Ano, can I borrow some money?” she shyly requested. They rarely asked for money because everything they needed were most of the time provided already.

The brunette stared down at Anne, “Of course, but why?”

Anne perked up at this, “There’s something I must buy. There’s only a few hours left!” she replied in a desperate tone. It completely flew from her mind because of their parents’ fight.

Both Kohaku and Akira frowned at the calendar then jumped as if remembering something important before asking the same from Kaname.

“Ah, me too, chichiue. Please.” Kohaku and Akira asked at the same time, they almost forgot!

Kaname was about to ask for the sudden reason why they needed the money when he sensed his mate getting nearer. He promptly heard their youngest silverettes run downstairs to greet him.

They heard ‘Otou-chan!’ and before long, they were greeted by the silver haired prefect who went to the lounge while carrying the two young ones.

“Hello, Zero-san.” Kain greeted the prefect.

“Hello, otou-chan!” greeted the other three brunettes while Kaname smiled at his mate.

“I’m going to the mall with Ichiru and Yuki, does anyone of you want to come?” Zero quietly proposed to his children.

“How perfect, the children said they have something to buy so we might as well.” The pureblood readily accepted. It’s not every day that his petulant lover invites them.

“I’ll come as well,” Hanabusa invited himself. He was shaken out of his inner musings at the mention of his lover’s name.

Kaname and Kain frowned when they witness the silverette and blond look at each other briefly. They could almost see electricity forming while they glared at each other before the hunter grunted a simple ‘fine’ as consent which surprised both spectators though they didn’t say anything regarding that.

“We’re going now, so hurry up.” Zero muttered before he left them to wait outside of the Moon dorm where he met the other two prefects who are ready to search for the perfect gift for the forgetful hunter.

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The silverette hunter had to fight down a groan threatening to escape from him as their little group got ogled by mesmerized men and women who stopped to look at the handsome men and beautiful women in their group.

He inwardly cursed. He shouldn’t have invited the vampire who he strongly believes attracts most of the attention.
'My, I’m hurt.’ The sound of his lover’s voice resounded inside his mind. He looked at the brunette walking beside him, not at all convinced of his pitiful act.

‘You have no idea just how much of these attentions are directed to you.’ Kaname continued to talk through their bond.

‘Whatever.’ was Zero’s only answer to it. “Hey, what are you going to buy?” he turned to their other companions and he inwardly grimaced to see a large crowd forming just behind their small group, seemingly trying to follow the exquisite people who look like celebrities with their beauty. Not that it’s a wonder when some of the Night class actually shamelessly invited themselves to come. They all seem to have remembered something they suddenly wish to buy and being the school guardian, he took it upon himself to look after the vampires to make sure they won’t do anything untoward.

Though looking at their preoccupied group, (Rima who’s supporting her partner Shiki since he seems to be sleepwalking, Ruka who’s eyeing every cute clothes in every boutique with Kain who’s carrying her things, Ichijou who’s having a secret conversation with Yuki as if giving out comments regarding each item they come across to, Aido with Ichiru who both looked detached from the world and the children who looks like they’re having a heated discussion about what to buy.), attacking someone seems to be the furthest thing from their minds.

‘You worry too much.’ His lover’s teasing voice came from the bond.

‘Shut up.’ The silverette merely turned to his children, “Where do you want to go? What did you want to buy?”

“A-ah, we’re still thinking about it, otou-chan.” Anne answered, a bit flustered.

Though Zero didn’t seem to notice it, “Alright, hold on to each other. Don’t get lost.” He reminded them. It will be hard if they get lost especially since Akira gave them each a blood pill to suppress their auras since it might attract trouble if their group which consisted of one pureblood, five hybrids, six nobles and one ex-human hunter and a human with the legendary blood in their veins happened to be detected by level-Es in the area.

“Oh Zero! Look, baby clothes! How cute!” Yuki exclaimed when they unknowingly wandered to the infant area of the department store.

“Do you think it will be fine if we already bought the things that Anne would need?” Ichiru seriously asked, “It’s only a few more months to go anyway.”

“Yes, and since we already know the gender, I think it will be alright to prepare it already.” Ichijou commented, looking at the cute baby paraphernalia.

Zero reddened a bit. He never thought that the time would come where he’ll need to shop for baby clothes, not to mention for a baby he will bear. He looked at his mate who’s smiling at him very endearingly.

“Why not? One cannot be too prepared after all.” The brunette assented.

Suddenly, the infant department was attracting attentions from many people as the gorgeous bunch scavenged for items they believe are needed to raise a new born child.

Zero was looking at a very cute pair of pink and white rompers. He turned to his mate to ask if they should buy it when he was startled by the volume of items already inside his mate’s cart which was pushed around by Seiren. Just how long have they been shopping? It’s only about five minutes ago!
“Kaname, what is that mountain of clothes!? And you, where did you even come from?” he asked his mate before turning to the vampire who’s silently following her master.

“I’m always at your service, Zero-sama.” Seiren merely offered, expressionless like always.

“What about it? It will all look good on my daughter,” Kaname answered his mate’s earlier question putting in another bib on the overflowing pile of things inside the pushcart which still only consists of baby clothes. “Hmm, that’s cute too,” when he saw the rompers that Zero was holding, he so proceeded to put it in the cart.

“We don’t need that many.” The hunter said and took some of the things from the cart with the intention of returning them to their specific rack, “because you might not know it, but we can wash clothes to be used again.” He added sarcastically.

“Hmph, I know that but it won’t do us any harm in buying more. It’s not going to be a waste since it will all look good on Anne.” Kaname seriously and stubbornly insisted, with a straight face, putting back the things that his mate took from their cart.

“Kaname, don’t be stupid. Children grow faster,” the silverette argued as he continued putting the items back on their respective racks which his lover still adamantly keeps putting back in their cart.

“Then, we’ll just use it again.”

“You’ll have male twins afterwards.”

“Then we’ll just buy masculine ones,”

“Kaname!” Zero is just about to burst at his mate’s insistence on buying too much baby clothes.

Their argument was cut short by the soft giggle that came from the store associate from that department, “Oh I’m sorry. Are you shopping for your niece?”

This successfully silenced Zero as to not give themselves away.

Kaname nonchalantly granted the female store representative a smile, “No, I’m shopping for my daughter. She’ll be born sometime next year.”

“Oh… Congratulations. I’m sorry, you look too young. I thought you’re a student. You must be very happy.” The female was clearly disappointed but valiantly tried to give out a sweet business smile, “Would you like some help?”

“Oh no, we can manage just fine. Thank you.” He politely declined before he went to another station where the infant toys are, followed by Seiren who’s still pushing the cart which now contained more than the original items. Zero also followed while sighing, failing to stop his mate’s shopping spree.

“Kaname-senpai! Look, it’s cute right?” Yuki said while presenting a very lovely set of bear designed feeding bottles.

“It is indeed. Thank you, Yuki,” he agreed and put it inside the cart.

Yuki’s smile turned a bit lopsided and her eyes widened at the sight of the items inside the cart, “Wow…” she wiped some imaginary sweat. No wonder Zero looked pissed. Since he’s like a frugal mother, always sticking to the budget.

“Kaname, how about- wah! Wow, you’ll buy all of that?” Ichijou joined them while carrying a small
“Yes, why?” the pureblood asked rhetorically and taking the small tub from his vice-president’s hands, examined it shortly before putting it on top of the pile.

“Nothing,” the blond only smiled stiffly. He didn’t want to deny what his friend is so obviously enjoying.

Soon, the Night class gathered with different baby accessories in their hands, stopping at the volume of the items to be purchased but no one commented nor complained about it, for they only wanted to help their leader gather everything that his daughter will need, all of which were only slightly examined before getting approved.

By the time that Ichiru and Aido joined them with some linen at hand, Seiren, Kain, Ichijou and Shiki are each pushing a cart all containing things for infants.

“Ah, you’re buying all of that? How are we going to carry them all?” Ichiru gaped in bewilderment at his senpai’s shopping. It looks like Kaname-senpai took one of each item from the infant station.

“Ask him.” Zero merely glared at Kaname who only smiled sweetly at him. He already gave up telling him off.

“Don’t worry, I have this,” Kaname showed them a ring adorned by a red stone.

“Oh, Anne-chan’s?” Ichijou asked to which his friend nodded, “That’s really convenient, isn’t it?”

“Where are the children?” Zero asked. Remembering that they went off with Ichijou earlier.

“They were watching the mall parade when it passed through there, they said they’ll just come here when it’s finished,” the blond informed them. He’s not worried leaving them on their own for he’s well aware that they’re mature and old enough to take care of themselves and since they’re together with Anne, he allowed them to wander for a little bit. “Look, there they are. Eh?” he added when they saw the three older brunettes running towards them with a look of… well, panic.

“Otou-chan! Have you seen Sui-chan and Nao?” Kohaku asked them the question which made them all blanched white.

“No! I thought they’re watching the parade with you?” Zero asked anxiously. Damn, not now when there are too many people because of the weekend! On top of that, they can’t detect each other because of the pill. Shit!

“Oh no, I’m so sorry. I was walking in front of them, I’m really sorry.” Anne said very guiltily. She had the feeling that the two actually followed the parade and didn’t hear, or listen, to her when she said they’re going back already. Oh dear, stupid me!

“It’s okay. We’ll find them.” Zero comforted Anne despite his own agitation.

“We’ll just spread out to look for them.” Kaname calmly proposed, giving a reassuring smile to their eldest.

But before they were able to spread out, a loud and clear announcement was issued throughout the whole establishment.

“Attention to Kuran Zero-sama. Attention to Kuran Zero-sama. Kuran Suiren and Naoto are both in the lost and found station. Please proceed to the second floor, east wing. I repeat, to Kuran Zero-
sama, Kuran Suiren and Naoto are both in the lost and found station. Please proceed to the second floor, east wing. Thank you.”

There was a pause in their lot.

After the announcement, their small group fell into an awkward silence as they repeated the words of the announcement over and over again in their minds. Only the children’s relieved sighs were heard.

Zero caught his mate’s eyes who also automatically looked back at him and instinctively blushed when certain words in the announcement finally hit his system. *Kuran Zero*. Now that is something he forgot will happen.

“I’ll… I’ll j-just get them… stay here!” he stammered without looking at anyone from their group before running away to the east wing. He ran as fast as he can, knowing that he must be furiously red right now.

The Night class, the school prefects and children watched with interest at the retreating figure of the hunter, suppressing the amused laughter they felt at the rare sight of Zero blushing and flustered but they stopped when they turned to the pureblood and found themselves gaping at the sight of *Kaname/their father* blushing. The pureblood looked away from them, clearly trying to hide his smile with the back of his hand but failing as his bliss was quite evident already. It unknowingly made all of the adults blush as well. The children were very much confused as to why they all became very flustered at the seemingly ordinary announcement.

“Uhm, l-let us pay for this, shall we?” Ichijou offered to ward off the awkward atmosphere that formed.

They quietly proceeded to the counter to pay for their purchase.

Yuki wasn’t able to suppress a giggle when the same announcement was repeated once again.

“Kuran Zero, hmmm,” Kaname uttered very quietly when he heard the second announcement, this time not hiding the gorgeous smile, which inevitably charmed the cashier, that he wasn’t able to stop from making at the thought that there will indeed come a day when Zero will carry his name.

“Oh, are you Kuran Zero-sama?” the receptionist manning the lost and found station said to the handsome young man that stopped at the desk. Judging from his unusual hair color, she must be right. She blushed when she saw how gorgeous the young man is.

“Uhm,” Zero panted from the fast sprint he did, “Yes. Where are they?”

“Otou-chan!!” Suiren and Naoto both jumped from the seats at the sight of him.

“Sui.ren. Na.o.” he slowly pronounced with a hint of irritation when he saw the missing silverettes which made the two burst out crying.

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry! I’m sorry!” both wailed at the same time, feeling very scared at the sight of their irritated daddy and guilt at the trouble they caused. They just dazedly follow the cute mascot of a huge turtle before they realized their older siblings were already nowhere to be found and since
they can’t sense them, they became lost until someone brought them here.

Zero sighed, “It’s fine now. Next time, don’t worry me like that again.” he hugged both of them very tightly. His annoyance was immediately banished at the sight of his crying children. How can he even stay angry at them?

“But…*sniff* but…*sniff* you’re tired, right? *hic* You run *hic* here?” Suiren asked in between sobs.

“No, I’m fine.” He smiled to assure them.

“Then why are you red?” Nao asked, very worried.

Zero became redder at the reminder why he was blushing in the first place, “It’s nothing. Let’s go.”

He stood up to bow and thank the receptionist who dazedly stared at him, unaware that he just managed to seduced her and all the female and male customers who happened to be walking by.

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“I wonder where they are right now?” Yuki offhandedly asked when the cashier, who was looking at their group and their purchase from time to time with a quizzical expression, unable to believe it’s only for one child of anyone from the young and gorgeous group, was finished stuffing their purchases into paper bags and was handed to them. Kaname already successfully transferred them to another dimension with Anne’s blood stone. “Kaname-senpai, we’ll go first okay?”

“Why?” the brunette asked.

“Because it won’t be a surprise anymore. Tsk, that Zero. Apparently, he forgot again,” Yuki sighed and shook her head. She has been waiting to slip out so she can buy Zero and Ichiru a gift, “Looks like Ichiru would get his gift from Zero late again this year.” As evident by Zero being clueless as to why they wanted to go shopping today.

“It’s okay, you know nii-san.” Ichiru chuckled, also readying to leave their group.

Kaname frowned at these vague answers, “What do you mean?”

There was a very long silence from the rest of their group, even the children blankly stared at their father at his question.

“Father, uhm, did you know what’s the occasion tomorrow, October 24th?” Anne asked quite gently. When there was no answer from Kaname, only a blank look, she continued softly, “It’s uncle Ichiru’s and of course, otou-chan’s birthday…”

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“I think we just landed a heavy blow on Kaname,” Ichijou remarked as he half-chuckled and half-sighed. They left Kaname and the children to wait on Zero and the young silverettes and split up so
that they can find a gift for Zero and Ichiru. He grimaced, knowing Kaname, he must have hated the fact that he was the last one to know regarding such an important matter, since all of them knew (Ichijou was told by Yuki, he told Shiki who undoubtedly told Rima, and Aido would of course know as Zero shares Ichiru’s birthday and his cousins, Ruka and Kain would have known through him.) and they were all thinking of giving Zero a gift as well because he’s their king’s mate.

“Looks like it,” Yuki replied, a bit worried. She never saw such an obvious look of self-hate on her savior’s eyes before until just earlier but she smiled afterwards, Kaname clearly treasures Zero very much. She giggled, feeling giddy all of a sudden.

“What do you think Kaname will get Zero?” knowing his friend’s competitive nature, he won’t allow any gifts overshadow his own though he had to wonder if he still have time to prepare it considering it’s tomorrow already.

“Well, it’s worth looking forward to. We can’t lose Ichijou-senpai!” Yuki enthusiastically cheered. She can’t lose! She must find the perfect gift for her brothers!

“Well then, let’s go.” He smiled down at his eager companion.

They proceeded to another part of the mall, a contest unknowingly started between the prefects, the Night class and their pureblood leader.

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Zero frowned at the brooding state of his mate and the nervous silence of the children. When he returned with the twins, he found that the others have already left to mind their own businesses and so he was left with the pureblood and their children but there was this tense silence that came from his vampire that he can’t shake, he asked him what is the matter to which he replied with the ever suspicious ‘nothing’. The hell it’s nothing. He would sometimes feel Kaname glare at him but whenever he looks at him, he’ll always find him looking elsewhere.

What the hell is wrong with him?

He’s clearly unhappy about something but he’s not saying it. Could it be regarding the earlier announcement? If anyone has anything to say regarding that, shouldn’t it be him? He sighed, sometimes, he really can’t understand Kaname.

Their day ended after several purchases of whatnot. They came back relatively early as the children said that they have not found the thing that they’ve been looking for though they seemed to be decided about something already so he let them be.

He only looked briefly at his mate after kissing his children goodbye, all who immediately ran inside the Moon dorm as if unable to wait to start some kind of mischievous plan, before walking away once they arrived in the academy.

“Zero,” he looked around when he heard his lover called out to him, “be sure to come here before midnight, I’ll be expecting you.”

The hunter swallowed the bile he felt at his vampire’s high-handed words and tone, Fucking controlling bastard. He really wanted to shout ‘don’t order me around!’ but he let it go since something is clearly gnawing Kaname. Something must be wrong.
So stifling a retort and a groan, he silently waved his hand a bit in consent as he walked away towards the chairman’s house.

There are slow movements inside the darkened study, the occupant didn’t even bother opening the lights as even with the darkness of the night, he can still see very clearly. He rummaged inside the drawers of his desk, looking for a special document he decided he’ll give as a gift to his beloved.

Kaname’s hands stopped as he found the black envelope containing the document he’s been searching for, he opened it to take out the papers inside to make sure of the contents. He smiled with satisfaction, his earlier displeasure already lessened. He then put the envelope upside down to let keys inside to slide down on his palm.

When everything was settled between him and his hunter the day he proposed, he thought of giving this to him as a wedding gift in the future but it looks like it’s not possible. He sighed, his irritation at his ignorance coming back again.

He silently made an oath that this shall be last time that he’ll be unprepared for something this important. What an utter failure, of all the mistakes to make in a relationship, he made the most basic one. How could he have gone through all those agony without so much as knowing Zero’s birthdate? He sighed again. He cannot believe that he, of all people, made such an error.

He went to the balcony, trying to enjoy the cold autumn wind while he waits for his lover to come. It was already half passed eleven and his hunter should be here any moment now.

When he felt Zero’s aura approach, he willed the doors of the study to open to allow him entrance. He turned and waited for his lover to come to him. The brunette smiled when his ever scowling hunter joined him in the balcony.

“What? Are you finished sulking?” Zero frowned as he asked, a hand inside his jacket’s pocket.

“How rude, I wasn’t sulking, merely displeased,” Kaname answered when his silverette came close to him. He drew his lover closer by wrapping his arms around his waist, “but forget about it. I’ve recovered. Now put this on, we have somewhere to go,” he added as two coats materialized on his hand.

“What? Where?”

“You’ll see.” He answered a bit mysteriously as he put on his black coat. “Hold on to me,” he said as he wrapped his arms around his lover, smirking at his silverette’s frown and unease to his romantic approaches.

“Huh? Wh-,” Zero’s question got stuck in his throat as a cloud of bats came out of nowhere. The black colony surrounded them and he had to repress an unmanly yelp as he felt them leave the solid ground. The abruptness of their ascent got the better of him that he immediately wrapped his arms around his pureblood’s back, “B-bastard! At least warn me, dammit!” he yelled when he recovered, he leaned on Kaname’s shoulder, closing his eyes to avoid looking down.

Kaname chuckled as he navigated towards their destination, “I did warn you.” His hunter replied with an unsatisfied groan, clearly unhappy at being caught off guard though he just smiled, content
with his silverette clinging to him.

Even through his jacket, coat and lover’s embrace, Zero could still feel the harsh wind bite his skin. They must be flying quite high, “Are you alright? Are you cold?” Kaname’s concerned voice asked him which he answered with a grunt and a simple “I’m fine.”

“We’ll be there soon.” The pureblood whispered soothingly as he felt his lover’s body trembled slightly at the cold air.

After a few minutes, Zero felt them slowly descend from the great heights of the heavens, he inwardly sighed with relief when he felt the soft earth beneath his feet.

“We’re here.” The brunette announced as his silverette raised his head to look behind Kaname.

Zero frowned at the large expanse of trees further down from where they are that he can see though his enhanced vision. They seemed to be on an elevated piece of land. A hill, maybe, “Where are we?” he turned his head towards his mate, unaware that he’s still clinging to the brunette. He has a feeling that he’s been there before already.

Kaname smiled at his confusion before motioning forward and that was when Zero looked behind to see a simple but elegant country two-story house standing nicely, styled like an old fashioned brown bricked English cottage, with a chimney and large paneled-arch windows and abundant bushes surrounding it.

The pureblood untangled himself from his lover to take his hand instead and lead him inside the cozy looking cottage. They entered the simply furnished and decorated house, Kaname willed the lights to open and they were greeted by the warm atmosphere of the interior.

“Hey, Kaname, where are we?” Zero was only able to turn his head once before he was led further inside; they then stopped in front of the large fireplace.

Kaname took out his phone as he turned to him, “Ah, just in time,” he muttered before he showed Zero his phone’s screen which only reflected the time and date on its black background: 12:01 am Oct 24, “Happy Birthday Zero.” He greeted as he smiled at the expression of surprise on his lover’s face.

Zero wasn’t able to say anything as he opened then closed his mouth, “S-shit, I-,” was all he managed to say as he covered his lips with his free hand, reddening in embarrassment, surprise and, he wouldn’t admit it, happiness.

“Forgot? Don’t worry, they all knew it already.” Kaname smiled wider as he came closer, leaning his forehead on to Zero’s, “To be honest, I only knew just earlier,” he sighed as he admitted, “I’m sorry, I didn’t know.”

“I-it’s fine, moron.” Zero easily shrugged as he amusedly arched an eyebrow. Was that why he was sulking?

“This was not supposed to be a birthday gift but rather, I intended it to be an engagement or wedding gift.” He continued, making his lover’s lilac eyes widen.

“What? This, you mean -,” The hunter was dumbfounded as he turned around the beautiful interior of the house.

“Yes, I meant this cottage and the bit of land surrounding it. At first, I never really intended anything when I purchased this land and had this house made but when you answered my proposal, I thought
that this would be the perfect gift for you when we marry.” He explained as watched his adorable lover’s expressions at his words, from stun, amazement, awe then embarrassment.

“Wha-what do you mean?” Zero asked, half in real curiosity and half to mask his awkwardness at his pureblood’s confession. Really, he just can’t stand this romantic sap.

Kaname smiled at the question, there was a hint of mischievous amusement dancing in his dark auburn eyes, “You don’t recognize this place?”

“Huh?” the question caught the silverette off guard as was the attack from his lover that pinned him down against the thick, soft carpet in front of the fireplace, the light suddenly shut down just as the fire from the hearth ignite a blaze, “What the fuck, you bas-,” his words where cut as a sense of déjà vu awashed him when he caught sight of the fireplace from that angle. He gaped as he finally recognized the place, he remembered it but in a much more battered and run down state, “t-this was…”

“That’s right,” Kaname smiled down at his lovely mate as he was overcome with surprise at the recollection of the memory, “it was the old shack from your last mission more than three months ago. This is exactly where everything started between the two of us,” well, not exactly as he knew his feelings was already established long ago, but it was here that everything was set in motion. It was because of what happened here and its results that enabled them to be where they are now. When he thinks about it, he’s thankful that everything that happened has come to pass. He’s thankful of that mission from the association, of Kaien’s overprotectiveness, of Zero’s inattentiveness, and even to that damned vampire who pierced him through his chest, everything that made this moment possible. He can’t help but smile broadly as he looked at his lovely hunter beneath him, their intertwined hands almost above his silverette’s head, “and this is where I first tasted you.”

Zero’s eyes widened in embarrassment and disbelief, he can’t believe Kaname just said that as he knew his vampire was referring to his body more than his blood, “Why you damn perverted bastard!” he barked as his face flushed crimson red, chagrined.

Kaname merely chuckled, fully enjoying his discomfited lover’s reaction, “Why? It’s the truth,” he supplied with ease as he lowered his head to plant a soft kiss on Zero’s lips before adding, “and I wish to be reminded again.” He whispered huskily as he plant ghost kisses on his temple and ear.

Zero clicked his tongue, “You really are such a greedy bastard,” he said through gritted teeth though Kaname could tell that he has already consented.

“Yes, yes, I know.” The pureblood smilingly admitted in a hushed indulgent tone before fully claiming his hunter’s lips.

It was light and gentle. Kaname slowly pried his hunter’s lips open with his tongue to delve even deeper, he smiled as he could feel his lover’s stubbornness even when he was given free reign over these passionate encounters. He slipped his tongue deep inside to caress the supple and luscious softness of his silverette. It was extremely delicious and sweet that he can’t help but moan in delight as he explore and delve even further, tormenting his mate as he lazily tease his tongue, making Zero groan for more, before candying his lower lip and giving it a tender suction.

The brunette could feel their intertwined hands tighten their hold even more as his free hand rove through his hunter’s lithe body, slipping under Zero’s shirt to feel the warmth of his pale skin. It’s hot to the touch as he caressed every line of his torso, feeling his smooth and unmarred skin under his palm and fingers. He ventured higher to softly squeeze the tight snub of his nipple, which made his hunter growl, before feeling the enchanting beat of his lover’s raging heart.
He could feel Kaname’s sensual, feathery touches awaken his body; the contact was too hot that he could feel his skin burn. The hunter flushed bright red as his body awaken and tremble slightly in anticipation as Kaname pressed their intertwined bodies closer. His every sensor alive as pleasure drowned his body as it always does in the arms of this certain pureblood. His hold on Kaname’s hand and coat tightened as he tried not to get carried away which he doubted will actually succeed as all sensibility and control goes wild and untamed in his vampire’s embrace.

He could feel the maddening caresses as Kaname’s hand move lower, torturously slow, as if engraving every contour and curves of his hunter’s body in his mind. His thumb rubbing his hip so affectionately, his fingers almost venturing inside his pants with the intention of squeezing his bottom but not quite as if to tease him, instead it hovered tauntingly on the line of his denim which produced a low growl deep in the silverette’s throat. He knew his pureblood could feel the erection straining his pants but the bastard is adamant in tormenting him as he still refuses to free him from his tight confines.

‘Kaname,’ Zero warned through the bond as his mouth still occupied in its erotic dance with his irritating mate.

He could feel and hear the strain of his hunter from his groan and their bond which he returned with a husky chuckle that got trapped in his lover’s lips, ‘My, how impatient,’ he teased as he sparingly unbutton his lover’s pants and proceeded to lower it with his boxers, slowly as his other hand still tightly imprisoned his silverette’s hand, but only half way as he then popped open his own slacks to liberate his own hardened member.

Kaname broke their kiss to look deeply into his mate’s darken silver lavender orbs as he reached and wrap his long slender fingers in both arousals which made his hunter grit and hiss. He chuckled but the taunting and hissing sounds soon vanished to be replaced by breathless moans and groans as Kaname began to stroke. Their half-lidded eyes intent on each other’s reaction as their steamy breathes from their gasping mouths, only an inch from each other, mingled to add to the intense and passionate ambience of the room. It was so hot that sweats formed and danced to decorate their foreheads, making silver and dark brown threads cling slightly to their temples.

Zero gripped his vampire’s sleeve in an attempt to stop himself from getting swept away entirely. Damn! It feels so good. He groaned in pleasure as he felt the sensation of Kaname’s smooth movement over their shafts, the mere feel of his sensitive skin on Kaname’s member is enough to send him on edge, and with that fluid movement coupled with that fierce gaze and his warm breath on him, it’s causing his brain to malfunction as his whole world gets filled with nothing but this vampire, his pureblood.

It’s always been like this, whenever he’s near Kaname and especially when he’s in his arms, he always loses himself even when he tries to anchor himself to reality. He’s always thrown into the hot sensations as if drowning in warm waters, it’s a comfort to his heart, soul and body and the same time it suffocates and chains him, robbing him of his breath. His mate’s skin on his always scorches and burns him to the point where it’s almost painful but no matter what it never fails to leave him writhing in pleasure and overflowing affection. It’s like an addicting disease, an incurable one.

It’s weird how the mix sensations and feelings deliver him both pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, contentment and greed. He can’t understand it but he knows he liked the feeling. He didn’t care if it’s weird or incomprehensible, what matters is that it feels so damn right and compatible. He wants to be here, he needs to be here, by his side, by Kaname’s.

Zero felt the tight coil in the pit of his stomach threatened to spring free. It’s too much, he can’t take it anymore, “S-stop… no more…” the silverette managed to moan out the words which received a
predacious smirk from his lover before he lowered to play with his piercings and mischievously continue his erotic strokes. The silverette could only helplessly groan, tightening his hold on Kaname in an attempt to last even just a few more seconds all the while throwing curses at the bastard through their bond which was only replied by dark chuckles, mingled with his own moans, from the playful pureblood.

The hunter’s silver hair tousled on the carpet as Kaname’s strokes became faster, their pants filled the room. They moaned each other’s name as they both climbed to the peak of fervor passion to the ecstasy of release. They shudder as they spilled at the same time, harsh breathes escaped from them as their hearts thundered, uncooperative in their attempt to calm it, their body damp from sweat because of the humidity they themselves created.

“You… sadist…” Zero panted harshly, still not recovered, as he covered his eyes with his free arm.

Kaname breathlessly laughed, “Why, thank you.” He replied as he took a handkerchief from his coat’s pocket to wipe their combined released, with some difficulty as he determinedly didn’t let go of his mate’s hand.

“No a compliment.” The hunter grumbled, as he took a peek on his lover who was still smiling at him.

“Of course,” Kaname replied ever so indulgently before hovering over his hunter again, removing his silverette’s arm out of the way, to grant him another fiery kiss while casually stripping him of his pants and boxers completely.

Kaname decadently devoured his lover’s lips, swallowing any retort or reprimand his hunter might say, the ever present surge of desires overcoming his drugged senses.

Their free hands scrambled to feel each other’s warm skin resulting to their crumpled clothes, unable to completely take off their shirts and coats with their other hand still tightly intertwined, they left it hanging loosely off their shoulders, uncaring as Kaname positioned himself between his silverette’s thighs, not even bothering to remove his slacks, too impatient to feel Zero soft around him.

Kaname broke their kiss to take a look at his hunter before entering his heat. He was instantly mesmerized and seduced by the picture of Zero’s dishabille state, with his storm of silver threads in disarray, his beautiful body which was only partly covered by his unbuttoned shirt and coat, seemingly glowing against the light of the fire, unmarred except for his tattoo, mating mark and the lovely reddish marks he had decorated his pale skin, his chest heaving from pants, his parted lips, a bit swollen from sweet and ardent violation, and his darkened silver violet eyes, frowning in confusion and question.

It beckoned him.

He smiled.

“It’s your birthday but why do I feel like I was given the ultimate present?” he softly whispered before he gently kissed the back Zero’s hand that he’s been holding, making Zero’s eye widen in surprise and confusion, Kaname leaned forward, “You’re a gift for me. I want to believe that you were born to eventually meet and be with me,” he kissed his lover’s forehead before adding, “You’re mine.” He didn’t allow Zero the chance to reply, which would normally be a retort, a snort or a bark of disagreement, as he trapped his lips once again.

His half-mast lilac eyes stared at his pureblood first before completely closing. He actually didn’t know what to say regarding what Kaname just said. All he knew was that he felt completely
embarrassed and light at the same time. There was this thing inside him that shook the center of his core, he felt so happy, surprised, embarrassed, though it's also a bit painful but what he felt mostly proud and flattered. He’s been deemed a monster since that horrible night, not belonging to any race, not a hunter anymore, not exactly a vampire and most definitely not a human. He felt his existence an eyesore, a mistake and he wished multiple of times to just die and turn to ashes, to lift the burden off from the people around him, to just end it once and for all but he was too cowardly to do so. Never did he think that his existence would mean so much to someone. Frankly, it hit him so hard that he let himself be taken once again by the sensation of Kaname’s affectionate inhibitions because he felt some shameful tears in the horizon, his chest too tight and full, and he’ll seriously kill himself if he cried like some sissy. That would be embarrassing as hell.

Ah, it’s unbearable. It’s unbearable.

It’s extremely unbearable how much he feels for this bastard, this vampire.

Zero smirked as he returned Kaname’s heated kiss. Soon he felt the thick pressure of Kaname’s erection in his entrance, he held his breath as his hands tightened on his lover’s hand and hair as he felt Kaname eased himself slowly inside him, feeling the intoxicating mix of pain and pleasure in their connection. Their lips unable to continue with their hot encounter as harsh breaths and pants escaped uncontrollably, their names fell from their lips as Kaname started to move for a tender assault inside his lover.

He thrust deep inside his mate, withdrawing but immediately slamming back inside causing his adorable hunter to cry his name in pleasure. Kaname is in a daze as he watched his bewitching lover get enthralled, his senses beguiled, his restraint non-existent, his desire overflowing. He was completely hypnotized by his lovely hunter, stubborn and beautiful, that he can’t help but wickedly ram himself to the hilt and fill Zero. He wanted his silverette to feel only him, to capture him as he was trapped and to suffocate him as he can’t breathe, to do to Zero what Zero does to him.

To make sure Zero cannot be without him.

Just like him.

His dark malicious thought formed a mischievous smile on his exquisite face as he dig even deeper, continuously attacking his lover’s pleasure spot, making Zero arch his back and groan in delight, his legs wrapped around him. Kaname was deeply intoxicated by his lover’s heat enveloping him that he can’t help but be a bit forceful in his possession, all self-discipline lost, driving them both towards the pinnacle with each lunge then retreat especially after wrapping his free hand around his lover’s hardened member to time each stroke with his thrust.

Zero is definitely lost, as always, what with this beast robbing him of all his sensibility with untamed wildness underneath all gentle caresses. He trembled as he felt his second release rebel against its confines. He let Kaname engrave himself into his soul as he welcomed each delicious sensation from his pureblood, too drugged to really be aware that his lips have traveled through his vampire’s smooth skin and over his pulse, the desire to fill himself with everything that is Kaname getting much stronger inside him that he instinctively pierced his aroused fangs into his tender skin to sample the most delectable blood he’d ever tasted, clutching Kaname’s shirt and coat further off his shoulder, as he let himself free fell towards climax.

The surprise rush of painful pleasure caught the pureblood off guard that he shudder to release much earlier than he expected, a husky moan escaping from him, panting harshly as he supported himself on his elbow to let his mate finish his unannounced meal before collapsing entirely. He patiently waited as Zero licked the punctures until they healed, his head dangling weakly, sending a couple of damp dark brown threads to tickle Zero’s face, “That’s foul play.” Kaname breathlessly chuckled as
he teased, completely spent.

Zero smirked at his lover, “It’s not,” completely unrepentant while he travelled his free hand into his brown locks to face him so he can grant his lover a soft kiss on his lips, something he rarely does which surprised Kaname yet again.

The brunette smiled down at his hunter, “Well, since it’s your birthday, I might as well be lenient with you today.” he whispered against his soft lips, “Happy birthday, Zero.” He greeted him again in the sweetest way possible, by never letting go of his hunter’s hand.

“I can’t sense him inside.”

The hushed sound came from a vampire lurking in the shadow as they strained their eyes, ears and all their senses to look for a very special vampire hunter. They just came to the town where the infamous school founded by their late king and queen together with their ex-hunter friend stood. They found that they cannot come any closer without getting detected which is an absolute must as they came only to scout and ascertain the truth of the interesting rumors that currently graces every vampire’s lips.

“He’s not here but… I feel strange presences inside,” a hushed reply was heard among the bushes that concealed their very small group, “the hybrids…” there was a hint of awe mixed with greed, desire and ambition evident in his voice, “so it’s true,” the darkness concealed his dark, malicious smirk.

“We must get him first before anyone else does,” another voice came, his orbs the color of blood as dark longing reflects in his eyes.

“Oh, I wish to meet you soon, Zero-sama…”
The Glimpse and the Party

It was almost noon when they found themselves back in the academy as the ever romantic pureblood wished to explore the island with his silverette, subtly reminding his lover of how he was abandoned there the last time he came making the hunter choke his grumbling and guilt forcing a consent out of him.

They walked for a while, going to the very small city where there were lots of tourists as it turned out to be a newly discovered prospect for fine resorts with its white sand beaches, only the latter part of the island, the mountainous and woody area where their property stood, was left unexplored. Kaname was internally relieved that he was already able to buy one sixth of the island so he can preserve that memorable place for his hunter.

They only looked around for a while, Zero taking the chance to buy his twin a gift and so was Kaname who wish to leave a good impression on the younger Kiryū. After satisfying the spoiled vampire’s request, they headed back to the academy with great timing as the chairman was actually looking for his son who had a physician visiting him in a few hours.

“Son! Where were you the whole morning?” Kaien greeted him in his frilly pink apron when he saw the young hunter came from the front door. He went to his room quite early to be able to be one of the first to greet him to find him already out, “Ah, good morning Kaname-kun,” he added when he saw the pureblood prince follow Zero inside. Oh, I see.

Zero fought down a blush, not willing to give himself away, “None of your business,” his reply was only smiled upon by his happy guardian, “Where’s Ichiru?”

“Nii-san?” his younger brother’s voice came from the kitchen.

“Zero?” Yuki also called out from the kitchen.

The two prefects emerged from the kitchen, and to Zero’s horror, wearing their aprons and each in the middle of mixing something inside a large bowl, “Oi, oi, what are you two doing over there?”

Yuki pouted towards her adopted brother after greeting the pureblood, “We’re cooking of course. There’s going to be a great party later on!”

“Ah, Kaname-senpai, you’re welcome to come later,” Ichiru said as he continuously stir whatever concoction was inside the metal bowl, “Nii-san, you should help too, you know it’s our -,”

“Birthday? Yeah, I know,” Zero said as he sighed, he should have known that these very happy people would also plan a party for their birthday like always, “Here, Happy Birthday, Ichiru.” He said as he walked to his twin to take the large bowl he’s carrying to replace it with the white paper bag he’s been holding.

This surprised Ichiru, Yuki and the chairman. Their comical disbelief, with exaggerated gasps and bulging eyes, at what just happened told Kaname that it’s very rare (or actually the first time) that Zero remembered their birthdate thereby being on time with his gift. They looked at Zero then the paper bag then back at Zero again.

“What?” snapped the annoyed silverette hunter.
“How? How did you remember?” Ichiru looked at his brother suspiciously (just to be annoying), as if suspecting a trap or him being someone else in disguise, even though he’s sure that Kaname-senpai told him.

“Shut up, just take it.”

“Here, Ichiru-kun.” Kaname smiled as he also gave his present which was in a small box, “Happy Birthday.”

“Thank you, Kaname-senpai,” he’s bit shy as he accepted the gift from the pureblood, ‘Ah, I didn’t expect him to also give me a gift…’ Ichiru mused silently as he gave him some ‘family-acceptance-points.’

“What time will that doctor come here?” Zero said as he walk towards the kitchen with Ichiru’s bowl.

“Maybe not for two to three more hours,” Kaien said as he followed his son towards the kitchen.

“Good,” he said as he put on his own white apron and proceeded to inspect what has been done in the kitchen, the ingredients, and if there’s already any damage on whatever dish they’ve been trying to make, “there’s still time,” to salvage these. He motioned for his adopted father to stick with cutting the ingredients and not to do more than that.

While the silverette hunter quickly became immersed with cooking, Yuki and Ichiru turned to the pureblood vampire, “Ah, Kaname-senpai, be sure to come here alright?” Yuki enthusiastically invited, not seeing the worry behind the pureblood’s burgundy eyes as he observe her action for anything abnormal.

“You can bring the Night class, since, of course, the children are also invited though we invited Kaito as well.” Ichiru said, they also invited Toga-sensei but he’s currently away on a mission.

“If you insist,” Kaname smiled, he walked towards the kitchen to say goodbye to Zero who merely nodded and waved his hand at him before barking at his adopted father to put down the spice the honey-haired hunter was trying to secretly put into the boiling dish in the pot.

Kaname chuckled as he left the chairman’s house, greatly looking forward to the events of the coming evening.

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There were some scurrying and scrambling inside the chairman’s house as the occupants prepare for the small party they’ll have for the ex-hunter’s most beloved sons. Zero busied himself with the dishes with the chairman’s help while the cleaning and whatever decorating they had in mind were left to the two other clumsy prefects. The Kiryū twins’ birthday has always been a private event for them but now, with the addition of the children, the twins’ lovers (Zero whacks them when they said ‘boyfriend’), the student-teacher hunter and of course, with Aido and Kaname invited, the Night class as well, there’s going to be quite a fun party to look forward to.

They were almost finished with the preparation when the doorbell rang. It was opened by Yuki and he was greeted by the pureblood prince, “Kaname-senpai, you’re early.”
“Ah, no, I came to collect Zero and the chairman, the physician is here.” He smiled at the petite prefect.

“Oh, alright, please come in. Zero’s in the bath, he just finished cooking and we’re just waiting for the cake to bake in the oven.” She said as she let him in, “Wait, I’ll get the chairman, he’s been baking a pie when I last checked on him.” She said as she skipped some step as she hummed a tune. She’s excited as she’ll be able to see the blond noble later on.

Kaname watched her quite intently as he gauge her condition. He’s sure that she should be showing signs of her memories returning but it’s weird how she seems to be able to act normally. Nothing seems to be wrong. He frowned. His thoughts were then cut by the jovial voice of his longtime friend.

“Ah, Kaname-kun! I heard the doctor is already here?”

“Yes, they’ve already set up their instruments in the clinic of the Moon dormitory.”

“Oh wonderful!” the honey-haired man ecstatically said as he clapped his hands together.

“What’s wonderful?” Zero said as he descended from the stairs, fresh from the bath, “I really don’t see why there’s a need for a checkup. It’s most definitely a girl you know.” He said a bit grumpily, he hates medical examinations and he’s not too keen about someone actually looking at his prostate or anywhere near there, he cringed at the thought.

“It’s not just that!” the chairman said disapprovingly, “We need to make sure that my granddaughter is healthy and well and we need to know how to take better care of you!”

Zero clicked his tongue. Well, it’s not like he’s especially against it and if it’s to ensure his child’s safety then perhaps he can suck it this once.

Kaname smiled as he walked towards his mate, “Well, shall we meet our child in her earliest stage?”

“Fine,” was all his hunter muttered as he sighed.

-A-ah, Z-Zero-sama! It’s an honor to meet you!

The enthusiastic and stuttered greeting came from a nervous and modest looking old vampire who bowed, flustered, together with his middle age female assistant, when they entered the Moon dorm’s clinic. The greeting which was overflowing with such awe and excitement made the poor hunter uncomfortable. He’s not used to being treated like a celebrity or anything of the like, the most he got from introductions were whispers (from the class during day one) and a taunt (from the bastard Kaito when they were kids).

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“Zero, this is Dr. Matsumoto. He’s been our family friend since my parents’ time.” Kaname introduced the good doctor, “He took care of my mother during her pregnancies. He’s someone we can trust.” He said as he smiled politely at the old vampire.

“Thank you very much Kaname-sama. I was really fortunate to be under Lady Juri and Master Haruka’s graces.” The vampire smiled sadly, remembering the kind purebloods who befriended a
lowly vampire like him.

“I’ll leave Zero in your care.” Kaname said before leaving the room with the chairman so they can begin the examinations.

“Zero-kun, be good kid okay? I’ll give you some candies later.”

“Get lost, you stupid oaf,” He shouted as he kicked his guardian out of the clinic. *What am I, a kid visiting the dentist?*

Kaname and the ex-hunter waited for about half an hour for the examination to finish. The otherwise silent waiting was shattered by the chairman’s camera’s continuous clicking as he’s enjoying documenting ‘A Father’s Waiting’ look of his pureblood friend.

The brunette had to fight down the twitch of his fingers to snap and break the noisy device in his friend’s hands, as the repeated shutter sound and flashes of light distracts him from his internal reverie.

“Don’t worry Kaname-kun, I’m sure Zero-kun is alright and little Anne-chan is healthy.” Kaien said quite seriously as he reviewed the shots he took of the unconsciously worried pureblood just now.

“I’m not worried,” Kaname said quietly, though in actuality, he’s indeed quite worried about his mate’s condition as the last week has been hectic and there was also a time when he didn’t drink blood for three months. It’s also the first time there was such a case and so he wished to be able to provide Zero everything he’ll need. He sighed inwardly as he saw another flash of his friend’s camera.

“Oh, but you are,” the ex-hunter knowingly teased. He smiled as he saw concern for his beloved son reflects on his young friend’s wine colored eyes. *Ah, how they’ve grown. “Oh yes, where are the children?”*

“They’re in their room. There was a ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign hanging outside so no one dared enter,” the pureblood said as he chuckled, then another flash of the camera, “It must have something to do with Zero’s birthday gift.” He added, ignoring his friend’s maniacal hobby.

“Oh! How wonderful!” the cheerful chairman chortled as he clapped his hands together, “I wonder-,” but his words were cut when the doctor went out and asked them to come in.

Zero was already buttoning up his light blue shirt as he sat on the clinic’s bed when they entered the room.

“Everything’s alright with Zero-sama,” Dr. Matsumoto cheerfully informed his king as Kaname sat on the seat in front of the clinic’s table. “Here, Kaname-sama,” he handed him a black and grey photograph.

Kaname stared as he looked at the ultrasound image of his child. It’s then that it really hit him that everything is real. His child is really about to be born soon.

It’s not that he doubted it, of course not, but there’s a possibility that Anne will be born years from now and that what Zero was feeling was merely due to stress and such but now that he holds the absolute evidence that everything’s set and that his mate is indeed pregnant with his child, it sent a light feeling to spread deep inside him. He pressed his lips together to stop himself from showing his emotions but a smile still escaped from him despite himself and the chairman didn’t waste a moment and though he heard the continuous sounds of shutter, he couldn’t stop himself. He stared and marveled how he could already make out the head and tiny body of their little angel.
He felt Zero stand beside him to look at the photo he’s holding. He stood up to let his lover get a closer look as he wrapped an arm around his hips to drew him closer, unable to contain his pleasure and happiness (ignoring Kaien who’s having a feast).

Zero would have shoved his overly clingy vampire away at his display of affection had it not been for that look of utter bliss in his face that made him knot his forehead in amusement and wonder, though he felt he could relate to that as he looked at the image of the life growing inside him. It’s unbelievable and amazing how such a precious thing is currently within him.

“He’s already in the beginning of his fifteenth week,” Dr. Matsumoto said, shaking himself from the trance that his king’s smile and joy has provided as he never seen such an expression in his handsome features before, “Please continue on to take care of your health, Zero-sama. A regular intake of blood and normal food,” as they were handed a certain list of food that’s good for pregnancy, “it’s the first time that I’ve handled such a case as yours, Zero-sama, but I can’t see much differences, I’m only wondering though when and how the birth will proceed.” He was already informed of what the children said about a cut appearing naturally and so they decided to monitor Zero periodically to ensure his safety, “and Zero-sama, I would like to advice you of one more thing,” the old vampire said after providing several advices, his tone turning less cheery and more serious, “I know it might be difficult for you given the young stage you’re currently at in your life but considering your circumstances, I would advise that you stop your education for a while.”

There was a short silence as everyone in the room looked at the hunter.

Dr. Matsumoto continued when no one spoke, “it’s not that I can see that it’s a delicate kind of pregnancy but I think Zero-sama has also already notice,” he looked at the young silverette, “it’s already showing and soon, no amount of clothes will be able to hide it. I would not have advised it had yours been a regular situation but it would certainly seem… odd in the humans’ point of view.” Then he added as he felt that he said something out of line, “I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay, I understand, I’ll think about it,” the silver haired hunter conceded.

Kaien shifted his worried gaze on the two young vampires while Kaname looked guiltily at Zero as he tightened his hold on his hips making his lover inch away just a bit with a ‘it’s-sweltering-you-idiot’ look.

“Don’t worry about it, I’m not that bothered regarding repeating a grade, you know.” He said quietly as he looked at the photograph in his pureblood’s hand. He knew it would come eventually since that time he decided to keep the child and he’s honestly not bothered by it but he must admit becoming a bit disgruntled at the thought of Yuki and Ichiru becoming his senpais (not that he’ll ever call them that anyway).

The hunter turned towards his mate who’s still looking at him with trouble reflected in his wine orbs, ‘Don’t look at me like that. It’s not like it’s your fault. It takes two to create a child, you moron.’ Zero spoke to him through the bond. His words were only awarded a small smile and an even more troubled look from the brunette.

The pureblood certainly felt guilty but more because of the fact that he greatly wished to see Zero heavy with his child. He grimaced internally. How abominably selfish he has become. He wanted to see it so much that he forgot about what trouble it might cause his hunter. He’s clearly mad with hot obsession and possessiveness. How monstrously greedy he has become, enough to softly suffocate his own beloved so he’ll only breathe his scent. He took a deep breath to rein in his raging beast as he held on tightly to his mate as the physician carried on.

“We can expect your child around mid-spring,” Dr. Matsumoto then cheerfully continued, breaking
the awkward moment by giving good news.

“Oh perfect. The best time for a hanami. Spring!” the honey haired ex-hunter declared.

After a few more advices from the good doctor, and setting the schedule for the next appointment, Zero and the chairman went back to their house to continue the preparation while Kaname remained to help and see the physician out, agreeing to see the pureblood at a certain time for the private gathering.

The silverette and the honey-haired were walking in the quiet afternoon without saying anything but the hunter could feel his guardian’s eyes glancing at him from time to time.

“I’m really fine,” Zero started, feeling a bit annoyed at the chairman’s obvious careful treatment with him regarding the doctor’s earlier advice, still looking at the black and grey photograph of the ultrasound. “I’m not bothered by it.”

Kaien sighed, a bit conflicted though not wanting to voice out his concern lest he troubled his son furthermore though Zero surprised him by continuing.

“There’s nothing for it. I’m already prepared for this.” The silverette added determinedly.

This made Kaien smiled, “You’ll be a wonderful father, son.”

“I’m not your son,” Zero grumbled as a flash of camera captured his solemn expression as his gaze was steadfastly trained on the photograph of his child.

Their walk turned a bit merry, on the chairman’s part, as he continued on chattering about being reminded of his cuteness as a child and blatant flashes of his camera while the hunter grumbled and scowled.

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It was already after four in the afternoon when the doorbell rang in the chairman’s residence. It was immediately opened by the excited female prefect. She found the whole Night class led by the pureblood president waiting outside. Her eyes immediately flew to her savior’s right where a certain green-eyed vampire met her gaze with a blinding smile on his lips.

“Senpai-tachi, please come in,” Yuki invited, a bit flushed.

“Thank you Yuki.” Kaname smiled, noting her sudden blush when her eyes flitted to his vice-president. He made mental observations as he followed the two with his auburn eyes and it didn’t escape him the sudden splash of ecstatic aura at their meeting. He shook his head a bit in disbelief at his own inattentiveness. He has been blind. He made a mental note to gently question his closest friend later on.

Yuki was all smiles and was too happy that she belatedly noticed that their little party is missing a few faces, “Where are the children?”

“They said they’re not yet done with their gift,” Kaname explained, frowning a bit at the memory of his eldest daughter’s state when she opened the door to their room earlier. Anne was bit flustered with a bit of sooth covering her pretty face, he saw that they even already transformed to their older
selves, no doubt because of the miscalculation of the time it will take to prepare whatever present they have in mind. “Anne said that they may be a bit late.” He continued.

“Oh, okay.” Yuki replied thoughtfully, wondering what their gift might be.

“Ah Kaname-kun, children!” Kaien’s voice boomed joyously at the sight of the Night class who stopped at the sight of him. He’s looking comical and ridiculous with his childish party hat and extremely colorful clothes.

“Take that off!” Zero scoffed at his guardian as he forcefully took the cardboard hat off the ex-hunter’s head to which the older man whined, irritating the silverette even more.

“Geez chairman, where did you even get that?” Ichiru sighed as he came inside the room from the kitchen, carefully carrying a dish and arranging it neatly on a table.

Yuki could only shake her head in exasperation and shame (‘so that’s what he bought earlier in great ‘secrecy,’ she mused), Kaname merely smiled, some of the Night class chuckled and laughed, while the others shook their head in embarrassment.

“Where’s the children?” Zero asked while he arrested his guardian by the collar of his shirt.

Kaname told them that they might be late because of the finishing touches with their gifts.

“Oh my, that’s so sweet of them,” Kaien fawned at the thought even though he still being man-handled by his son, “Well, we can wait some more because Kaito-kun is also not yet here.”

“Who cares about him,” Zero mumbled under his breath, Kaname noticing a bit of bitterness in his voice that made him smile. Clearly, Zero still hasn’t forgiven the young hunter for seducing his eldest daughter.

The Night class gathered and separately came to the Kiryū twins to give their congratulations and gifts (Zero’s were through Kaname as he’s still not comfortable with the Night class). They were scattered throughout the room. Yuki and Takuma were immediately immersed in a world of their own near the window which was closely but secretly observed by Kaname and Zero from their position on the couch in the middle of the room as the pureblood immediately informed his hunter of his suspicion and the two immediately scrutinized the understanding forming between the two as they both didn’t want any more pain to befall their most beloved sister, while Hanabusa helped his own beloved silverette arrange the dishes neatly and saving them whenever Ichiru would almost stumble as he trip on his own feet even on flat surfaces, the chairman was flitting across the room offering drinks to the other vampires as they observed the couples; Rima passively, Shiki sleepily, Ruka half-vehemently and half-resigned and Kain in contentment (for Hanabusa) and worry (for Ruka).

They were having a comfortable and satisfyingly peaceful late afternoon when it was shattered by the arrival of their temporary mathematics teacher who unceremoniously opened the door as Zero was halfway to the kitchen.

“Yo, Kuran Zero-sama!” was the first thing out of the mouth of the mischievous new-comer.

Zero stiffened when he heard the irritating voice of a certain annoying hunter that just entered the room. Suddenly, the room became very quiet. He looked around and sure enough, there stood Kaito Takamiya wearing a teasing sneer.

“I was at the mall yesterday, you know, when I heard that very amusing announcement. That’s really bad of you Zero-kun. You must always look after your children.” He said in a very amuse tone while
walking towards his kohai.

Zero only grimaced inwardly, cursing Kaito inside his head and gathering all his will power not to just punch the hunter there and then out of sheer annoyance. He didn’t want the party that Ichiru, the chairman and Yuki prepared to be ruined just like that.

“Hey, are you listening, Kuran Zero-sama?” Kaito smirked as Zero walked away from him, “Hey, Kuran Zero-sama! Kuran Zero-sama!” he called after him, “Don’t be stubborn Kuran Ze-,” he suddenly stopped when his face was hit by something soft… and disgustingly sweet.

Apparently, the silverette just threw him the pie that the chairman baked for their birthday, not at all being able to stop the irritation that he’s feeling because of Kaito’s teasing. Screw patience. “You’re fucking noisy so shut up, Kaito-sensei.”

There was a heavy silence that blanketed all the guests of the private party, many of them are suppressing the laughter at the sight of the two pissed off hunters, before the sound of the falling metal platter from Kaito’s face resounded inside the room.

There was a silent countdown for a fight to start.

And there would have been a mighty brawl as the two hunters ready themselves to leap at the first attacker but then the sound of the new arrivals snatched their attentions.

“Hello! We’re sorry we’re late! Otou-chan?” Anne’s clear voice came resounding from the hall, “Oh my, what happened?” was her surprised exclamation at the sight that greeted her when she entered the room with her siblings, “Kaito-san?”

The ash-brown haired hunter stopped his impending attack when he saw the children in their adult appearances enter the room. His attention was instantly stolen by the beauty leading the other four. Suddenly, he became very aware of his shameless actions and the white icing that still covered his face.

“Mou, what happened? Kaito-san? You’re teasing otou-chan again, aren’t you?” there was a slight scolding tone in her voice as she immediately came towards the hunter after kissing Zero on the cheek, who’s already calm but still throwing daggers at him (albeit for a whole different reason Kaito has yet to know), to wipe the icing off his face. “You should stop baiting otou-chan every time, Kaito-san.” She said quietly as she wiped some more icing, “since chichiue is a really jealous man,” she added seriously in a whisper.

Kaito could only quietly stare at the young vampire as she helped him, not even laughing (when he could hear the others muffled their laughter) at the, no doubt, ridiculous state of his face. He slightly grimaced inwardly, how uncool.

“Ehem!” the chairman finally found his voice which he seemed to have lost after watching his masterpiece fly into the young teacher apprentice’s face. He wanted to cry. My work of art! He could only sigh, “Well, it seems like we’re finally complete so we can now start the birthday celebration for my cute sons, (he ignored the expected retaliation from the older silverette, “We’re not your sons!” and continued with his speech.) Thank you all for coming, please enjoy yourselves!”

“Kaito-san, you can go to the comfort room now to wash your face. Almost all of the icings are gone already but you must be feeling sticky and uncomfortable.” Anne said to the hunter after her grandpa’s speech, smiling as she did.

Kaito only grunted in agreement before quickly proceeding to the guest’s bathroom and quickly
locked himself inside. He didn’t stop even when he felt Zero burn holes on his back. When he looked at the mirror, he quickly wished that he went there with icings covering his face.

He can’t believe it. He grimaced as he looked at himself in the mirror. He hoped that no one noticed that he’s actually blushing…

Fuck. “I’m sure it’s because of humiliation.” The hunter tried to convince himself.

Kaname looked at his mate, discontent in his eyes.

“What?” Zero asked when he caught his lover’s stare.

The brunette looked away to blindly look forward before he answered, “Do you hate it that much? Do you hate being called by my name?”

Zero stared as the controlled angry tone of his mate alarmed him, he swallowed, not knowing how to answer his sulking mate, ‘No.’ He instead answer though the bond as he look away, it seems much easier for him, ‘it’s just… I’m… still… not use to it…Fuck… I’m a man too, you think I ever thought I’ll even change my name?’

He sigh in understanding, ‘Then, do you hate it?’ he asked though the bond.

‘…Not… really…’ Zero said while looking further away, feeling embarrassed at admitting it.

Kaname smiled at his mate, he knew Zero’s feeling strange about it, after all, he’s very manly with a high ego that’s why he appreciate his mate giving way too many things because of him. He discreetly reached for his hand to hold it briefly and tightly before letting it go. He watched as a blush creep all the way to his lover’s neck at his gesture. Fortunately for Zero, their children came to distract him.

“Chichiue! Otou-chan!” their little angels gathered around them, “Here’s our present!” as they handed Zero a small rectangular wooden box, with elegant lines engraved into it for the design. He opened it to reveal seven silver-metal earrings: five huggie hoop earrings, one slightly elongated clip-on cartilage earring, and one stud earring. All of which are modestly decorated by little red blood stones so that it won’t become too eye catching, knowing their otou-chan’s low profile.

“We’re sorry we’re late otou-chan, it took us a while to finish it,” Kohaku apologized as he sat beside Zero.

“What? You made this?” the silverette was amazed as he took and examined the simple but finely made accessories, “You know how? What, did you train to be a silversmith?” a crease appearing on his forehead.


“It’s not like we really mastered it. It’s only like a hobby.” Akira piped in as he sprawled on Kaname’s lap, “Well, when you’re alive for so long, one tends to venture a lot of things to occupy our bored minds.” He didn’t add the fact that it’s actually their parents who made them do it in an attempt to distract them from doing highly dangerous and unmonitored distraction like sneaking outside the palace to play and some other things they haven’t confessed to just yet. They unfortunately didn’t succeed but they’re not supposed to know that. He snickered internally.

“That’s why it took us a while,” Suiren squeaked, seated on the floor between Zero’s legs, her chin on her daddy’s knee, “We forgot how hard it is! It’s been a long time and only nee-chan has been
practicing it for her dimensional blood stones.” She finished, she’s exhausted as they pulled up an all-nighter to finish it though they were still late.

“Well, thanks.” Zero sincerely said as he patted his daughter’s silver hair. He really like the present as it looks simple enough for him, “Are these stones…” he trailed as he inquiringly glanced at his children.

“Oh! They’re our blood stones so that otou-chan will always be protected!” Naoto brightly offered from his seat on the floor between Kaname’s legs, his chin on the pureblood’s knee nearest Zero. “So please always wear them otou-chan.”

“I will,” the young hunter smiled, feeling a rush of satisfaction from the pureblood beside him.

Kaname is extremely pleased with the idea as it would mean additional protection for his beloved. He does love the way his children’s wonderful mind works. He could feel the awe that came from the Night class as they quietly regarded the family.

Blood stones are considered one of the most precious objects in the vampire society, and that its being freely given must have come as a shock for the aristocrats.

The children also went to Ichiru to give their present. Ichiru opened a smaller, intricately carved wooden box, which contained a better imitation of his hair tie. A thin silken ribbon with a small white gold bell attached to it. The children explained that the small loose sphere enclosed within the body of the bell is made of Akira and Kohaku’s blood stone (for their most beloved uncle’s protection) which made Hanabusa choke on his drink.

The blond is certainly happy about it as it will put his mind at ease specially whenever his silverette would leave sight, but he’s internally grimacing at the fact that his gift might not be at par with their royal highnesses present. He received a pitying look from his most faithful cousin, Kain, who lightly patted his shoulder for support.

It didn’t escape Ichiru’s attention, “What is it?” he asked his dejected lover who smiled at him but didn’t convince the silverette. Then he caught Hanabusa’s gaze on the children’s present and immediately understood. He sighed at the sweet thought while coloring a bit as he softly whispered, “You’re a moron. I know I will love it, as long as it came from you.” A smile in his voice.

And just like that, the proud blond noble’s confidence was restored and they were instantly thrown into their own universe, violently kicking the red-haired third-wheel out to hastily retreat to their friends who are distractedly feasting on the lavish food prepared by the hunter.

“They should get a room, those two,” Kain muttered under his breath, a bit disgruntled at his cousin’s poor treatment of him despite his continuous support in his genius affairs though he only sighed before he smiled. He still can’t help but be happy for that little blond devil. He really does spoil his cousins.

“Did you say anything?” Shiki turned to him, his sleepy eyes half-mast as he munched on his strawberry cake.

“Nothing,” he answered and he was startled as Ruka silently handed him a slice of strawberry cake. His beloved’s gesture instantly completed his day even though he really isn’t a fan of sweets.

“What?” the beautiful vampire snobbishly asked, arching an eyebrow, as she sat next to Kain to eat her own slice of strawberry cake.

“Nothing, thanks.” The flaming haired vampire smiled as he took a bite of his sweet.
Meanwhile, the chairman was busying himself with dishes while accompanying the ash-brown haired hunter who took refuge inside the kitchen after sneakily emerging from his hiding from the comfort room. He didn’t dare show his face again (not that he had any interest in socializing with bloodsuckers anyway) after his earlier embarrassment. He was quiet with resignation as he half-listened to the ex-hunter’s incessant chattering of some nonsense or another when the phone rang.

“Hello?” Kaien answered the phone as Zero walked inside the kitchen with more dirty plates, “Ah, Toga-chan! Great timing!” he cheerfully exclaimed thinking that the hunter called to wish his students a happy birthday but the serious voice of his former student hinted a more dreary reason for calling, “Toga-chan?”

The sudden change in his guardian’s voice stopped Zero from exiting from the room as he listened intently with the help of his vampire hearing.

There were harsh breathes on the other line, sign of the raven hunter’s irritation with a hint of hesitation in delivering the terrible news, no doubt from the association. “Is Zero there?” he asked but then quickly added, “No, don’t call him. You can just tell him later. Don’t ruin his day.” He breathed deeply and harshly before releasing a litany of curses full of frustration, irritation and downright anger but not directed to the chairman or to his pupil.

“What is it Toga?” Kaien asked again, abandoning his normally sweet tone. He’s sure that it’s not anything good.

“It’s urgent so I’m warning you now but don’t tell Zero just yet.” Toga continued after a few more curses, “The president will ask him to report to HQ, a letter will arrive any time now,” he breathed deeply, “some asshole leaked the story about the brats.”

The honey-haired ex-hunter was still as he stared wide-eyed to his son whose presence he vaguely felt, knowing he heard every word. Zero visibly paled, his expression strained, clearly remembering the last time he was summoned by the association’s president.

“Kaien, this doesn’t look good for the kid. Knowing that psychotic bastard, he must be cooking up something” The hunter continued, “Watch out for him. That fucking asshole has sent me on one hell of a mission.” The underlying meaning that he’s being purposely kept away was completely understood by the chairman.

“I understand. Thank you for telling me.” Was all he said before ending the call. He took a deep breath before fixing his silent son with a very serious look.

“What the hell was that about?” Kaito loudly asked, reminding them of his presence. He didn’t hear the conversation but he can judge from the two’s expressions that it’s not anything decent.

“Fuck,” Zero muttered under his breath, closing his eyes, not answering Kaito’s curiosity, “and I thought repeating a grade was the worst I could land to,” he grimaced. With the swirl of events and after being immersed with his personal problems and emotions, he completely forgot the nutcase that is the hunter association’s president. It didn’t really hit him that since the story and matter of his lineage and children was broadcasted far and wide within the vampire society that the same news would reach the hunters in no time at all. Shit! He’s really screwed. Compared to meeting the president, calling Yuki and Ichiru ‘senpai’ is definitely less painful.

“What? Repeating a grade? Why the fucking hell?” Kaito repeated loudly, confused while trying to put two and two together before finally understanding why that certainly would happen as he eyed his kouhai’s belly.
“Otou-chan repeating a grade?” repeated once again but by someone else, disbelief laced in her high and feminine voice. Anne walked inside the kitchen, followed by Kaname, carrying another batch of empty and dirty dishes. There was a thoughtful then scandalized frown on her exquisite face as she also realized the reason behind that phrase. Her eyes widened as her gaze also fell on her beloved otou-chan’s abdomen, “Oh,” she lowered her head, “Oh, I see.”

“Anne,” Zero was immediately with her, momentarily forgetting his greater problems in the face of self-hatred he can see reflecting his daughter’s lilac orbs, “It’s not your fault,” he assured her.

“That’s right Anne. Don’t worry yourself over it,” Kaname added, putting away the dirty dishes in the sink then coming beside his mate.

The chairman also helped in the assurances, not forgetting the greater calamity but welcoming the distraction. He also didn’t want the others to know about it, which he knew would agree with Zero who would not want anyone (not even Kaname) to know. Kaito retreated to just observing the family, strangely getting tongue-tied at the sight of the female brunette.

“Oh, but it is, isn’t it?” the young brunette faced her parents, “must it be so?” then shaking her head at the ridiculous question. Of course, it is. It will certainly be strange once his otou-chan’s stomach slowly swell on the next stages of his pregnancy. It’s something he won’t be able to hide soon. She bit her lips. She was contemplating suggesting Zero’s transfer to Night class but she remembered that they still have some human teachers as well, and he’ll still be spotted during class exchanges. She was near tears with frustration which frantically sent her parents and grandfather beseechingly for her calm, which she could barely hear in her distress, when she remembered something that she can do.

She suddenly perked up, looking at her parents with wide-eyes, now filled with bright glee. She didn’t even stop to think and proceeded with her plan. Without words and as fast as she can, she crouched to hold on to her silverette father’s shirt’s hem to hold it up to reveal his stomach. She vaguely heard the young hunter’s yelp of surprise at her unexplained actions and the other’s questions. She unceremoniously nicked her index finger, filling the room with the heavenly scent of her blood which sent everyone in a quiet panic and making her siblings ran to the kitchen to see if there’s any problem, the other nobles just behind them, with flaming red eyes, but she didn’t give anyone of them any attention as she focus on writing symbols on their daddy’s stomach, just below the navel, using her blood as she muttered incantations under her breath.

The older twins immediately recognized her action, she even heard Kohaku’s admonishing tone to stop but they’re already too late as the blood on their parent evaporated and the smell of burning power became evident in the air.

Zero took a step back as scorching warmth spread inside his stomach making him blanch white, his heart raging inside him, alarming his mate but before they can even say anything, the heat abated as soon as it came which successfully calmed both of them though they’re still confused and then panic came over them when they saw the faint expression of their eldest.

“Nee-chan!” there was a mix of anger and worry in Kohaku’s exclamation as he came running inside the kitchen where Anne slumped on her thighs, her shoulders sagged with evident exhaustion and chest heaved as she desperately gasped for air.

“Anne!” there was a general commotion as the children herded their older sister outside the kitchen, thank goodness for their adult body, in the living room and deposited her in the large couch, the nobles staying out of the way as they calmed their thirst shaken by the intoxicating scent of their princess’ blood.

“Nee-chan? Are you feeling much better?” Suiren worriedly shook her older sister a bit for reaction.
“Are you okay now?” Naoto frowned as he perched his chin on top of his twin sister’s head.

“Nee-chan why did you do that?” Akira exclaimed with confusion and exasperation while his twin merely sighed as if fighting for patience.

“What happened?” Yuki and Ichiru asked in chorus.

“What did Anne do?” Zero asked, his heart beat steadily slowing down, mighty confused as he didn’t understand what just happened.

Anne raised a hand as a gesture that she’s feeling much better as evident by her much easy breathing.

“Are you alright, Zero?” Kaname asked after making sure that their daughter is doing much better. A frown decorating his handsome features.

“I’m fine,” the silverette answer, his eyes not leaving his daughter’s face who seemed to have been overcome with surprise as well as awareness seems to have finally hit her system.

After a while, when Anne was a bit calmer and uninfluenced by her turbulent emotion, she sat for a quiet moment as she took deep breaths, taking stock of her body and finally realizing the consequences of her abrupt action.

Her younger twin brothers only followed her action, seeing the remorse etched on her lovely faced, when she suddenly stood without words and went to face their parents who’re also looking at her with worried frowns. They were greatly disturbed once again when she, their elegant and proud princess, kneeled in front of them and prostrate herself in a low bow without any words. Anne spoke even before her parents could react.

“Please forgive me otou-chan, chichiue,” she said in a most repentant voice which deepened the crease on her parents’ foreheads. She then sat back up, still in a formal sitting position, to face a completely puzzled Kaname and Zero. Her face set as if readying herself to take on a harsh scolding.

“What was that about?” Zero can’t help but be bewildered by his own daughter’s antics. She’s really the one with the most drama.

“Explain yourself, Anne.” Kaname said in a quiet and serious voice which made Anne internally whimper, pursing her lips a bit in fright.

“She opened and created another dimension,” Kohaku answered for her when it took her more than a minute to respond. He’s clearly not pleased with her actions.

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“Eh? What for?” Ichiru asked.

“Yeah, what for nee-chan?” Akira curiously asked as he knew well enough that though her sister could be a bit impulsive sometimes, it’s because of a great cause, it must be very important because she’ll plan her steps first if she can. There must be something she can’t let go.

They all waited. The nobles are already back sporting their own eye colors with the other prefects who are situated behind the couch the silverette hunter, their king and the royal children are sitting. The chairman and Kaito are by the kitchen’s entrance.

“Uhm, I… I… o-,” she stopped to swallow before continuing, “open a contained space that will take up the fetus’ space once it grew bigger inside otou-chan’s womb,” she sniffed a bit as she finished knowing that this time, she really did cross the line by not getting permission before doing what she
did because it could have endangered the child (though she was also careless knowing it’s her inside her dad anyway) and that she might have unknowingly trampled any wish of her parents, and now after the deed is done, she just realize many miscalculations on her part in terms of her remaining power.

“What?” Zero blurted, understanding and at the same time completely questioning what she said.

“What do you mean, Anne-chan?” Anne heard her grandfather question from behind her.

“Eto, it’s so that it will not appear in the naked eyes…” she said, not knowing how to explain it.

“Does it mean that there is a space inside Zero,” the genius of the Night class started, remembering in time to give due respect to the hunter no matter how much they hate each other’s guts, “-san where the child will be nurtured?” he finished though can’t see the reason for it.

“Meaning, nii-san currently has his own mini black hole inside his stomach?” Ichiru tried to make sure he understood.

Anne nodded but added, “It’s something like that but it’s not completely detached as it would result to… a miscarriage,” her tone became extremely low, almost inaudible, and before anyone can even react, she immediately added, “and it’s only a limited space. So otou-chan will still feel the mass and weight of it but I did it so he’ll not…” she trailed.

“So it won’t be obvious?” Zero finished which made Anne stare hard on the floor. He would have said more as it did sound quite dangerous but he can only sigh at her expression, “It bothered you that much, huh?” the silverette scratch his head.

“What do you mean, otou-chan?” Kohaku turned; it’s his turn to be concern.

“It’s really nothing big,” the silverette gave him a small smile before sighing again and looking at his daughter whose eyes still seemingly drilling holes on the floor with the sheer power of her mind, “it’s just that I might stop in this school year because of my…” he cleared his throat awkwardly before continuing, “pregnancy.”

There was a gasp of understanding around them. Now fully comprehending what might have happened and the reason for the young brunette’s action. They all realize what might have been the series of events and thoughts that led here. The adults all smiled kindly at the impulsive little princess, her siblings shaking their head and the parents sighing in both understanding and resignation.

“Ah, I see.” Yuki chimed in, “that’s why you made it so Zero will not look… well, pregnant?” Anne nodded to confirm her claim. “Well, that’s convenient for you then, ne Zero?”

“But that was extremely dangerous. We could have lost you,” Kaname intervened before the silverette could even answer. He understood her reasons but he’s still displeased as it seems like it was a tricky feat to perform. Had it been a failure then it would have meant her own demise. The pureblood just knew what a risky stunt it was for both Zero and the budding child inside him (as evidence by how his daughter was now rigid with distress at his words and how the older twins sighed and shook their heads) and he didn’t like how her daughter seemed to have gone paler than normal (even paler than Zero) and in closer inspection… “You’ve used everything now, haven’t you, Anne?” This troubled him as he can’t feel any remaining power from within her. He saw as she finally lifted her head with a remorseful frown gracing her features.

“I’m sorry, I can’t help it. The mere thought that I’m ruining otou-chan’s youth is enough to kill me with guilt,” she looked down again as she addressed her siblings who’re looking at her with troubled
understanding as if not knowing what to feel, “I’m sorry, I know that with this we’ll be staying here even longer.” She said apologetically. While she didn’t mean to use every last bit of her remaining strength for her own selfish reasons (as she miscalculated and really didn’t think that it would use every power she has), it has completely flown from her mind how sluggish every bit of her vampiric power returns. She looks at Kohaku who she knew must be the one most troubled by it all.

“It’s not like that, nee-chan. You should know that I wouldn’t mind staying here longer because as per the law of time, our parents would know by now when to expect us back,” Kohaku calmly but very seriously said, internally adding that they might even already have encircled the date of when they’ll be home, “but what really troubles me is how weak you are right now!” He finished a little exasperated.

“That’s right, nee-chan,” Akira agreed, sounding equally worried, “the way you are right now… you’re… you’re…” he paused and though it would still sound serious, Anne could already tell that he’s already back in finding amusement in her predicament. My, what a brother. But his enjoyment was taken from him by his twin.

“You’re even weaker that the lowest leveled vampire in the academy.” Kohaku finished in a serious tone, ignoring the disappointed look his brother gave him as unlike Akira, he can’t see this as laughing matter as their sister’s vampiric power’s slow regeneration is a serious concern especially now that they know there is danger lurking around and they do not even have a good grasp at the situation. Forget returning to the future, she won’t be able to protect herself like this!

“Anne,” Zero’s hard voice made his eldest look up. He frowned but more in worry than anger as the same realization of her present vulnerability hits him.

“Please don’t worry about me, otou-chan!” Anne defended, “It’s not like my powers are combative anyway and I still have my sword mastery and all.” She assured them, her voice confident though she knows that the loss of her powers affects even her regeneration and fatigue but she didn’t mention that. She caused enough trouble for the day and to think that her action was to lessen her parents’ (as well as her own) distress, what with the results, she just completely ruin the point! “Please don’t worry, I’ll be fine and I assure you that what I did will not affect otou-chan’s health or the baby’s.” she strongly assured. For the latter part, she’s most sure as she didn’t spare any expense on her part to ensure that (hence, her powerless state now).

Zero’s hand travelled on his stomach, greatly relieved with her repeated assurances that nothing happened to his child, “Geez you. I can’t believe that you’ll,” he sighed again, unable to finish his sentence, not at all liking burdening his own child regarding his own matters. “I told you it’s not your fault. It’s not really a big thing.”

“But it is!” The young brunette exclaimed, “I definitely wouldn’t want to rob you of the enjoyment of your youth.” She looked up to him with her big lilac eyes. She remembered her aunt Yuki telling them of the fun experiences they had in Cross Academy. She would often tell them their adventures, the embarrassing, humiliating, and of course, exciting and happy memories they had. It’s one of the reasons why she greatly looked forward to growing up, so she can attend this school and have pleasant experiences as well. She just can’t take it away from him.

Zero scratched his head, “Really you, I don’t know where you got that idea but I’m telling you now that I don’t exactly live a rosy life.” He doesn’t know what’s going on in his eldest’s mind or how she even came to that conclusion as he didn’t exactly had a highschool debut. Really, it must be something she knew as she came from the future, but what could possibly be different from now? He only took a deep breath before ruffling the dark brown threads of the repentant child in front of him, “Well, it’s not like there’s anything we can do about it anymore. Just don’t do it again. I do not want
you being reckless for any reason at all,” then he looked at their younger children, “that goes for all of you, do you understand?” he asked seriously to which the children nodded vigorously. He looked at their earnest expressions, Akira’s he knew was a bit forced (the little devil), before shaking his head and granting his eldest daughter a smile. “Now, stop kissing the floor already. Once you return on your own time, you’ll be grounded,” he laughed at the whimpered that escaped from Anne. “Yeah, you heard me. I won’t forget. Really, you’re so reckless.” He whispered as he hugged her, “And here I thought you’re the most behaved. Turns out you’re just as troublesome as the rest,” he chuckled as he tighten his embrace.

“Demo,” Anne started a whine but just opted in burying her face on her father’s chest, relieved that at least for now, she avoided trouble with her parents.

Zero was about to open his mouth to insist her stubbornness when he was stopped by the flash that slightly blinded him. He looked up to find the chairman with his despicable camera and he just remembered where they were. He looked around to find the Night class still there, watching him with amusement (clearly amazed and interested by his expressions as it’s the most emotion they witnessed from the grumpy hunter), Yuki and Ichiru are grinning from ear to ear, Kaname had a hint of a smile in his eyes though his face is still serious, Kaito had an unreadable expression while the ex-hunter was extremely delighted. He blushed and he would have barked to ward off the spectators had he not been smothered by several layers of hugs from his children, directed and started by Akira, to which Ichiru, Yuki and even the chairman followed.

“Aw Zero,” Yuki fawned at her brother’s cuteness, “you’re such an adorable father!” she said as she tighten her hug around Suiren and Naoto who’re on top of Zero.

“He certainly got it from me,” squealed their honey-haired guardian while embracing his other two children.

“Don’t butt in in odd places, chairman,” Ichiru grumbled as he threw his weight on Akira, who forced his twin to also join them, and Kohaku.

Kaname chuckled as he looked at the small mountain of embraces, “Now, now, you’re going to crush Zero and Anne,” mildly detaching the adults from the pile, knowing that by now, his mate must be seething at being suffocated.

After one more squeeze from the chairman, Kaname was able to successfully save his lover and eldest daughter from being crushed and suffocated.

“Well, now that that’s done, how about we go explore your presents?” the ex-hunter cheerfully invited.

Zero only grunted whereas Ichiru agreed with more spirit and so with their festive spirit restored, they went and spent the remaining evening jovially wherein Yuki was hunted by both her brothers for giving them a highly inappropriate gift; a picture frame depicting a single image; for Zero, a certain hot encounter inside an amusement park’s Ferris Wheel car and for Ichiru, a passionate moment in the middle of a wild vegetation (courtesy of her lovely eldest niece).

She of course, managed to expertly dodge them, with no small help from her cheerful conspirator and accomplice. And the night went on as it should have been, full of warmth and enjoyment.

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They trekked the forest quietly, the handsome noble tightly holding his hand as he led him to a specific location. He looked up to gaze at the young moon that just ascended to take the sun’s place in the high heaven, illuminating to set a beautiful glimmer on his silver hair. He let out a sigh as he remembered the look that a certain red-haired vampire gave them when he caught them sneaking out to silently slip out from the party. He grimaced inwardly; Kain must have thought that they’re out for some ‘private’ time.

His face burned at the thought.

It’s not like he didn’t wish for it nor does he think it’s humiliating to be intimate with another man as he’s been in love with this aristocrat since time immemorial but he just felt indignant as they were just innocently going out to where Hanabusa said he left his present for Ichiru. But it’s not like he’s expecting anything in their private time.

No, nope, nu-uh, none at all.

He tensed, then sighed. Crap. Maybe, he did expect a little after all.

Honestly, just a little!

Now he just felt guilty, damn it!

Well, he’s a very healthy teenager (in that aspect). He cleared his throat, his face burning brighter.

“What is it?” Hanabusa called out to him, jolting him out of his internal reverie where he convinced and deluded himself.

He opened his lilac eyes, which he didn’t realize he already closed when he was deep in thought, to look at the smiling blond. His charming blue eyes prodding him for his thoughts. His fair skin beautifully illuminated by the moon giving Ichiru a breathtaking spectacle of a fallen angel.

God, he’s wiped.

“Nothing much. It’s just that your cousin might be thinking were up to something… well,” he coughed instead to hide his embarrassment though he burned in guilt and, just a little, anticipation, “It’s nothing.”

“Is that an invitation?” the vampire smirked as he leaned towards his silverette.

The prefect blushed, gaping at his lover, unable to say anything in response, the vampire’s pheromones completely muddling his brain into mush, “Geez you, you’re such... You’re just…” Ichiru can’t seem to finish.

Hanabusa chuckled, “Well, you seemed to be expecting something.”

Ichiru’s eye widened. What the hell? Was he that transparent? Is he openly drooling at him? Fuck, dignity? What dignity? And ego? What the hell is that? He doesn’t know the meaning of the word. Still he tried to save whatever he could salvage, “Excuse me, I didn’t come with you with ulterior motives.” He said as he looked away.

The blond noble just smiled at the captivating picture of his silverette, watching as he reddened from his cheeks to his ears, listening to his heart beat mercilessly in his chest, all an indication of his feelings and attraction but his lilac eyes stubbornly trying to say otherwise. How adorably delusional.
But he can’t have that, he wanted Ichiru to always openly show him his feelings. He cupped his petulant lover’s chin to gently force him to look up at him, “Well, is it alright if I do?”

This startled his silverette once again. His words deepening his blush.

“Come with me,” the vampire said huskily, ushering his lover more eagerly than before while Ichiru could only stare at his dancing golden hair, his heart running wild in his chest.

Shit. I’m going to die tonight.

“Oh my, it’s already this late. I didn’t even notice. Where has the day gone by?” Anne said in a seemingly cheerful manner. She laughed, albeit awkwardly, as she felt her beloved brother burned holes behind her back.

They just came back from their grandfather’s house. It’s almost midnight and though they could have stayed longer, there will be classes by tomorrow and so their aunt, uncle and otou-chan must already retire for the day. They’ve been silent on their way back and they knew their sister has been trying to avoid the discussion.

“Nee-chan,” Kohaku started. He knew his sister has been trying to avoid them for fear of what they might say regarding her earlier action. They could see beads of sweat form. Her pretentious lively countenance was immediately replaced by guilt and repentance. He heard her sigh.

“I’m sorry. Please forgive my action, it was really thoughtless of me.” She said as she faced her siblings.

Kohaku sighed, “I understand your reason nee-chan and had I the similar abilities, I would do the same for otou-chan.”

“That’s right and I know you will still do the same thing if not earlier. It can’t be helped. It’s a matter regarding otou-chan’s future.” Akira reassured.

“But it doesn’t change the fact that you’re in a dangerous situation now, nee-chan.” Kohaku continued, “I’m reminding you now that Rido-ojiisama is after you and otou-chan. You’d be powerless against him as you are now.” His worry evident despite his very severe tone.

“I know,” Anne answered dejectedly. Going to where their youngest siblings are. She flopped down on her back, Suiren perched her chin on her stomach and she proceeded to stroke her silky silver hair, “I didn’t realize that it will deplete me that much. I had to make sure that otou-chan and the child will be safe so I used more than what a normal dimensional spell would require. I couldn’t very much let otou-chan have a miscarriage and risk losing, well, me.” She added and had to frown at how strange it sounded to be worded like that. “It turned out I only had so much of my powers left. Gosh, I’m wiped, It only took three powerful spells to drain me.” She sighed again, the time spell really took much of her powers, it must have taken more than half of her monstrous strength. Not to mention, she’s been creating blood stones after blood stones so they’ll have enough to use to attend the Night class. Well, at least she has made enough, and she still has a few left that she made on and off during her regular time in the past for emergencies, in short for sneaking out and disguises.

“We must be careful now, nee-chan. With this, you’ll have a much slower regenerative ability as
your body will prioritize generating your powers back,” Kohaku reminded her again for good measure, “and that will take a long time,” he finished, mentally calculating the estimate amount time it will take for sister’s power, enough for the time spell, to come back based on her previous records.

“Seven to eight months,” Akira said out of the blue, “With nee-chan’s record and with that certain amount of power needed, it will take her about that long to generate enough for the time spell.” He said as he stare upwards, recalculating on top of his head just to make sure.

Suiren sharply looked up to her brother at that.

“Wah nee-chan, that’s very long,” Naoto, who was sprawled just beside her, sat up.

Anne could only sigh. She wouldn’t have minded staying for that long but she worried about her siblings and parents that were left behind. Well, her parents should already been aware, though she worried how they’re both taking it, so it’s really her siblings she’s worried about. “Yes, I’m sorry.” She repented.

The two twins looked at her for a while. They smiled in quiet resignation.

“Mah, mah, it’s okay nee-chan. With this I’m sure we’ll have lots of fun with young otou-chan and chichiue!” Suiren positively exclaimed.

“Umh, maybe, we’ll also see your birth!” Naoto also looked up at the positive side of their situation.

Akira clapped his hands at the idea, “Ah ha! That’s right! It will be the perfect opportunity to get our revenge on nee-chan!” he mischievously exclaimed.

“You will do no such thing,” Kohaku smacked his twin before shaking his head. There’s nothing they can do at this point anyway, and it’s possible that there’s still a role that they need to play in this time. He just hope that their parents are still alright even with their long absence. They worry about them.

Anne smiled at the encouragement, embracing the two silverettes besides her, “Thank you. Forgive this foolish nee-chan. Don’t worry, I’ll be careful.” She murmured on their soft silver tresses.

“Don’t worry nee-chan, we’ll be here.” Kohaku gallantly said.

“Uhm, we’ll protect you!” Suiren squeaked as she was crushed tighter in her sister’s embrace.

“There’re also otou-chan and chichiue!” Naoto reminded them.

“Though I’m sure that one glare from nee-chan would surely send all enemies to scamper away anyway,” Akira smirked as he teased generating a look from his older sister. “Yes, that’s the look! Freeze them with your stare nee-chan, oh our ice princess!”

Her scowl turned to restrained chuckles as she regarded her brother with warm affection. She’s really lucky to have such kind and understanding siblings in them. Really, what would she do without them?

“Just remember to stay close to us, nee-chan. We’ll handle protecting you, Sui-chan and Nao,” Kohaku interrupted.

“Hai! Haku-niichan!” Anne answered in a playful and teasing tone. She smiled as Kohaku shook his head, Akira just smirked while the youngest silverettes snuggled closer to her.
A sudden smile graced the lips of the pureblood king which made Zero frown in question.

They just came back from his guardian’s house and though he does have classes in the morning, Kaname insisted that he comes back with them so he can drink some blood and though he insisted not being thirsty, his mate was kind enough to forcefully remind him the doctor’s orders of daily intake of blood as well as normal food and so the silverette can only grudgingly agree.

They went to his room right after bidding their children a good night, though Kaname still strained his hearing to know what their conversation will be about. He smiled at the closeness of their children. They clearly grew up in a warm and affectionate family to have such strong bonds and relationship. He’s happy. It’s everything he wished for his offspring to have; a loving family.

He looked at his lover who’s leaning with his back and hips against his work table, his hunter’s long arms folded in front of his chest, his enchanting silver-violet eyes looking down at him inquiringly with a quizzical eye brow arching up to complete a soft frown. He smiled at his extremely adorable lover.

“It’s nothing.” He answered which didn’t really convince his silverette though he was not pressed for more; perhaps Zero knew that he’ll not give any other answer.

“Fine, whatever.” He straightened up, “Let me drain you already so I can go back. I have classes tomorrow and because of Anne, I’ll not be able to avoid midterms,” He sighed. He’s not bad at it but he’s also not fond of examinations. It’s a fucking pain in the ass.

“Ah, yes. How regrettable,” Kaname agreed as he sighed.

Zero frowned at his pureblood, “Why? Weren’t you also troubled by it?”

“Yes, certainly. And while I’m glad that your pregnancy,” He smiled as his silverette blushed reflexively, “will not affect your studies, I’m saddened by the fact that I’ll not see you round with my child.”

This made the hunter sharply turn to his vampire.

“Why? Do you want to see me fat?” Zero asked, arching an eyebrow, honestly baffled at Kaname’s preferences.

The brunette only chuckled before suddenly taking his hunter’s arm to pull him near. It caught the silverette by surprise as he was positioned to sit on his pureblood’s lap. Zero grabbed his vampire’s shoulder to balance himself, Kaname immediately wrapped his arms around his hips and waist while he leaned a bit to whisper in his ear. “It’s tempting, you know, to see you heavy with my child,” he lowered further, his lips so near to the pale skin of his hunter’s neck, kissing it before continuing his ardent confession. “The thought that I can declare to the world that it’s my child you carry, that it was me who filled you, that it was I who made you that way and the unchanging fact that you belong to me seduces me to the point that I’m delirious.” he arrived at the base of his lover’s neck which he proceeded to suck until it reddened, generating a shiver from his adorable silverette, as if to further provide evidence to his next words, “You are mine and I simply want everyone to know that.”
The silverette could feel his face burn at Kaname’s declaration. He’s speechless and unable to form any smart retort against his possessive mate. He could only tighten his hold on his shoulders as the brunette continued with his sweet violation on his neck making him tremble as his heart went wild. “Kaname,” he managed to groan through gritted teeth, “I’m still sore.” He can’t help but blurt out as his pureblood threatened to snatch and throw him again in a hot and amorous cataclysm.

Kaname chuckled against his lover’s flushed skin, now decorated with a new passion bite, “I know, I was just saying.” He inhaled deeply, taking in his lover’s intoxicating scent before giving his skin one last suction and kiss, “Don’t worry, I can wait until tomorrow.”

“Geez you, have some restraint why don’t you?” Zero grumbled, trying to hide his awkwardness by snapping at the brunette, trying not to focus on how he’s still nicely arranged in Kaname’s lap and embrace. “You’re fucking merciless. My freaking body won’t be able to take it,”

“My, is that a plea I’m hearing?” Kaname teased, finding great enjoyment at his lover’s embarrassment, “Why don’t you try saying please?”

“I’ll fucking shoot you, you bastard.” the silverette countered as he gave his vampire a look which was supposed to be intimidating had it not been for the flush across his face and neck.

The brunette only chuckled before directing his lover’s lips right above his neck so he can be fed, arching his head to give him better access, “My, how frightening.” He said as he heard his hunter grunt, feeling a pleasantly wet tongue lick the base of his neck before slender fangs pierced his skin making him sigh in pleasure.

He hummed as he listened to his silverette drink his fill all the while, his hand rubbed comforting circles on his back while the other gently stroked his silver hair, basking in the delicious feel of his mate’s weight on him. He’d like it if they could stay like this for eternity.

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There were footsteps that resounded in the darkened hallway of the elegant and humongous mansion of the noble as Ichijou Asato made his way on one of the chambers underground where his lord and master currently resides while bidding his time as he planned and envision his favorite nephew’s demise all the while gathering his strength to patch up his broken body.

He opened one heavy oak door and he was greeted by the gruesome sight of several dead bodies of humans that littered the floor. The stench of rotting bodies and dried blood heavy in the air but he did his best not to show any of his disgust in the presence of his lordship.

“Rido-sama,” Ichiou greeted the pureblood as he bowed on one knee, knowing full well that he sensed him coming.

Rido didn’t immediately answer though he did look up from the neck of a once beautiful maiden’s neck that he’s been gnawing. Blood trickled from his chin, his body all bloodied from broken skin that still hasn’t quite healed and still generating and trying to fully cover his flesh and recover his gorgeous features. He pulled what was revived of his lips to an unmistakable smile. His fangs, his pride, flashed in the darkness as he began to question his servant, “What news?”

“They’ve gathered, my lord, in different places as you’ve predicted. We can expect multiple movements in all directions. It’s as you said.” Ichiou answered, his cold blue eyes trained on the
bloodstained carpet.

“Excellent. I knew they’ll move. One single phrase and they all gather like the flies that they are;” his cold and cruel sneer echoed in the room. “Spread it far and wide, make sure that not one vampire is ignorant about it.” He said before lowering down on his meal again, the squelching sound of his feeding filling the room once more.

“Certainly, my lord.” The blond acknowledge the order before closing the door to contain the little hell inside it once again.
“Ah, Ichiru!”

The silverette sitting quietly in a corner on one of the cafeteria chairs, silently having his meal while greatly wishing he’s not going to be noticed by anyone he knows specially his dearest, sharpest brother and clumsy adopted-sister who may or may not wield that dangerous weapon called women’s intuition, visibly tensed when he heard his name being called by the aforementioned adopted-sister. He didn’t look up nor answer. He stayed as he were, staring hard down his curry and not willing to meet anyone’s eyes even as said intruders to his solitude came to take a seat with him around his table.

“Where were you, Ichiru?” Yuki immediately asked once she seated herself in front of the younger silverette, “You didn’t attend the earlier classes. Were you following Zero in ditching?” she ignored the older Kiryū who turned to glare at her and instead continued to whine, “You both missed the details of our booth! Now, don’t even complain to me because it’s your fault for not being present.” She pouted then pursed her lips as if to stop herself from showing her smile at a reminder though they didn’t catch it.

“Shut up, Yuki,” Zero barked, coloring slightly. He didn’t wake up early enough as he was wrapped around the pleasing warmth of Kaname’s comforter and arms. After feeding him, the damn pureblood still insisted his sleeping in the Moon dorm, with promises of good behavior on his stupidly charming face which was miraculously kept though because of the comfortable warmth of the body adamantly pressed against him and arms that wound up persistently snaked tightly around him, he still managed to oversleep. Damn it. He woke up at the sound of the bell signaling the Day class’ break. He shook the thoughts out of his mind and instead focused on what the petite girl said, “What booth?” the hunter asked, frowning as he took a bite of his bread, pacified by the sweet and sour taste of the strawberry jam.

“For the cultural festival, of course.” Yuki explained as she arched an eye brow, a crease appearing on her forehead.

“… huh? It’s already time for the preparation?” the older silverette muttered more to himself as he took another bite, confused at how he didn’t know about it.

The young brunette looked incredulously at her brother, “Geez Zero, how enthralled were you at Kaname-senpai not to even notice?” She teased, albeit still a bit exasperated, generating a glower from the hunter.

He chose to ignore the smirking Yuki to give his attention to his twin brother who he didn’t notice was avoiding his gaze, to ask where he’d been and the reason for his tardiness instead, “Why were you late, Ichiru?” He looked at his brother and had to frown at the flush covering his normally pale skin, “Hey, you okay? You look… feverish… hey, Ichiru?” he nudged his twin beside him when he didn’t answer.

Ichiru stiffened even more. He didn’t trust himself to speak to try and fool his brother and sister because for sure, with the help of his non-existent acting skills, he’ll be found out. Oh God, kami-sama, Buddha, Amun-Ra, anyone, please help me! He really didn’t know how he can get away from the situation without exposing himself. But since no celestial being came down to help him even after a minute of silent prayers, he just let his siblings fuss and make a conclusion on their own.

“Hey Ichiru, are you feeling bad? You look ready to explode.” Yuki said with an obvious tone of
concern, all glee at teasing the hunter suddenly forgotten.

He nodded, still not speaking, convincing himself that it’s not exactly a lie as his body is really aching and the thought of the reason behind that made him blush even deeper which generated a panicked response from his brother.

“Ichiru!” Zero stood to feel his brother’s forehead and felt him burning up a little, “You have a fever, come with me.”

“Eh?” the younger silverette looked up then, also surprised that he’s really having a slight fever. So that’s why his body felt heavy, he thought it’s something to do with last night. He quietly thanked his lucky stars that are apparently still silently present even after their long absence. He followed clumsily, his hips killing him, as his twin dragged him to the clinic.

“Why did you even come here if you’re feeling bad? Geez you, really,” Zero scolded him as he led the way to the school clinic.

Ichiru didn’t answer, focused on looking ill which wasn’t hard because he really felt a bit dizzy as his brother dragged him in a pace that’s too fast for a fragile human with legs ready to give up under him. Geez, his brother, after being a vampire for years, he already forgot the normal speed ordinary humans considered slow.

They arrived at the clinic. Zero violently threw the door open which startled the poor old nurse. He was instantly pushed down on one of the beds, his temperature taken, a cooling pad immediately plastered on his forehead and was given some medicine to drink as the nurse knew him very well. He’s been a frequent visitor here which is why he’s very close with the good natured nurse enough that they call each other by their first name.

“Ichiru-kun, what happened this time?” Yamashita Hotaru, the old nurse asked him as she looked at his temperature that’s indeed slightly higher than normal.

“Just exhausted, Hotaru-san,” he answered, giving her a sweet smile, his blush deepening though because of guilt this time. He closed his eyes. He wanted to catch some sleep as he still lacked some because of the night before and to also successfully avoid a would-be awkward confrontation with his siblings. It’s like killing two birds with one stone. He heard Hotaru-san talked to his brother to let him rest. He smiled; the nurse was one of the few who weren’t scared of his brother because she knew of his kindness as he’s the one who always accompanies him here. She knew of how close they are and even found it sweet and charming making her dote on both of them.

When the curtain around his bed was drawn to give him privacy to sleep, he allowed himself to open his eyes as he was taken back to the happenings of the night before. Really, he thought he’s going to die because of both nervousness and excitement.

…..

He let him lead the way through the dark forest, his hand holding his tightly, with only the moonlight to illuminate their path. By the time they reached the clearing, near the Academy gates, Ichiru’s chest was already heaving as the blond vampire almost dragged him in a most unforgiving pace that his lungs certainly didn’t appreciate and coupled with his own frenzy emotion, it caused his heart to over speed.

He squinted his eyes unseeingly through the darkness, his lilac orbs were a bit unfocused as exhaustion attacked his system. He crouched, his free hand on his knee, as he panted hard. His fast, deep, steady breaths penetrated the otherwise silent surroundings with a few strands of his silver hair
clinging on his sweat laden temple and forehead. He could feel his lover tensed through their intertwined hands.

“Are you alright, Ichiru?” Hanabusa asked almost frantically. He didn’t realize he was going too fast as elation and excitement made him unmindful of his speed and quite forgetting his silverette’s frailty. “I’m sorry.” He added as he extended a hand to rub gently on his back.

Ichiru only gave him a look, not yet able to snap a retort to the overzealous blond though the worry and concern he saw etched on his handsome face made him forgive the over-enthusiastic little devil almost immediately. So he nodded instead and after a few more minutes, he was able to stand upright and clearly look at his surrounding once more. It’s only then that he noticed the grand black car just a few feet away from them, almost indistinguishable as the darkness of the night carefully hid its body. He wouldn’t have noticed it completely had the light of the moon didn’t shine and reflect on the metallic exterior.

Silver-lavender orbs quickly flew to the dazzling blond beside him, blatant inquiry obvious through the soft frown decorating his pale face which was answered by a proud and smug smirk on a handsome face and with a mischievous twinkle inside the blue sapphires of the young Adonis, it painted the most enticing sight of a fallen angel. The silver prefect inwardly sighed. The world does take its favorites.

He vaguely heard his lover muttered something that could have been ‘come on’ and while he was internally lamenting the unfairness of the universe, he was further led nearer the parked vehicle. When they were standing right beside the driver’s side, the vampire fished out a small remote looking thing with his free hand and forcefully handed it to the stunned silverette, who can already tell what the black car is for but not quite believing it, with a giant smile plastered on his face.

“Happy birthday, Ichiru,” he greeted again, grinning at the flabbergasted sight of his lover, glee evident in his voice. He has long specially ordered the foreign car for the silverette and has been wanting to give it but wasn’t able to without betraying his feelings when he thought it would forever remain unrequited. And even when he could right now without any problem, he worried about Ichiru’s reaction. Knowing his personality, he’d refuse it without a second thought and so he bought him another simple present (as all his pre-arranged intended gifts were too luxurious as per his most trusted cousin’s advice) but after getting a whiff of what their pureblood leader gave to the hunter for today and then what the royal children gave Ichiru, he can’t possibly allow himself to give a rather ordinary gift. And seeing his reaction, it was well-worth it that he’s itching to just give his entire fortune to him so he can keep seeing this adorable expression.

The wide-eyed prefect looked at his lover for a very long time before finally turning to the behemoth of a car beside him. He looked back at the vampire, now positively radiating with happiness. He shook his head, “I… I c-can’t,” he stammered.

The blond vampire gave him a look before slightly turning his head in a playful imitation of stubbornness, “No can do. No take backs.”

“Hana, I can’t. It’s too much!” Ichiru exclaimed desperately.

“It’s not,” the noble replied in a matter-of-fact tone, “your brother received an estate from Kaname-sama, compared to that, this is simpler.” He explained, pushing his advantage to have his silverette accept it, “Come on. I really want you to have it. Accept it, please?” He even added while putting in a look of utter sincerity and no small amount of adorable, pitiable pleading expression which he reserves when he really wants to get his way. Desperate times calls for desperate measure.

Oh shit, not that look. “But,” he tried to reason though he felt himself waver in the face of angelic
It’s okay, it’s okay,” he brightly assured. He knew he already won against his beloved and so even before another hesitating reply was made; he snatched the hand holding the key to press, using Ichiru’s thumb, the button that would automatically unlock the door and immediately herded the silverette inside. Afterwards, he went to the other side to settle himself in the passenger’s seat.

The younger Kiryū found himself surrounded by the cool and modern interior. He looked forward to the dashboard housing the sleek steering wheel, different meters which he honestly can’t tell measures what, several apparatus, buttons, a monitor and other whatnot that he can’t name. It’s so grand that even though he’s not familiar with cars as he’s not that interested with it, he could still tell that it’s one finely made and expensive type of vehicle. It intimidated him.

And the fact that he can’t drive only intensified his distress.

He turned to the vampire seated beside him, already wearing an expectant look for him to start and perhaps take them somewhere for a spin, clearly not knowing that he’s only asking for their demise via road accident. It vexed him to be the one to burst his bubble.

“Err… Hana… I can’t drive…” he started in a small voice, “and anyway, I’m not allowed. I don’t have a license…”

There was a short and awkward silence that ensued as the blond noble blinked at him.

“EH? Why?” Hanabusa was finally able to ask. He knew that his genius mind made driving for him as easy as breathing, he learned it only within hours, but it’s really not that hard of a feat and why didn’t he just apply for a license?

Ichiru frowned at his clueless expression, “Because you have to be at least eighteen to get a driver’s license…” How can he not know that?

The silverette watched with apprehension as realization and mortification flash across aquamarine orbs. It was followed by a series of groans, flailing and some body swaying. He watched with a bit of amusement and pity as his lover held and scratched his golden head restlessly.

Oh fuck! Shit! He forgot about that! He grimaced. It has completely escaped him as aristocrats and, of course, purebloods, all over the world can get their license as early as sixteen regardless of the law in their country. He groaned again. What an epic failure. He wanted to die as he slumped his head on the dashboard. How mortifying. How could he even forget that tiny little detail? It burned tears of humiliation and shame in his eyes. He wanted the Earth to open up and swallow him. He can’t even find the strength to look at his, no doubt troubled, silverette.

There was a soft smile that graced the prefect’s lips, although inappropriate in the face of the depression in front him, he just can’t help but be happy that his vampire thought so much about something as simple as his birthday present. That he’ll put it in such high regard touched him so much so that he can’t help but chuckle, this strengthened the desire to rescue his lover from despair and self-hate.

“It’s okay, Hana. I really like it. It also looks, uhm, new and… sturdy so I think it could wait for a year more, right? Or we could let the chairman use it to drive us or something. I really think this baby could still wait for me so cheer up, ‘kay?” Ichiru offered in a most upbeat and lively voice, meaning every word he said.

“Umh, it will hold. It’s an armored vehicle,” Hanabusa emerged from his hiding place to face his
gentle silverette to grant him a smile, though still pained, feeling even worst that he’s being comforted on his birthday. God, that’s so messed up! “It’s bullet proof and can withstand chemical attacks. But still, don’t deliberately drive it straight into the water… or ocean… or concrete…” he added a bit sullenly.

“Hana. I’m clumsy, not suicidal.” He arched his eyebrow but still unoffended. Feeling too happy to be annoyed, he could probably forgive anything right now, even the chairman’s ridiculous ramblings.

This successfully generated a laugh, though brief, from the still dejected blond. He felt his lover reach out for him and his hand was enveloped by the warmth of Ichiru’s hold. He returned his smile though he’s still unsatisfied with the outcome. He was thinking on how to make up for this stupid mistake when his gaze fell on their intertwined hands. Then he remembered the gift he was supposed to give him instead. It’s the simplest of all the presents he prepared but it does hold much meaning as to why he chose it. He used his free hand to feel all his pockets, not quite remembering where he put it.

Ichiru watched as hope and determination replaced the despondent expression of his beloved as he search for something in his person and he later fished out a small dark blue box. He peered curiously as Hana opened the box to reveal two halves of what appear to be a circular, or perhaps an oval, white metallic bracelet and a small tool that seems to be a screw driver nicely cushioned inside. He dazedly watched with interest as his vampire went to work to attach the two metallic halves using the small screw driver around the wrist of his hand that he was holding.

After Hanabusa finished attaching the two ends of the bracelet, he looked at it for a while, greatly pleased at how well it turned out and how great it looks against his lover’s pale skin. It’s valuable but not ostentatious, perfect for his humble prefect. The white gold as well as the lilac colored stones embedded (so that Ichiru didn’t notice there were stones entrenched to it) into the bracelet glimmered with the car’s light. He smiled as he stared at the stones, parted in equal spaces from one another, he could have put in diamonds or rubies instead but if he’s going to give something like a bracelet to Ichiru, it must be with these stones. He finally returned his gaze back to his lover; he was met by questioning lilac orbs.

“This is, err, another gift, you know. Treat it as an apology for this,” the vampire explained, pertaining to his stupid blunder.

“You don’t need to apologize for anything,” the prefect answered, his worry renewed, which was awarded by a grin from the noble.

“I thought you might like the stones,” he just said instead and watched as his lover examines the trinket, “Those are special fluorites. It turns light violet, like now, under incandescent lighting but it’s normally blue under the sun.” he smiled as a faint flush slowly fill the prefect’s pale cheeks while surprise, amazement and a bit of quiet disbelief light those stunning lilac eyes as if he can’t believe he would do something as sappy and sentimental as that. Ah, well, he’s mush when it comes to Ichiru. No doubt about that. He’s guilty as charged.

Ichiru didn’t say anything in response to that; instead he just avoided those grinning, fully restored, blue sapphires by scrutinizing the simple bracelet again. It’s quite heavy but really modest looking, cool and classy and despite the eight stones embedded around it, it didn’t look girly or extravagant but does speak of fine taste. He stared at the lilac colored fluorite, surprised at how such a thing exists, anticipating how it looks under the sunlight. He smiled. Yeah, he does like it, “Thanks,” he whispered.

He was still looking at the trinket, wondering about the shade of the stones under the sun when the
blond reached out to cup his cheek. He turned, a bit startled at the sudden gesture, only to stop at the captivating sight of his lover.

Hanabusa was now seated comfortably; leaning backwards, with his head slacked against the headrest, his blue eyes watching him as if entranced and a most alluring, almost lazy, smile on his lips.

It tempted him.

His heart immediately thrummed painfully in his chest as all the blood rushed to his face to paint him scarlet. He was so hypnotized that he can’t help but lean forward as if magnetized, when his vampire moved to him, knowing what he’s welcoming. He met his lips and he was instantly and completely lost in him.

The noble was mesmerized as he watched the innocent happiness manifested inside those silvery amethyst whilst looking at the simple gift. He loves how modest and pure Ichiru is. Kindhearted and amiable, fragile but strong, fierce and beautiful. All his qualities just make him completely crazy about him.

If there’s a pure, naïve and angelic succubus, that’ll be Ichiru.

He inwardly sighed.

He’s utterly bewitched.

Completely beguiled.

And helplessly captured.

And when he felt those sinfully sweet lips on his, soft like silk and intoxicating like the most potent drink, he closed his eyes to further concentrate in the delicious feel it gave him. The hand holding his lover’s cheek moved to tangle its fingers with silken silver threads and lock itself in the base of his tied hair. He could feel his heart wreaked havoc inside his chest as he angled his silverette’s head to finally explore the alluring heat of his mouth. He pulled him closer; his other hand snaking around his lover’s waist, the enchanting vanilla scent enveloped him, further drugging his senses.

He lost himself in the exquisite sensations of Ichiru returning his kiss that he delved his tongue deeper, his sweetness rapidly muddling his mind, sucking hungrily to further taste the ambrosial flavor. His prefect’s heavenly scent intensified as the heat suffused around them got even wilder and hotter. He let out a groan as he let his hand start its adamant exploration on his lover’s skin. He pushed his clothes upward to feel his burning skin, felt the hands holding on to his arm and clothes tightened, to rub maddening caresses.

Ichiru gasped against the mouth providing him such sweet torment when he felt the hand fondling him lovingly found one of his hard and taut nipples and gave it a light squeeze. It sent wonderful shivers down his spine and he can’t help but break the kiss to let out a breathless moan. He felt his lover took the liberty to nibble and suck the pliant flesh on his neck until it reddened. He was so distracted that he let out a surprised yelp, his hands frantically searched for Hanabusa’s shoulders for support, when he was completely snatched from his seat, over the low barricade that contains the clutch and other accessories he can’t name, by his inhumanely strong, incredibly impatient and highly aroused lover.

He only let go of his silverette’s velvety skin when he’s settling him on his lap, to look deep into his startled, darkened lilac orbs as he arrange himself snuggly between his thighs. He watched as Ichiru
blushed even deeper when he felt his arousal against his own. He smirked seductively at the innocent reaction.

They stayed like that for a moment, panting hard, as deep azure orbs asked for consent to darken amethysts as they both know where the hot encounter is heading to.

And when Ichiru closed his eyes to initiate a kiss as he gently cupped both his cheeks with slightly trembling hands, skin redder than ever, the vampire’s heart soared. He tightly wrapped his arms around his silverette as he desperately returned the chaste kiss, their bodies rocking delightfully against each other. He felt his lover clumsily unbutton his clothes, he smiled as he felt his trembling hands’ jerky movements. Afterwards, he proceeded to take off his prefect’s shirt over his head, momentarily breaking their fiery kiss, before moving to unbuckle Ichiru’s pants.

He’s going to die.

He’s seriously going to die. He’s even surprised that he still didn’t suffer cardiac arrest with how fast his heart is beating by now as he felt himself get slowly stripped by nimble hands desirous in feeling his naked body. When the last article was removed, he knew he must be flushed from the root of his hair down to his toes, he was again arranged on his lover’s lap.

His silver-lavender orbs gazed at the noble wearing that irresistible smirk, still elegant and with his shirt completely unbuttoned to reveal a lean and sinewy body, he’s even more sinfully attractive. Damn it. He wanted to cover his pathetic gaunt skin-covered-bones; it can’t possibly be called a body. He flung a conscious arm in an attempt to awkwardly cover himself but was immediately arrested by the blond who leaned forward to whisper huskily against his mouth.

“Don’t do that, Ichiru. You’re beautiful.”

It was all he heard before full, delectable lips covered his pliant ones once again. He sighed as he closed his eyes, unable to believe that someone so wonderful could actually revere him so much. He could feel Hanabusa’s overwhelming affection through the eager and ardent violation of his mouth. He grasped a handful of his golden tresses and tightened his hold on his shoulder as he got swept away by the fierce need and desire to fill himself with everything that is Hanabusa.

The noble travelled his hands to memorize every curves of his silverette. Ichiru is indeed thin but no less beautiful. The Kendo practices also afforded him with a bit of muscle here and there and, though he’s still skinny, his body has a delicate fine shape. He lovingly caressed his smooth skin, pleasantly sweaty from the heat, until he found the hard, flushed length of his little silverette.

It broke their kiss as Ichiru escaped to let out a loud moan when he started to stroke it. He watched with fascination at the evident pleasure reflected in his lover’s expression and drank the music of his dulcet cries. He drowned him with kisses, on his jaw, cheek, to his temple then ear. He only stopped the sweet torture when he felt Ichiru’s desperate nudges and heard him call his name, almost pleadingly. He smiled in understanding and promptly let go of his erection, now sticky with the steady flow of pre-cum, to prepare his lover for his entrance.

He pushed his silverette on his knees before he shoved one finger, slicked with pre-cum, inside his small aperture. He caught his breath as he felt how tight and warm it is inside. Ichiru cried sharply, his body tensed as his eyes widened in pain whilst he continued to stroke the digit in and out of his heat.

“Shhh…” he cooed, rubbing comforting circles on his silverette’s hip with his free hand. “I’ll take care of you,” he awarded his lover with an intense kiss and trapped another sharp cry when he added a second finger. His free hand supported the trembling prefect and he further deepened the kiss as a
distraction when he scissor inside to further widen the insides. He curved the long digits eliciting a moan from the silverette which he caught with his lips. He thoroughly massaged his lover’s opening before finally adding a third finger when he’s sure it will hurt less which was awarded by a whimper from his lover. He let a moment pass while he decadently devoured Ichiru’s heavenly supple lips to let him get used to the pain as he opened him up.

Ichiru broke the enticing kiss, “H-Hana, I c-can’t anymore,” he breathed out the words, “my k-knees are about to give up.” He finished while panting a bit.

The vampire chuckled at the adorably naïve and honest declaration. He conceded and took out his fingers. The silverette immediately sagged in his arms and leaned forward to rest his head and gasped for air on his shoulder while he freed his own arousal. Hanabusa kissed his lover’s cheek. It made him turn and look in to his eyes as he gripped his hips to gently guide and ease him down his hard length.

The silverette caught his breath once again, the tears that formed earlier finally trickled down his cheek, his nails digging into Hanabusa’s shoulder, and though he has been prepared for it, the thick pressure of his vampire’s arousal still hurts like hell. He buckled, letting out a sharp cry as his lover’s cooed and comfort him. He could feel little kisses rain down on his face, licking his tears, and hear the calming husky voice whispering ‘I love you’ repeatedly in his ears. It drowned him and soon he was fully seated on his lover. Twin moans filled the small space of the car and he shivered as he felt too full, emotionally and quite literally, inside. He panted, feeling the point of their union throb, giving him an odd but pleasant sensation.

Hanabusa breathed deeply in to his neck, the intoxicating vanilla scent burned quite a painful thirst in the back of his throat, and he exercised a great deal of self-control not to let his foremost instinct as a vampire which is to mark and sample his lover’s blood get the better of him. Instead, he concentrated in the feel of Ichiru hot and soft around him. He sighed. He nibbled on his neck and shoulder, kissing and sucking passionately, while he waited for him to get use to his size, enveloping his adorable lover with the warmth of his embrace.

When he felt Ichiru relax in his arm, he looked in to his alluring amethysts orbs before briefly kissing his luscious mouth and slowly lifting him through his length only to pull him back in a fierce lunge. They both threw their heads backwards, loud moans filled the air with the soft jiggles of Ichiru’s hair tie’s bell, as they were attacked by fierce pleasure with a hint of pain and a raging desire for more budding inside.

The silver prefect went wild as the vampire set out a vicious pace. He could feel a fire burn gloriously deep inside him with each smooth withdrawal and immediate thrust. The intense discomfort completely ebbed away and replaced by the addicting pleasurable ache with each lunge. It rapidly enthralled and enticed him that he sometimes pulled himself up only to sink back in if the noble still hasn’t recovered.

Ichiru rested his forehead on his lover’s. He’s completely enamored with his vampire’s stunningly adorable and alluring expression of evident enjoyment and bliss, with his lips slightly parted as he panted heavily, his skin flushed and sweaty, his disheveled golden hair clinging to his temple, and his gorgeous darkened blue eyes displaying a beautiful mix of love and lust. There’s a sense of weakness as well as hunger in his expression that completely seduced him. That, with Hanabusa’s own cries of pleasure is enough to satisfy him. It’s extremely unbelievable how someone so perfect could love and desire him this much.

He let out a lewd breathless whimper as he closed his eyes and he arched his back when he felt Hana brushed a certain area inside him in one of his thrusts. His vampire caught it, knew it to be his most
sensitive area, and he didn’t waste any time to attack the pleasure zone repeatedly, eliciting loud moans from them both, Ichiru especially. He then felt as his lover pulled his hair tie, freeing his silver hair, damp from sweat. He opened his eyes when he heard the soft clang and ring of the bell when it hit the car floor and he was greeted by the sexy picture of Hanabusa leaning towards him with a hypnotizing gaze and enchanting smile. He was surprised when he held a few strands of his longish silver hair to lovingly kiss it.

“You’re perfect,” he whispered, almost out of breath with tone heavy and deep with pleasure and exhilaration at finally being able to claim his precious treasure, “I love you,” he breathed almost voicelessly.

He pulled his startled mate into a fiery kiss to relieve even just a bit of his burning craving though it only fanned the flames of desire deep within him.

He’s lost at how anyone could ever even think of anything unsightly towards this lovely and dazzling creature. He couldn’t see any flaw as even his sickly nature and clumsiness only adds to make him so unbearably adorable that he might just crush and suffocate him in his tight possessive grasp.

How are you so perfect?
How could you be so beautiful?
How could anyone not love you?

They must be blind. He’s extremely lucky. And while he pitied those fools who’s missing out the entire world, he’s not about to let go of this hand no matter what.

He guided Ichiru by helping him lift himself up and to slam eagerly down. His other hand found his lover’s dripping shaft to fondle and stroke it, trapping their groans of pleasure in his mouth.

They continued with their ardent tasks of loving each other with the heat burning their sweat covered bodies until they reached the peak of ardor. He opened his silver-lavender eyes to find equally half-masted cerulean orbs gazing back at him, they broke their kiss but their lips still hovered each other’s, moaning as they climaxed and spill into one another, both breathless and spent but clearly blissfully content and satisfied.

Hanabusa held his exhausted lover in his arms while they even out their breaths. He rubbed comforting circles on his back while his other hand tangled its fingers with silky silver threads. He hummed as he smelled his lovely fragrance and had to marvel how anyone could smell so innocently sweet and seductively beguiling at the same time when he felt Ichiru’s deep steady breaths on his pulse. He looked at him to find a peacefully slumbering silverette. He chuckled.

I guess it’s too much to ask for a second round then. Well, he must be too tired.

So he only kissed his temple and forehead while softly whispering, “Happy Birthday, Ichiru.”

And Ichiru answered by snuggling closer to him.

…..

He groggily woke up though he kept his eyes close, not knowing when he actually fell asleep, after feeling another presence just on his bedside. He felt a cool hand on his still feverish skin, gently cupping his cheek.

“Ichiru,”
His eyes fluttered open to train his sleepy silver-lavender orbs on the angelic blond currently looking at him with concern in his lovely blue eyes. He dazedly watched as his lover sat beside him on the clinic bed, a frown gracing the features of the young Adonis, “How are you feeling?”

“I’m fine.” He mumbled weakly as he snuggled closer to the palm holding his cheek, relaxing as the pleasant cool spread on his burning skin.

He smiled as he heard his beloved chuckle and watched as Hanabusa seemingly touched the already warm plaster on his forehead and feel it slowly cool again.

“You never ceases to worry me,” the blond gently scold his lover. After waking up in extremely high spirits and eating his breakfast with such energy and animation which was at par with their vice-president’s, annoying pretty much everyone, even his most trustworthy cousin who could only shake his head in exasperation, he immediately set out to look for his charge and do his undertaking very willingly. He wondered how well Ichiru slept after he cleaned him and tucked him on his bed when his happy wondering bubble was instantly punctured by the female prefect who gave him the alarming news of his illness. While he was a bit relieved that it’s only a fever and not one of his asthma episodes, he was still worried knowing that he might have caused it. He knew he didn’t exactly hold back in loving him. He blush at the thought, and to be honest, the idea of being gentle completely flew out of his genius mind. “How’s your body?”

Ichiru’s eyes widen at the question. His lilac orbs immediately surveyed their surroundings and tried to use his faint hunter senses to make sure that his brother and Hotaru-san are not around. He almost sighed in relief when he was able to make sure that they’re alone, “F-fine,” he stammered, embarrassment further deepening his flush. Argh, he’s going to have a permanent blush if this continues.

The vampire smiled tenderly at the endearing picture of his silverette fast turning scarlet. How adorable. He wanted to tease him more but he’s afraid that Ichiru will hyperventilate if harassed even further, so he swallowed his mischievousness and reserved it for another occasion, “But really now, you’re like a child. Catching a fever right after you’ve found out you’re in love.” He can’t help but laugh at the prefect who looks like he was affronted.

“Shut up,” he sulkily turned his head away, feeling a bit offended. Well excuse me for being such a child. “It’s just that I wasn’t able to sleep well the last few days,” he defended.

“Of course, I won’t blame you. When you have the heavenly me to think about, you’ll surely lose sleep,” he agreed, chortling at the look of exasperation from his lover.

Really! This… this… this hatefully charming vampire! He really can’t say that he’s wrong because that’s exactly right, but must he say it like that? And right to his face as well! Ichiru was full of frustration as he can’t seem to find any retort at all but all his irk was immediately banished by the blonde’s next words.

“I do understand as I myself had many sleepless mornings thinking about you,” he placed his forehead on top of Ichiru’s as he confessed in a sincere tone which made the silverette speechless. Hanabusa stayed like that, leaning and covering half of his prefect’s body as he stared with fascination deep in his lilac orbs as it became bare to show Ichiru’s overflowing feelings. “Ichiru?” he straightened himself, alarmed when he felt his lover’s rising temperature and realize just how fast his heart beat was.

Ichiru groaned, holding up his arm to cover his eyes, both in embarrassment at his vampire’s declaration and humiliation at his own reflexive reaction. But more than anything, he knew he’s happy. So happy that he’s about to die.
God, he’s such a girl.

Why must he swoon every freaking time? He knew he won’t be able to stop falling even deeper from now on but must he unconsciously show it every fucking time and give ammunition to this narcissistic bastard who just knew exactly how to tease and tick him off while using his devilishly perfect charm resulting to his surrender every time? God, he’s so wiped. He’s crazy. Damn it!

The silverette was internally planning his own painful murder orchestrated by his pathetic self when he heard his lover’s concerned inquiries about his health. He peeked at his vampire from under his arm and he had to smile at the look of panic swimming in his blue orbs. Ah! He gives up. He’s been lost in him since long ago and he knew it’s too late for him anyway. He sighed in resignation as he turned to give assurances to the frowning vampire who already took out his phone to call the best paramedics from the biggest hospital he knows, a look of utter seriousness in his face.

He chuckled.

Well, at least he’s not the only crazy one here.

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There was a sighting of a very flustered prefect in the hallway. Her scarlet colored face was full of mixed emotions; there was embarrassment, guilt, giddy excitement, thrill, playfulness and pure pleasant happiness in her new discovery. Her back on the closed door of the academy’s clinic and her hands covering her lips that formed a giant grin are trembling in elation at what she overheard.

‘Oh gosh,’ she mused, ‘Ichiru, you’re a man now!’ she giggled.

She felt guilty for eavesdropping but she really didn’t mean to as she only went there to innocently inquire about her dear beloved brother and to tell him what he missed further in their homeroom for their upcoming cultural festival activity because Zero was again missing in action, no doubt trying to escape the crazy Day class students.

She frowned when she remembered the frenzy reaction of their female classmates when she and Zero returned to their classroom after lunch break. She was surprised when they instantly surrounded the silverette, violently kicking her aside, as they all try to get his measurements while they fought with each other for the privilege of doing the task. While she was amused to see the horrified expression of Zero as their female classmates shout and yell at each other (drowning the silverette’s own bark of threats), tugging on his uniform and almost ripping the poor fabric to pieces as multiple hands try to snag him which managed to frighten the hunter enough to run away (as it was the first time that his glower was ignored), she was completely baffled at the sudden turn of events.

When they finally decided what their booth will be and each student’s role, she was already resigned to be tasked the duty to get the grumpy silverette’s and scary-when-angered-though-normally-sweet brother’s measurements which she was not too keen to do as it would mean explaining what they’ll be doing which will surely end in her bloody murder. She grimaced, *Oh dear.* She just remembered that she still hasn’t informed her brothers. *Shimata.* It will not be a pretty sight. They’ll surely shred her innocent bones to ribbons and dance on her grave afterwards.

She swallowed then she shook her head. Why must she suffer like this?! It’s not even her idea! And she didn’t even vote! Granted that she also wasn’t able to voice any objection on behalf of her dear
siblings as she was busy joyfully running after a certain green-eyed blond in la-la land while drowning in her own drool, still, she felt indignant. Why must she put her life on the line?

Then it struck her.

She actually didn’t need to risk her life; she only need to stay quiet about the whole thing. Once the class started the preparation, the two silverettes will definitely be informed, one way or another, of the horrifying facts. What she needs to do is just fly away and stay clear from their path until their rage has calmed down.

And come on, it’s their own fault. Who told them to be immersed in their own problems right when they made the announcement for the preparations to start? Or to skip classes while they’re still deciding what to do on the festival? That’s just clearly asking to get all the troublesome parts. She nodded, folding her arms in front of her chest, successfully clearing her mind of all guilt.

She’ll wash her hands off of these dangerous ordeals.

Yup.

It’s not like she’s also looking forward to it. *Nope.*

And she’s definitely not feeling excited at the looks of her brothers during the festival. *Nu-uh.*

Of course, she doesn’t find all of these to be amusing. *No siree.*

She’s not even thinking of actually telling Kaname-senpai and Aido-senpai just so they can come and look as well. *Absolutely not.*

She stopped and shorted, her hands covering her lips again as she broke in a fits of giggles.

Oh hell, who is she kidding?

It’s going to be a huge, unforgettable and incredibly hilarious moment! Oh, she can’t wait to see the look of terror in her brothers’ eyes. It’s undeniably going to be so much fun!

She hugged herself as she tried to rein her glee and get a hold of her normalcy. After a few more snorts of laughter, she continued to walk away from the clinic’s door. It will not be good if she’s caught eavesdropping but then again, she was innocent. Right, what happened is that she *accidentally overheard* their intimate conversation. Yup!

She smiled as she remembered her dear brother’s lover’s words. How sweet Aido-senpai was. She never expected such adorable confession from the vampire who she watched for a long time as he glare and bicker with Zero and flirt with his fans. Oh how lovely! She mused as she touched her cheek in a wistful manner.

Oh if only…

Her musings was suddenly cut as she heard a growl right behind her. She stiffened, her hands immediately darting to snatch Artemis from the thigh rig under her skirt. She equipped herself with her rod as she jumped away from the sound and immediately assuming battle posture. Her heart beat wildly as fear clouded her mind, contemplating if it’s an actual attack or her sanity playing with her again. She’s frightened because she didn’t know. Either case is bad enough to cause her to shake uncontrollably.

“Ichijou-senpai, Ichijou-senpai, Ichijou-senpai,” she chanted breathlessly while her eyes darted at her
surroundings, tears slowly building, as she reminded herself of her anchor. When she saw nothing, a tear escaped from her, because of her fear of slowly creeping into insanity slowly being realized. She’s really going mad. *Oh God, someone, someone please!*

But her despair was immediately cut by the presence that suddenly glared at her. She turned around to strike the assailant behind her; her vision was completely obscured by blood making her movements frantic and terror overcoming her senses. In her moment of her frenzy panic, she didn’t realize multiple presences and she let out a scream when both Artemis and her movements were arrested. She would have resisted had it not for the familiar scent of her beloved finally jarring her out of her hysteria.

She looked up over her shoulder to find very welcomed emerald green eyes so full of overwhelming worry and concern. She let out a sob as she fully turned to the blond vampire restraining her from behind to hug him; Artemis fell with loud clang on the floor. His embrace was the perfect embodiment of her salvation and his scent; her redemption. Her relief opened a dam of distress and fright, evolving her sobs into heart-wrenching cries. Her focus was so arrested by the noble that even though she can now identify the other presence with them which belonged to her dearest hero, she made no move to face him but instead continued to cling desperately to the blond aristocrat.

Kaname watched with worry as Takuma made calming sounds and rub a comforting hand on his unknowing, beloved sister’s back. He knew it. Her nightmares were starting and soon, it will be terrifying enough to break her permanently. He needs to free her memories, the sooner the better. The king observed the two again, feeling satisfaction at the look of pure affection and reverence in the eyes of his most trusted confidant. If it’s Takuma, he knows that his sister is in good hands and he can already see that the blond would love and honor her as his one and only. There is no doubt of her happiness if it’s in the arms of this man who’s so obviously devoted to her already. If only he knew, then he would have let Takuma in one of his greatest secrets. He could only hope that the truth about Yuki will not shatter the understanding they so clearly share.

They both waited for the frightened prefect to regain her calm. Ichijou looked at Kaname from time to time to make sure his hand, which he used to stop Artemis, is healed already. When her cries turned to sobs and was finally diminished to mere sniffs, she finally let go of the blond. Her huge sienna eyes, red from crying, apologized for her silly and unexplained actions which were returned by kind and understanding smiles from the two vampires.

“Are you feeling much better now, Yuki-chan?” Takuma asked, still worried.

Yuki can only nod as she grace him with a smile, albeit quivering, before turning to the pureblood king to verbally apologize as she just realized that the one who stopped her rod was undoubtedly Kaname-senpai which would mean that she just burned him really badly though she’s relieved to see that there are no more wounds. *Must have healed already,* she mused. She was just about to open her mouth when the pureblood spoke.

“Yuki, there’s something I must tell you.” Kaname began in a serious tone which made the other two looked at each other in half-confusion and worry as there was a sense of foreboding in his voice, “This is extremely important. Is it alright if I invite you to the Moon dormitory later this evening?” he smiled at her, his tone turned gentler to ease her though his eyes were still humorless.

She was taken aback at the seriousness she can see reflected in her savior’s eyes unconsciously telling her that an enormous secret is about to be unfold and that would mean a great change is about to take place. She somehow knew that her life is about to take a different turn. Her gaze travelled to the blond noble beside her. She can see a deep crease on his forehead as he’s definitely attacked by the same confusion and conclusion as she did. She didn’t know why but she became a bit afraid for
reasons unknown. Is it because of the look of uncertainty in the blonde’s expression? But before she could even determine it, the pureblood king spoke again.

“Trust me, Yuki. You’ll understand everything soon,” he coaxed; they can’t afford to dally anymore.

The hint of anxiety behind the pureblood’s voice forcefully generated a nod from the prefect as she watched the blond vampire at the corner of her eyes. She doesn’t know what she’ll find out but she greatly hope that it will not shatter anything she holds dear now.

Especially now.

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He opened his sleepy lilac eyes when he felt his pureblood mate near and heard the soft crunch of dried leaves outside the stables where he took refuge when the shocking storm that is the Day class students threatened to flatten and suffocate him. He was extremely appalled that his warnings and glares did not only go unnoticed and deliberately ignored, it was also rendered ineffective at driving them away. It was the first time it had happened. *What the fuck is wrong with them?* He was still contemplating what just happened when he felt drowsy and felt the aura of his vampire.

He heard White Lily neighed anxiously just above his head, clearly also sensing the incoming intruder to the quiet moment she’s been having with her favorite person. Zero reached out to calm her agitation, “Easy girl. He’s fine,” he breathed as he straightened up to pat her smooth coat. He looked at the entryway to find his lover already leaning on one of the stable’s wooden pillar, watching him with warm regard as he calmed the temperamentnal beast with bad personality who’s clearly not pleased with their guest.

Kaname looked at his adorable hunter comforting the infamous mare who’s well-known for her favorite play of trying to throw off all her riders that are not Zero. He could clearly see the disgust in her deep dark eyes and strangely enough, the brunette knew that she’s quite the intelligent creature as she clearly sees him for what he is. A creature of the darkness. He can feel her distrust and suspicion. It also amused him to sense a bit of rivalry from the white horse. Really, his hunter has a way in taming such ferocious beasts. He chuckled. *My, what a sinful man.*

“What?” Zero asked, arching his eyebrow, as he watched Kaname smile as if listening to a joke only he could hear.

“Nothing, please don’t mind me,” the pureblood answered as he regarded his silverette with fondness, not quite daring to go near lest the white beast went wild which could hurt or trample his mate.

“Huh,” he gave him a suspicious look but didn’t pry. He could have used the bond to find out but he didn’t feel comfortable intruding in someone else’s consciousness, he’s not yet ready for that level of intimacy. He also knew that Kaname is being unusually considerate about it so he let it be. Instead he just questioned his reason for coming, “Why are you here? It’s still early.” He asked as he continued the comforting gesture on White Lily’s coat.

“I felt your distress earlier. What happened?”

The silverette tensed as he looked at his vampire while sporting a look of disbelief and surprise.
What? Was he that shocked at the unprecedented actions (towards him as he already knew them to be overly zealous when it comes to the Night class) of those stupid little monsters in black uniform that it actually shot through the bond? Seriously? That he didn’t know that he was shocked, shocked him. He didn’t know that he was *that* taken aback.

Oh God, he feels like he’s been steadily degrading since these past few days. How can these pesky little imps even incite disturbance in him when their strongest weapon is only their loud shrill voices and well, perhaps their overwhelming delusions and desires? He sighed. He must be slowly regressing due to the lack of missions and changing hormones. He shook his head, “It’s nothing,” he finally mumbled after a moment of silent and horrifying contemplation.

“Are you sure?” Kaname’s eyes narrowed to closely observe his lover. He felt a wave of surprise, frustration, humiliation and just a bit of anxiety through their bond.

“Yeah,” the hunter mumbled again, not quite meeting the auburn eyes he knew are intently staring at him, feeling a bit of shame at being overwhelmed by, not only humans, but female teenagers. “I was just… surprised, is all…” he added.

“I see,” the brunette answered in a quiet tone, his eyes still carefully observing his silverette, “that’s already a surprise in and of itself as it’s hard to catch you off guard.”

“I was distracted.”

“Is that so?” the pureblood was not convinced but didn’t press the subject anymore as he knew very well just how much Zero dislike being badgered for answers. It’s not good to harass his mate, so he decided he’ll just look for another way to find out without his lover knowing. “In that case I would like to remind you again to be attentive. Please ease my mind by promising to always pay attention to your surroundings. You wouldn’t want to distress me ill now, would you?” he added as he gave a mocking smile, especially designed to mildly irritate and tease his lover who groaned as he rolled his eyes. He chuckled.

“Ah Zero, please come to the Moon dormitory later this evening,” he continued though in a much serious tone and before his frowning hunter could even ask a question, he added, “I’m planning on telling Yuki.”

Serious and slightly grave burgundy eyes met surprised and anxious silver-lavender orbs.

“It’s time.” Kaname explained shortly.

After a moment of agitated silence where in the prefect unconsciously opened, closed then opened his mouth and moved his body as if not knowing what to do or say first, the silverette just decided to groan.

Oh great, it’s going to be noisy again.

Why can’t they go one day without any of these fucking problematic events? Or excitements? Or revelations? Or confessions? His heart hasn’t taken a break from all these freaking occurrences, granted that all are not bad and are really just mostly caused by the bastard and king of all dastardly means who’s currently staring at him and even had the gall to look worried, and he’s already drained.

He sighed, already exhausted.

He’s been ending up stressing about one freaking thing or another these past few days. Hopefully, this will not shake them (or rather, the other unknowing people around them) that much. He was suddenly reminded that he must tell Ichiru and the chairman but considering the ex-hunter’s long
standing friendship with the pureblood and his parents then it’s possible that he knew about it (damn that chairman) so that just leave his brother now. He’s sure that the children, of course, are already well aware and he doesn’t care about whatever reaction the Night class may have (he doubted they’ll die of shock anyway. Such a shame.).

Then a sudden image of a cheerful Yuki with a blond aristocrat invaded his mind.

“Did you tell Ichijou-senpai?”

“I will. Before I awaken Yuki so he’ll know what to expect.” Inwardly concerned at how it will affect them both and what possible results will be. The vampire king then waived the thoughts away. It hardly matters as Yuki’s awakening as a pureblood is something that must come to pass whether he like it or not. He could only hope for the better. He turned to his hunter just in time to see Zero giving him a look.

The hunter narrowed his lilac eyes at the brooding vampire. ‘Kaname,’ he snarled through their bond, ‘you better fucking fix whatever mess this is going to be because if Yuki cries again, I’ll clobber you.’

He replied with a genuine smile, pleasing warmth spreading inside him, happy that his most beloved person treasures his sister as much as he does, ‘And I wouldn’t want you to misuse your time like that. I’ll do everything in my power, Zero.’ He, for one, absolutely did not want to earn his hunter’s antipathy so he’s resolved to do anything and everything that will make him happy. He also wants to make his only sister happy as well, of course, so he can only do well regarding the matter.

The vampire king chuckled as he heard his mate scoffed something about someone being suspicious as hell.

Ah well, he can’t help it as he’s already prepared to incorporate cunning and underhanded means just to ensure he’ll be able to give what his hunter asked.

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He looked up to gaze at the moon, letting the cold autumn wind ruffle his silver hair, before sighing.

He’s currently in the middle of his patrol. He’s very exhausted because of the Day class students. He frowned. They’re restless and suspicious. He didn’t like the way they actually behaved more than usual, especially the way they smiled and looked at him with stars in their eyes as if expecting a praise from him for shutting up since it took only one shout of warning and even the people from Yuki’s side stopped screaming their lungs out which even stunned the Night class and other two prefects. It deepened the crease on his forehead. Somehow he’s more stressed than usual. They’re getting weirder and weirder and he didn’t like how he couldn’t read them.

Then there was a formal letter of summons from the association’s president. This is the greatest cause of his distress.

That bitch.

He just knew that sick scumbag of a president, who is slowly poisoning the hunter association, must be planning something to get his greedy paws on his children. He clenched his fist. He fears what may happen to them and there’s frustration coursing through him at the thought that it’s a hunter
trying to do them harm and how he’s powerless against that psychotic power-hungry bastard being a hunter who’s bound by their law.

No, fuck that.

He already made up his mind that he won’t ever hand them over should that be what the president wants.

Not to anyone.

And lastly, there’s Yuki. He sighed, it’s time and he’s worried about the chaos it might incite. Well, it needs to be done or they’ll end up with an insane Yuki which he didn’t want to see. He’s worried as there are far too many things shaking her. First there were the children, then his and Kaname’s relationship. She was just starting to smile and be relaxed again but now there’s this truth that will shatter most of what she presently believes. It’s basically turning her life upside down. He’s angry at how beaten up their gentle Yuki seems to be getting and he knew that it’s hardly Kaname’s fault and he can’t really blame Juri Kuran for doing what she did. He just despises how he can’t seem to help his best friend who’s been there for him all these times. He can’t do anything even after swearing to protect her. He didn’t like how he can’t prevent her from getting hurt.

He’s useless.

He was blindly glaring at the ground when the melodious voice of the said brunette jarred him out of his depression.

“Zoooooo,” Yuki called out in the darkness, seemingly looking for the silver hunter.

The silverette waited, not bothering with an answer as he knew she’ll find him anyway. After a few moments with only the sound of rustling leaves and the brunette calling his name in the air, there emerged a tired looking prefect who huffed at the sight of him, standing lazily while waiting for her.

“Zero, you jerk!” Yuki immediately complained, “Will it kill you to answer me even once?! I called you many times!” she charged at him as she gritted her teeth, her fists clenched and her eyes watery from irritation.

Somehow, this made Zero inwardly smile. Just like the old times, Yuki admonishing him for being lazy, for ditching his duties, for provoking someone (like Aido or Souen or Kaname) or for plainly ignoring her. And just like what he usually did, he casually turned his head, ignoring her annoyance and brusquely asked, “What?”

The annoyed brunette looked at him for a moment while still fuming, filling her cheeks with air, before sighing in resignation, “Are you finished with your patrol?” she asked, her voice turning a bit somber.

“Yeah,” he answered more seriously, having an idea about what the prefect came to ask of him.

“Ne Zero, can you come with me to the Moon dorm?” She looked up at him with her large pleading sienna eyes, “Kaname-senpai asked me to.” There was a hint of worry and dread in her voice which didn’t go unnoticed by her companion.

He sighed. “Yeah, I know.” The hunter replied with an unusually gentler tone, in an attempt to dampen her concern. He honestly didn’t know what to say more to alleviate even some of her fears. He just stared at her for a while before reaching out to ruffle her dark brown hair which startled the female prefect, “You’ll be fine, Yuki. Don’t worry.” He paused for a moment before adding in his normal curt tone, “or you’ll turn bald and get even uglier.”
The wind howled as the brunette gawked at him in disbelief, all solemnity gone, as she promptly followed the now retreating figure of the silverette while hurling the normal petty insults she could think of. She momentarily forgot about her distress and worries as she cried out her long litany of complaints and grievances, the long standing and even long forgotten ones, to the hunter’s back.

She didn’t notice the small smile that graced the silverette’s normally stern features as he listened and ignored the short prefect chasing after him.

Before she realized it, they’ve already reached the entrance of the Moon dorm. She was considerably breathless from her passionate cries of complaints while sprinting after her heartless brother, internally cursing his long limbs. The door was opened by the vice-president who’s obviously expecting them and she stopped at the unusual serious and despondent look on his face. His normally kind eyes now hardened to dull jades, unreadable and somehow unreachable.

She unconsciously extended a hand out to him, “Ichij-,” she started but was immediately cut off by the noble.

“Kaname has been waiting,” he interrupted, not looking at the female brunette to see her hurt expression, as he gestured towards the stairs.

She didn’t make a move. She couldn’t. She stood still, uncertainty shaking her resolve as she stared at the cold aristocrat; his expression instantly froze her as her fear of what she’ll find out tonight crept fast inside her. She opened her mouth to speak again but the voice of the hunter stopped her.

“Yuki,” Zero came behind the brunette to gently stir her to the stairs, “go.” He coaxed her. He couldn’t stand to watch as unease and pain eats her. He could hear her heart sped in anxious beats. He glared at the blond vampire. He couldn’t believe his reaction, no doubt Kaname has already told him, and would have snap at his indifferent attitude towards Yuki but decided against it. It’s his own damn business anyway. And he can’t really blame him as he didn’t exactly took the news all that calmly with open arms as well, though he did have his own personal reasons. Still, he threw him one last glare before turning to look at Yuki.

She hesitated. She turned to her adopted brother who nodded at her for encouragement then to the noble again who finally looked at her again though the sight of hopelessness in his cheerless green eyes made her waver again.

Why?

She felt a soft nudge as Zero pushed her forward. She didn’t have a choice but take the slow steps that would take her to the truth and most probably, as evident by Ichijou’s expression who she knew already found out what she’s just about to, shatter her current happiness. It was the first time that she ever dreaded meeting her beloved senpai. She took one heavy step after another, exercising a great deal of courage, which was scarce at the moment, not to bolt out of the building.

When she reached the familiar dark entrance of the Moon dorm president’s study, the double doors automatically opened to reveal a finely lit room with the pureblood waiting behind his desk. She swallowed before entering, the well lit room in contrast to her current dimmed emotions. Her expression was strained as she faced her savior.

“Yuki, thank you for coming,” the vampire king started as he slowly stood, granting her a small smile though he knew it was lost to her. “Please sit down and make yourself comfortable,” he gestured to the couch in the middle of the room.

She quietly obeyed, situating herself on the comfy sofa while Kaname sat on the armchair just
besides it. He offered some refreshment which she declined as nothing seems sufficient enough to
calm her raging nerves and soothe her aching heart. Her mind instantly flew to Ichijou-senpai and the
reason behind such a heartbreaking expression, her hand unconsciously gripped the hem of her skirt.

Kaname studied her briefly, inwardly sighing at the look of distress so obvious on her pretty face. He
closed his eyes to take a deep breath before beginning, “Please forgive me Yuki. I know you’re
wondering regarding why I’ve called you here tonight and I can see you fear the reasons behind it.”
He looked at the prefect who met his eyes with uncertainty, “And as much as I wanted to ease your
concerns by telling you they’re only unfounded fears, I cannot,” he heard her catch her breath and
heart sped faster than before, “for I do not know how you’ll perceive it. Yuki, your past is not
entirely horrifying as you believe though I must admit that it will change much in your life from now
on. From which you cannot go back.” He watched as her large eyes widen some more as he began
to recount her past and lineage. He told her who and what she truly is and by the time he’s finished,
she’s white with shock.

There was a long silence that ensued after his explanation, only filled by harsh breaths by the
overwhelmed prefect from time to time.

“P-pureblood… v-v-vampire… m-me?” she stuttered. She looked at the serious brunette near her
who’s still patiently waiting for her to calm down, her brother.

She stared at him as if she’s seeing him clearly for the first time. She looked at his dark brown hair
and creamy fair skin, only realizing how closely it resembles hers. She then strayed to his reddish
brown eyes, a bit different from her chocolate ones but she remembered how it would sometimes
turn darker to closely mirror her own orbs. So it’s like that, they’re related, that’s why they look a bit
alike.

He’s her brother. Her pureblood brother.

“I-I c-c-an’t re-remember,” she spoke again, haltingly.

Kaname smiled to assure her, “Do not concern yourself about it. I first need to unlock the seal to
unleash your memories and once that’s done, you’ll regain everything you’ve lost that day, your
memories, your identity, your lineage, and your vampiric instincts. Everything will be restored. Your
nightmares will vanish as well.”

Another silent moment has passed before she spoke again, “B-but what will happen from now on? If
I become a vampire now, what then?”

The pureblood king gave her a thoughtful look before answering, “With all honesty, I cannot speak
for you. Surely indeed, the life of a pureblood and a Kuran is a most thorny one,” he smiled
forlornly, “Your path will be full of trials and strife but one thing I’m sure is that you’ll be able to
handle them well,” he reached out to briefly cup her cheek, “I believe in you.”

Her eyebrows were drawn together as emotions both constrict and fill her heart at the same time.
She’s honestly lost on what to do. She’s still frightened and unsure. She closed her eyes and
suddenly, the image of a smiling cheerful green-eyed noble flitted across it. She didn’t know exactly
how he took this fact and truth about her but she imagined a vivid image of her walking with him
side by side through the changing seasons and era.

Ah, how beautiful.

Her path is definitely still a mystery and no doubt full of challenges and questions but if she could
face them all with him holding her hand then she knows she’ll be willing to face hell itself and be
confident that she’ll emerge victorious.

A tear escaped from her tightly closed eyelids as the desire to have him overwhelmed her fears of the unknown. Right now, there’s a path that exists where it can be possible to obtain his heart and to hold his hand even through thousands of years without needing to let go.

It seduced her.

Yes, if she can have him, or even just the chance to do so, then she’ll be willing to face the obscured future years as a vampire. As the pureblood that she is.

She opened her eyes, her fears has yet to abate completely but was overshadowed by the determination of a new found purpose and reason as she realized that it’s her best chance of ever grasping that happiness that she’s been unconsciously looking for all this time. She looked at the pureblood who’s been watching her all this time to give him a determined nod, a fire lit deep inside her sienna eyes. She was awarded by a genuine smile by her brother as he moved to remove the seal.

In many parts of the academy, many awaited (the chairman wearing a somber look as he sat behind his desk, the children looking towards the direction of the Moon dorm from their classroom window, Ichiru who was only informed the basic facts sitting on his bed in his room, the hunter and the noble vampire quietly sitting in the lounge) for the change to take place.

The Night class and Takamiya-sensei were all startled as another existence to be reckoned with appeared.

And the air in Cross Academy quietly shook as another pureblood emerged.
Sienna eyes darted to observe her surroundings. It’s bright and everything is so clear that it hurts her eyes. She never knew she’ll ever view the world so vividly but perhaps in her vampire eyes, everything is just too intense that it’s painful. Ever since she awaken, everything is so strikingly brilliant.

She can smell everything; the wood of her bed frame and furniture, the cotton of her bedding ensemble, the satin of her gown, the metal and steel in some of the contraptions inside the room, the Earth outside, the trees, the autumn in the air, the ozone in the sunlight and even the scent of every creatures near her. She can also hear even the faintest of sounds around her; the howl of the wind, the rustling of the leaves outside, the chirping birds, even the far-off chatter of the waking students in the distant Sun dorm, the snores of the vampires still asleep, some movements in the kitchen and the footsteps of a lone vampire getting near her chambers.

The scent the steps carried reminded her of a quiet night or like the morning dew mixed with something positively sweet and flowery. It’s a comforting fragrance though it’s constantly covered by a thick smell of red roses and a powerful and intimidating aura she associated with her brother, Kaname… nii-sama. And though she never smelled him like this, she just knew as her senses tell her, that it’s the same beloved hunter she treated like her own brother.

Zero.

Her thoughts were punctuated by a short knock on her door, followed by its opening. The silverette’s pale face peered inside.

“Rude,” Yuki mumbled as she moved to sit and face the hunter, she felt her very long silken hair brush the back of her nightgown.

Zero only rolled his eyes before pointing out, “I knocked first genius.” To which the pureblood only huffed in reply. “You’re going to be late. Get up.”

The brunette instantly felt the urge to whine. It’s too bright outside! It’s almost enough to blind her permanently! And there’s also some nervousness left what with the new thirst at the back of her throat she felt the moment she woke up last night after being bitten by her brother.

Bloodlust.

It scared her at the realization that she’s now bound by the need to drink blood from another being, that she can hear the heartbeat of those around her and the gush of blood running in their veins. Her brother taught her briefly how to control her abilities so she can reduce most of the excess things she can sense but she has yet to be successful and all the overpowering impressions comes running back to her.

She was able to rein her bloodlust by drinking the infamous blood tablets and it’s the next worse thing she has ever tasted (it’s hard to beat the chairman’s cooking in that aspect,), it’s like drinking pulverized chalk. It’s disgusting but surprisingly effective in keeping the bloodlust at bay or, at least, manageable.

She’s immensely relieved as when she first opened her eyes and caught the scent of everything at once, the temptation to bite her own brother was overwhelming. Her eyes immediately turned scarlet. A whiff was all it took and she could tell just how rich and luscious his blood must taste though the
raw power emanating from him tells her that attacking would most definitely cost her life. It’s the same when Zero came inside the room and the appetizingly sweet scent attacked her. Only the terrifying aura of her brother surrounding the silverette which sent the silent ‘touch him and I’ll obliterate you’ message to her vampiric instincts stopped her from succumbing to her impulse of biting the hunter. She was already warned before she was awakened but experiencing it first hand was still difficult.

Indeed, being a vampire is hard.

And while power seduced her to drink her two most beloved brothers’ blood, the temptation seemed nothing compared to what she felt the moment Ichijou-senpai entered the room to check on them. The enticing thought of sinking her fangs and marking the noble was almost unstoppable.

She immediately closed her eyes and gritted her teeth as her fangs lengthen in order to hide just how powerful the force was. She was trembling as she hugged herself, fighting the urge to pin down the aristocrat and bite his neck forcefully that she only vaguely heard her brother perceptively send the blond away for the night.

It was not the power in his blood that tempted her, it’s him.

All of him.

His everything.

She wanted to claim all of that and the pull was so irrepressible that it was frightening. She needed several glasses of fake blood in order to calm down while Zero and Kaname held her still to make sure she didn’t dart out of the room after the blond noble. That her brother needed to even put in a barrier around her room to make sure she’ll not be let out without him or Zero was most mortifying, but it eased her mind from doing something irreversible. It’s unbelievable just how much she craves Ichijou-senpai’s blood. Just the thought of him was enough to reawaken her thirst.

She grimaced. Hopefully it will get better.

Still, she fears what her reaction will be in the company of humans, her classmates. She’s so worried that she’ll have the same reaction towards them and it frightens her that she’ll make a terrible move on one of her friends. What will she do if she hurt Yori-chan?

She was so deep in thought that she didn’t realize that the hunter had already stepped inside her room in the Moon dormitory, which her Kaname-niisama gave her, until she felt a hand around her arm.

“She’s a part of the company of humans, not of vampires,” the silverette softly assured as if reading her mind.

“But,” she began, hesitation in her voice.

“It’s fine,” Zero interrupted, “Kaname said so, maybe because nothing will ever beat the temptation towards the blood of a love one. It’s even more alluring than pure blood, even if only a little, so don’t worry about attacking your friends.” He finished. It’s true and only now did he realized the fact that he only really ever craved Kaname’s blood, even more so after tasting it once. He didn’t know if it was because he’s a pureblood or he was already in love him even then or perhaps both but he didn’t want to think about it. It’s too embarrassing. He shook his head to will the thoughts away and looked back at Yuki who was left gaping and blushing.

“She’s a love? W-w-who?” the brunette stuttered.
The silverette looked at her briefly before answering, “It’s obvious, Ichijou-senpai.” He answered with such certainty which rendered the pureblood speechless. The comical face of Yuki who seemed to be caught with thoughts of whether to deny or surrender made him almost smile. This could be a good material to make her take a whole month off his cleaning duty, he thought evilly.

“D-d-does he k-know?” she queried almost in tears.

Zero felt a wave of pity at the look of the new pureblood princess and was torn between wanting to tease her and ease her. But one look in those watery chocolate eyes made him sigh in resignation, he’s just too soft on Yuki, “No, maybe not.” Ichijou-senpai seemed unconfident based on his reaction to Yuki’s awakening but he can’t be too sure since he’s not an expert in all things that concerns emotions.

“A-a-are you sure?” Yuki asked, half-disbelieving and half-hoping.

“Yes, yes, but you can ask him yourself if you want to make sure. Get dress now or you’ll be late, we have a festival to prepare.” He replied crudely as he headed for the door and closing it just in time to escape the pillow thrown at him.

“Zero, you jerk! You’re not even helping!” She felt petulant but still obeyed. She knew that Zero was only trying to support her even when he’s using his irritating means. She can still feel his presence outside the room, a sign that he’ll be with her when she face her classmates in order to act if necessary. It calmed her knowing there will be someone who’ll stop her should she lose to her nature, though she’s already determined to restrain herself if need be.

She will not lose.

She’ll protect her adoptive and biological parents’ wishes.

She’ll prove that co-existence is possible!

And she’ll make all of her brothers proud.

With that thought she began to dress for the day. The sun is still too bright and too hot but somehow it became just a little more bearable. She’ll face everything head on. After all, she’s aiming to snatch the heart of the brightest sun in existence; she should be able to manage this little brilliance.

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“Someone is ditching homeroom. Again.”

He opened his lilac eyes and he was instantly greeted by the wondrous sight of his golden haired lover smiling down at his position of comfortably lying down under the shade of a tree in the courtyard. He gave him a lazy smile before sitting straight and leaning against the tree, his bell ringing clearly through the peaceful morning, just as Hanabusa seated himself beside him.

“They said I could go. I’m one of the unfortunate costume wearer so I’m off the hook in the preparation. Even nii-san took off somewhere after making sure Yuki was alright.” he explained after yawning.

“Huh, how convenient. What will your class be doing?”
“Hmmm, not sure. Some kind of horror café.” Ichiru answered in a sleepy daze. He wasn’t able to sleep all that well since he was worried about Yuki so he’s pretty tired today.

“What kind of booth is that? You’ll be wearing scary costumes? And you agreed?” the noble asked skeptically.

The silverette only shrugged. He’s not that affected by it since Hanabusa won’t be present on that day as, not only is it uninteresting for them, there was also the ball to prepare by the evening. They’ll surely be asleep then, so every vampire will not be able to attend the day festivities. He couldn’t care less at how terrifying he looks then and what is one day of pretending to be a ghoul or whatever when one can be free from several days of preparation? “It’s only one day. I don’t think anyone would even recognize me once I’m inside the costume so who cares?”

Hanabusa smiled, “Indeed, but I can still safely say that you’ll be the cutest little monster there.” He laughed as Ichiru playfully scrunched up his face in mock disgust in reply. “You look tired, you didn’t sleep well?” he observed after studying his lover more closely.

The silverette huffed, “I think you know why.”

Hanabusa looked forward, towards the classroom in front where in the newly emerged pureblood princess happily chats away with a brown haired girl. There’s raw power seeping out of the previously ordinary prefect and while it may seem that only her hair’s length changed in a mortal’s perspective, a vampire can easily name the numerous changes she had like the certain glow of her skin, her aura, scent and how she can now intimidate, frighten and appeal to vampires by simply being herself. Humans may feel something amiss but no one will be able to call on her change as long as she doesn’t show her newly acquired fangs. “Indeed, it came out as a surprise. No one from the Night class knew about it.”

“Hmph, tell me about it. I was doubtful when nii-san told me and even when I felt her awakening, I still couldn’t quite believe it.” He replied, a bit sullenly. He’s sulking, just a teeny tiny bit, as he was one of the last ones to know since, evidently, the chairman and his brother knew long before last night which he thought was extremely ungracious of them, though to be fair, he did know even before Yuki did so there was that.

“You can say that again,” Hanabusa agreed as they both watch Yuki help out in carrying a heap of cloths and simultaneously trip inelegantly on the strip that was sticking out from the bundle, sending table cloths flying everywhere. They both grimaced as she landed face first on a part of the bundle she was carrying.

“And I thought that becoming a pureblood will give her some grace and poise…” Ichiru shook his head, wondering how all that supernatural senses can’t rid her of that infernal clumsiness.

“Well, in her defense, she only woke up a few hours ago. I can imagine her being overwhelmed by her heightened senses, causing her to be distracted. She still can’t keep up with what she can feel. She’ll do better once she’s able to control that.”

The silverette only hummed in understanding. He’s tired but he really can’t sleep as he was tasked by his brother in looking after Yuki while he went to report to the chairman, though he suspected that his brother was only trying to stay away from the Day class students. Zero finds their reaction to him suspicious and odd which he finds funny. His twin still hasn’t realized what a dish he must look in the Day class’ perspective. Hana already explained to him that it’s because of his pregnancy causing him to be desirable even more than normal to keep him protected. For him, it’s simply amusing so he’ll enjoy the show while it lasts though he wish that he could rest right now since sitting beside Hana makes him feel so comfortable that it’s hard to keep awake. He was just thinking of standing
up to wake himself when he felt an arm around his shoulder pulling him closer to the blond.

“You can rest. I’ll watch over you and Yuki-sama.” The noble whispered as he situated Ichiru’s head at the nook of his neck as if it’s the most natural thing in the world.

“People will see,” Ichiru argued though he made no move to get away from his lover. It’s really too relaxing to be with Hana, with his scent sedating him further and his sturdy body promising support until he wakes again.

The noble only shrugged elegantly, “Don’t worry, everyone’s busy staying indoor for the preparation. They won’t notice and even if they will, it will be alright even if they find out though they might just think it’s fan service, either way is fine with me. I have lots of open-minded fans, you know.”

Ichiru smiled as he closed his eyes to sleep, half debating if he should point out how selfish his lover sounded though, in all honesty, he’s the same. He couldn’t care less who knew and would have already announced it if not for the fact that Hana might become sad at the loss of some of his fans should they turn from him, but if he’s alright with it then Ichiru will definitely agree. If he can declare that he’s with him without fear then that would be perfect.

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She let out a long sigh as she trudged her way in her patrol. She can’t believe she survived that. She’s still reeling from the damage the shriek of the Day class students have done to her overly sensitive ears. Thank goodness for Zero and the Day class’ new behavior! Any overlong exposure to such high pitch voices will send her eardrums to the other worldly hell though, other than that, the day has turned out much better than expected considering her present circumstances.

Indeed, her classmates didn’t seem as appetizing as she thought she’ll find them. After Kaname-niisama, Zero, their children and Ichijou-senpai, everyone else seemed… unappealing. Like a ten yen piece of meat against a high grade premium steak.

She caught herself, horrified.

No, no, no! It’s horrible to think of them as food! She shook her head to get things right again. What was she thinking?

She groaned.

Hopefully those thoughts will vanish soon. It was a great thing that she attended the homeroom as being able to chat with Yori-chan was a great practice to acquaint herself with the thirst she knew will never leave her ever and the control she must never be without again. It was nice to be with everyone and it’s great that she found them ‘unappealing’ as it’s almost safe for them to be near her. She felt almost normal even when they commented nonstop at how gorgeous she suddenly became (which they all assumed was from the famous salon downtown. Thank God for the invention of hair extensions! No one was suspicious in the least, though Yori-chan did look a bit thoughtful…) which made her even more flustered.

The only one in danger to her is Ichijou-senpai for she has no doubt that Kaname-niisama will protect Zero and the children but she’s sure that she’s even more powerful than the noble. How easy it will be to bite that slender neck and claim him as her—
She stopped. No! She mustn’t!

She will not give in to her desires! She’ll do what is right and she’ll not press things like it’s her right! For if he’ll be with her, she wanted it to be because they felt the same. She shook her head again to clear and purify her thoughts. Geez, she must be careful or she’ll be hated forever. Her odds are not looking favorable as it is. She sighed, remembering how somber the blond aristocrat looked. He even avoided her gaze!

‘Oh what to do?!’ she was so deep in her musing that she belatedly registered the sweet scent of her niece almost upon her. She stopped in her tracks as she faced the beautiful vampire coming her way.

“Bachan! Good evening!” Anne greeted.

“Good evening, Anne-chan, what are you doing here?” she asked once the vampire reached her before resuming her walk with Anne by her side.

“I was asked by chichiue to inquire about you. How are you feeling?”

“Better,” the older vampire admitted.

“But you seem rather down,” she observed with concern, “Is something the matter, aunty?” she knew it may have something to do with Takuji as she noticed how sullen the blond aristocrat seems to be since last night. It was for this very reason that her father sent her instead of going himself as he well know that his sister can better confide with a woman when it comes with matters of the heart.

At her words, Yuki sighed again as if she’s carrying the whole world’s problems on her shoulders. When she realize that she indeed has the conviction to move forward but she’s missing one of the most important point in her happy plight: A plan.

She didn’t know what to do next! She was blindly trekking her way towards their classroom with Anne still worriedly accompanying her, patiently waiting for her to find her voice and confer with her.

They were already sitting on one of the many tables neatly arranged and lined by the walls, just beside the pile of attires they have gathered from each student in their class, with Yuki staring in the darkness and Anne observing the decorations and preparations already done inside the room while glancing at her aunt from time to time.

“How do you make someone fall for you?” Yuki asked all of a sudden.

Well, that’s a million dollar question, isn’t it? Anne wanted to answer with an ‘I don’t know’ since she’s been having the same struggle for many decades already but it will not help her aunty. She needed support and confidence as well as hope. She already knew that all shall be right but her aunty doesn’t know that. She also knew very little of their romance and how it went to be of any real help but she can still give a logical advice. She hummed for a while to give her time before answering, “It may depend upon the person you like. Each individual is different such as their likes and how they want to be approached. I guess the best thing to do is get to know one another first. Why not invite the other party out? It need not be a date, like a simple errand. It will also make it less awkward that way.” She articulated in an easy voice to make it sound simple. Oh, if only romance is ever that smooth sailing.

“Oh, that’s right!” the older brunette perked up at that suggestion. An errand! She might be able to use the cultural festival as a reason just like when they bought Zero and Ichiru’s gift. It will be perfect! Oh, but he’s kind of avoiding her. How will she make him go with her? She was wondering
about it when she looked at her smiling niece and an idea came to mind. Praise be to her brothers for rearing an intelligent child she can easily conspire with.

They smiled at each other in understanding.

“I’ll talk to chichiue. I’m sure he can easily arrange for Takuji to come with you. What will the errand be about?”

“Hmmm, well, I did kind of ruin many of the table cloths that we’ll use and I promised I’ll replace all of them.” Yuki answered sheepishly, it’s indeed a small miracle that such an embarrassment could play in her favor.

“How perfect! Are these the said fabrics?” Anne asked as she reached for the cloths beside them. She was only a little surprise that it’s not a table cloth at all.

“Oh no, it’s what most of my classmates will wear. We’re doing a café this year.”

“How beautiful. We rarely wear this but I do have a complete collection. They’re just too gorgeous and many designs from each era are simply fascinating. I just had to have them.” She chuckled, “Otou-chan once berated chichiue when he learned that he bought so many of this for me, even the ones that cannot be worn in our modern society anymore.” And of course she promised to take care of every gift her father gave her and has long been safely tucked away in one of her dimensions.

Yuki smirked. “There might be a reason for that.” She chortled as she gave the full detail of what they’ll be doing in the cultural festival.

“Oh, what a brilliant idea! How simply marvelous! May I please see otou-chan’s garments?” Anne ecstatically declared though she was immensely disappointed to see how plain the attire was compared to how it should be. “Oh dear, this will simply not do.” She remarked, “If you’d please, I insist on being able to lend a helping hand. It shall be my eternal regret if I let such an opportunity pass. And chichiue will certainly be pleased to know that I was able to make use of what he bought and for good reasons too.” She finished with sincerity as she extended an arm forward, palm facing the floor to open up the dimension containing her extravagant collection.

Yuki watched in amazement as she again witness Anne’s particular power. She gasped as she was presented by not only the most glamorous articles of clothing that they needed, but also with expensive looking tea supplies, screens, an antique looking shōgi board and other much needed accessories. Each one, she’s almost sure, costing a fortune.

“Well,” she swallowed, “I think I can convince them.” Oh their president will love this.

The prize for the best booth and the one with the most profit will definitely their class’.

Anne clapped her hands together in delight as she looked out the window, to nod at the bat that has been following them since earlier.

‘Well, that’s how it will be, chichiue.’ She smiled, watching as it flew away, knowing that she was completely understood.
She recited aloud, a smile on her lips as she felt the aura of her only love near like a balm to her wretched soul, her voice clear as a bell as she stared out to the young beautiful night. She just came back after joyfully devising a plan for her aunty when she noticed how bright the moon was which in turn reminded her of the future and her own plight.

She’s standing in the middle of the outside covered hall connecting the school buildings, the cool wind kissing her fair skin simultaneously ruffling her white school skirt and wavy dark brown hair. She sighed after inhaling the refreshingly cold air as she remembered comparable lovely nights she used to spend in their castle.

She could feel the young hunter near but made no move to turn and greet him as she finished reciting one of her favorite sonnets, her stunning lilac eyes glazed, chasing the fond memories of those delightful times she shared with the very same hunter a few years from now.

“Was that a poem?” the ash-brown haired instructor finally spoke after a minute of just silently listening to the young vampire. He just happened to see her, standing dazedly while uttering some foreign nonsense with a forlorn look that still managed to appear breathtakingly beautiful, on his way to the staff room.

Seriously, he’s starting to think that she can somehow pay the wind to arrange such stunning and ethereal sight that made even him stop in his tracks. He watched as moonlight illuminated her fair skin and immaculate white garments making her eye-catching in the midst of pitch black night with her hair dancing with the cold night air, giving anyone a clear view of her profile and her reddish-lavender orbs, glassy with a bittersweet haze.

Who could even leave in the face of something like that?!

He was about to forcefully ignore her had it not for the tragic look in her glazed purple eyes, and despite the smile on her lips, he knew that there’s a part of her that somehow wanted to cry. For some reason, that irritated him. *Such a troublesome spoiled brat!*

She finally turned to him, feeling much better at the sight of the familiar scowl on his handsome face, “It’s a sonnet.” She smiled.

“What the fuck is that? Something edible?” the hunter asked crudely.

The vampire princess only chuckled. She didn’t bother with an answer as she knew it when he’s asking rhetorical questions. She had lots of practice because he’ll always pinch both her cheeks quite painfully if she ever made the mistake of providing any logical answers. Decades of that made her an expert so instead she just asked him back, “Are you finished for the evening, Kai-, ah no, forgive me. *Sensei*?”
“…..” He stared at her with a blank look, fiercely fighting the sudden stir in his emotions. *He’s pissed.* Irritated at that smile and that look in her eyes. He’s so fucking annoyed for some reason. He can’t explain it but every time he’s with this vampire, in whatever form really but perhaps even more when she’s like this, he can’t help but be irked. It’s like developing an everlasting itch under his skin and a painful tug in his stomach. It also fills his chest with something heavy that makes breathing hard and no matter how deeply he inhales, he can’t seem to shake it away and just makes him so fucking disturbed. He let out a harsh breath.

He was about to say something, an unreasonable retort maybe, when he turned to the forest as he heard and sense some presence lurking in the dark, some distance from them. He felt more than saw the vampire turned towards the same direction with a look of consternation.

“Six vampires, Kaito-san. Level-Cs.” She commentated though she knew that he also sensed it but as she’s a vampire, unlike the hunter, she can clearly see their visitors and she have to wonder why they’re here, at this time.

“I know that, idiot.” He scoffed. He was about to say something more when he caught a glint of metallic reflection from the dark that was caught by the light of the moon. He moved fast, letting go of the reference materials he was holding, and grabbed his baby from under his coat as he run to snatch the vampire princess near him. He put a protective arm around Anne’s shoulder, ignoring her surprised gasp, pulling her close against his side as he pointed his gun to the hidden intruders. He was so riled up that he didn’t realize that there were no gunshots or attacks and belatedly heard weird sounds instead.

*Wait, are those shutter sounds?*

The fuck?

He wanted to make sure so looked down at the vampire he’s unconsciously half embracing only to be greeted by a completely flushed, wide-eyed frozen teen who’s looking up at him with surprise and quiet disbelief. He was instantly aware of the soft body he’s pressing against his, silky dark hair tickling the base of his neck, the alluring sweet scent she possesses, and the warm breath from the sinfully soft-looking lips, parted with shock, which are only a few inches from his.

He immediately let go of the blushing vampire and was about to say something when he was reminded of their fucking intruders thanks to the glaring presence of the vampire king, his fellow hunter and the other brats already engaging the vampires. He was forced to join them and as he really didn’t know what to do or say anyway, he just went to run to the commotion inside the academy forest.

“Fuck.”

He stalked the unknowing vampire very silently, like darkness itself melding with the night, that the poor creature continued his undertaking unaware of his presence until he’s directly behind him and let his monstrous aura known. He watched as the red haired man visibly trembled, his camera fell to the ground just as his strength left his every muscle.

“K-K-Kuran-sama!”
“How interesting,” his voice like silk, “You seem to know me but I’m quite sure it’s the first time I’ve encountered your pathetic self.”

He looked down on the vampire as he closed and opened his mouth like a fish, seemingly lost all ability to talk, greatly studying him so as to determine his intent in coming in to the academy at this hour. The vampire didn’t look like he possesses any extraordinary ability or weapons as he’s in casual attire, with a pen and note pad securely placed in his breast pocket and a camera case bag slung across his body. In Kaname’s eyes, he seemed to be nothing more than an ordinary journalist or photographer.

“Pray tell, what matters concerns you here?” the pureblood king asked after a moment of observation towards the still trembling vampire.

There were no answers that were offered and instead, the red head scrambled to get away only to be intercepted by Seiren.

“Hiieee!” the visitor shriek when a pair of feet appeared in front of him.

The king unleashed his aura again, now to oppress rather than to just to make himself known, as he slowly walk closer to the runaway who’s helplessly pinned to the ground by his powerful presence.

“Answer me, filth,” he ordered as he bore him with unforgiving eyes, “My patience is waning.” If he’s been sent out by his enemies then he must know, there’re auras of other vampires nearby and the thought of danger near his family is making him impatient.

“M-m-my editor made m-me Kuran-sama. We’re o-only trying to find out the t-t-truth before o-o-other publishing house d-does.”

Publishing? He’s really from the media then but he could be lying as well though given how fast his heart beats at the moment, it’s hard to say for certain if he’s bluffing, “Didn’t I made a decree that under no circumstances will Cross Academy ever going to be subjected to any medias’ object of discussion? Didn’t you know that your presence here might as well endanger the students here and expose our community? Or were you lying to me and someone sent you for any other reason?” he stepped closer, his aura a heavy punishment to the red-head, “choose your words wisely for they may as well be your last.”

The implications made the lower vampire realize his own dire situation, “Please, please Kuran-sama! Have mercy! No one! No one suspicious sent me! It was only because other companies decided they’ll venture here and my editor said we can’t lose! We… I would never even dream of disregarding your orders… only… only I was forced to by my work’s nature!”

Kaname hummed in acknowledgement but not entirely convinced of his innocence. The decree he made when the idea to build the academy was finalized successfully kept the nosy reporters out and at the time, it was such an unconventional concept that it was highly criticized by many of their kin. He could only imagine how much vampires like this one craved to explore the school but in the end, none did for his power and authority prevented any such designs, so now that they dared to neglect such an order made him suspicious.

Admittedly, the news about his children and newly acquired mate could be considered even more critical and interesting than forming a school for humans and vampires to co-exist but still, no one, not any media company or individual, would have dared disrespect his edict. They may be bold and persistent but they knew full well of the consequences of going against his order.

Unless…
His dark speculations were cut shortly by the approach of the soothing presence of his hunter and their children as well as a certain substitute teacher, each carrying an additional baggage closed in.

Both Kohaku and Akira appeared from between the trees as they towed their trembling and conscious captives with them while the silverette fraternal twins dragged their own sleeping charge by his feet. Kaito appeared from the dense vegetation with an unconscious vampire slung on his shoulder who he brutally threw conscienceless on the forest floor near the red head who jerked in surprise.

His hunter arrived last and it didn’t escape his notice when the three conscious intruders drew a sharp breath when Zero finally appeared from between the high bushes with an unconscious vampire slung on his shoulder.

Kaname frowned, “And here I thought you’ll be the first one to shoot any intruder,” he said in mock tease, unhappy with the sight, to which his hunter only raised an eyebrow.

Suiren’s jaw dropped and she made a comically displeased expression at the sight of her beloved father carrying someone on his shoulder that she let go of the other foot of their detainee and went to effortlessly take his otou-chan’s charge off by herself and immediately threw the unknowing vampire near the other captive before hugging the older silverette.

This made the king smile. The Kuran family was merely amused, even Seiren (quietly so) while the older hunter was bewildered and the other conscious vampires grew even more frightened.

‘S-strong.’ Kaito thought with shocked disbelief.

Kohaku cleared his throat, “Well, chichiue, I believe these are all of them. This person claimed to be part of a media company,” he informed as he nudged forward the petrified blond with him.

Akira reported next, “This one too. He said he’s writing an article about confirming the truth of the ‘Kuran’s future generation’.”

The silverette twins nodded, Nao also let go of the other foot he was holding and joined his sister in squeezing their father.

“Yeah, that one did too before that idiot charged at me to try and escape.” Zero nonchalance informed through all the silken silver hairs almost drowning him. He didn’t notice when the young silverettes both turned and glared at the said unconscious vampire as he threw a small piece of cardboard towards Kaname with some difficulty because of the twins draped around him.

“There, there, Sui-chan, Nao, they seem to be from the media and otou-chan was not harmed so don’t be rash, alright?” Kohaku reasoned.

Kaname also fixed his cold scrutiny at the foolish unconscious creature that dared try to harm his mate. He looked down on what he was handed to which turned out to be business card for one Kagemune Souichiro, a columnist for a newspaper company.

“I found many of that in his wallet and he said something about needing to be first and about a scoop.”

The pureblood stared at the business card, making sure he’ll remember who to severely punish for assault later on as he also silently explored several possibilities one after another.

“Oh hell,” Kaito groaned, ignoring the murderous children, “So these are all, what? Paparazzi? You even have that?”
“You must understand, Takamiya, that though you claimed us to be savages, we are called a sophisticated society for a reason.” Kaname answered dryly.

The hunter only rolled his eyes and would have retorted had the red haired vampire not prostrated himself.

“Please your majesty! This is all a misunderstanding. I would never dream of harming your Excellency!” he begged as he bowed low enough that dirt stuck to him. “Please let me go. I’m only trying to do my job!”

“Let me guess, they’re not friends with each other huh?” Kaito commented as he observed that the man didn’t try to bail the other vampires out.

“I as well your majesty! I would never plot against you!” came the cry of the blond Kohaku captured.

“Nor I! Never! Please have mercy!”

The pureblood looked at them for a while, “Why don’t we head to the chairman’s office? Surely he’s been waiting for us since earlier. I will decide you and your companies’ fates then. Sensei, please help us escort them.”

Takamiya clicked his tongue but said nothing to refuse, “Get on your feet, you leeches!” he bellowed as he carried one unconscious vampire, Kohaku and Akira did the same for the other two since Suiren and Naoto made no move to detach themselves from Zero, then trekked the way towards the school’s main building.

“Seiren,” the pureblood called quietly before making a move to follow the small retreating group.

“Hai, Kaname-sama.”

“There’s something I need you to do.”

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“Nee-chan, what are doing sitting right over here?”

She slowly looked up to find a skeptical Kohaku standing straight in front of her and an amused Akira crouching just beside him. She blinked several times to remember why indeed.

“Would you like to stand now?” Kohaku gently inquired as he offered a hand to help his silently muddled sister up from her seat on the hard floor.

Anne could only nod as she blindly took her brother’s hand and was led inside the building, her brothers on either side of her.

“So,” Akira started after a while of silence as he put both his hands at the back of his head, “Are you going to tell us about it?”

Anne internally jumped, “About what?” she asked in an even voice, feigning ignorance though she knew they could practically smell it on her.
“Really, nee-chan?” the little rouge of a brother asked in mock incredulity, “You smell like Kaito-jiichan, you know!” it’s only faint but still, it’s there!

“And here I thought dear Akira that you would develop some tack or at least pretend to have some when you’re in that form.” The eldest remarked in sulky embarrassment.

“Enough Akira,” Kohaku intervened, “leave nee-chan’s affairs alone.” To which his twin pouted but readily complied for their sister’s sake.

Anne smiled at Kohaku as she patted Akira. “Thank you, you two, I shall share once there’s anything worth sharing,” her brothers looked at her searchingly but didn’t ask any questions for which she was grateful and she diverted their conversation by inquiring instead, “So, what did our visitors wanted?”

“Nothing of consequence, really.” The older twin answered, “They’re merely foolish scoop-hungry paparazzi scavenging for information about us and otou-chan.”

“Uh huh,” Akira joined, “And here I thought I can finally show my real skills to otou-chan and chichiue. How disappointing.”

“It’s not good to wish for battle, Akira,” Anne lightly scolded though she knew he meant nothing bad about it. Her little brother may be a menace but he’s not bloodthirsty.

“Well, he’s such a show off.” commented his twin.

“Only a little,” Akira admitted, “but anyway, nothing really happened. We just confiscated all their films and memory cards then sanctions will be carried out for disobeying a royal decree. Father said that we need to erect a barrier so we’ll help,” he smirked proudly at that, “And that should have been the end of it before Haku here volunteered to develop all those films.”

“We have experience. It’s not good to go to a shop to have them developed as they may contain images that might expose our nature as vampires.”

“Oh dear, oh dear, I’m afraid it’s been decades since I’ve been inside a darkroom. I use memory cards and printers, as you well know.” the female brunette distractedly contemplated as she put a hand on her cheek.

“I’ll handle the films, nee-chan. You can take care of the normal printing of the less ancient vampires’ memory cards.” Kohaku offered, unperturbed.

“And I can babysit Nao and Sui-chan for you two.” grinned the other twin.

The older male turned to his brother, suspicious, “I daresay they’ll babysit you instead, to keep you out of trouble.” He shook his head, “No, forget that. I shall lock you in with me to watch over you myself. The twins can help nee-chan.”

This made their eldest sister giggle while the other scowled at his brother but Kohaku was unmoved, “We need to finish with those quick to be investigated and so we can lend chichiue and grandpa a hand in erecting a barrier around the academy.” His voice turned grave, “There’s something quite unconvincing about some of those vampires. Something is not right.”

“What makes you think so?”

“I don’t know, nee-chan. It was just that I felt that some of them were not saying the absolute truth when they were being questioned. Someone could very easily have put them up to it… but it could
“Yeah, you had lots of episodes.” Akira remarked carelessly, nodding, for which his twin electrocuted him with a bit of thunder.

Anne continued on her way as she plunged herself with thoughts as how it could be dangerous or who could possibly employ those vampires if they’re indeed not on errand for a story, leaving the identical twins in their little match behind her as Akira retaliated by releasing fireballs which all disappeared the moment it reached his twin’s personal space and was repaid by overhead thunders from the ceiling which harmlessly bounced on Akira’s invisible shield. The silent squabble continued as their sister thought deeply and internally enumerated all of their family’s enemies but decided there were too many.

“Enough now you two,” she ordered as she turned around only to find some great burns and broken glasses here and there, she blinked at the damaged that a few minutes has done, “Oh no! You broke the windows!” she groaned. She’s been careless as it’s only them in the hallway, “Fix all of these, you two! Before grandpa sees it and cries!”

The two shaken troublemakers looked around, unaware of the damage they caused, “Oh.” they chorused as Anne gave them a stern look.

“Uh nee-chan?” Akira called out to their already retreating sister, “Could you, uh, you know.”

Anne huffed, “Goodness, here,” she handed them a blood stone each to help them mend the damage by turning back the object’s time, “It’s only from my stash. Be careful, you know I can’t make any more blood stones right now.”

“Yes, nee-chan, forgive us.”

“Sorry nee-chan but you know, it’s all been made by Haku’s thunder.”

“If you had taken all of them then none would have been directed elsewhere. It’s not like it will kill you.”

“Well, excuse me. I happen to like my hairstyle as it is, thank you very much, and I only own two sets of uniform.”

“Enough, enough, really you two. You argue at the most trivial things sometimes. Be quick please, we’ve missed one class already.” She scolded as she too took a blood stone to help her brothers with cleaning up.

“Do you think it was Rido-ojiisama?” Akira asked out of the blue as they repair the windows.

Gloom settled in the air as they ventured the likely prospect. “Of course it’s possible. The question is, what did he hope to accomplish if he indeed sent out one of those vampires?”

“True, any one of those was hardly strong enough to stand up against chichiue or us. I doubt even an army would suffice and they could hardly get any substantial information with just their cameras and we even made sure to take every film and memory cards. They also carry no other device other than those. What harm could they possibly cause?” Kohaku postulated.

“Huh, well, it’s still possible that they’re really only foolish scoop hungry paparazzi…” Akira offered though unconvinced himself.

They all know this to be possible and since the fact that they weren’t able to deal any harm as
Kohaku mentioned rings true, somehow, they're still in doubt. There was a sense of foreboding in the air sowing seeds of fear and disturbance inside them.

In their fright of their terrible grandfather, Rido, they all quite forgot that it’s not only him that they should fear for greed lies not only in his heart but in all who thirst immense power to reign over every other creature in the world. They’ve been subjected to all kinds of malicious desire brought forth by greed from those kinds of people since infancy.

They should have known better.

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He has already made quite a distance away from the academy grounds but even when he knew it’s impossible for someone to overhear what he’ll say and sure that he wasn’t followed and is completely alone, still he made sure to go the extra mile of getting out of town before he took out his cell phone and dialed his master’s number. It answered in the first ring.

“How did it go?”

Asked the person in the other line even before he could make a word of salutation, “It had gone well, my lord. They’re starting to come and I believe I was not the only one who went in disguise.”

“Are you sure you were not found out?”

“Of course, my lord. Please don’t worry,” He assured, “And I have some news for you that might interest you. I shall come directly over to give you the details.”

“Oh? Regarding what?”

“Well, his majesty’s daughter.”

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The Summons

It’s unnerving.

Ever since he has been turned, every trip to the Hunter’s Association has been stifling and tedious as all the hunters present would watch him and his every move with contempt and revulsion as if he just committed the most horrendous crime known to man-kind. Never mind that he became a vampire not by choice and in fact was the result of a bloody massacre that killed his parents. For hunters, there’s simply no excuse for being what he has become.

A demon.

And now, being a vampire’s mate, each look is more poisonous than ever.

He ignored the criticizing looks from his kin and instead focused on the path that will lead him to a bigger problem in the name of the association’s president. He’s been dreading it since his guardian got that call. He braced himself for some mocking and even harsher abuse as that perverted president is sure to spout things he never wanted to hear. He can depend on him to be nauseating at all times. He growled.

“Still okay, Zero-kun?”

He turned his head towards his guardian who he momentarily forgot in his brooding. The chairman insisted to come with him even after he refused any company. He didn’t want to acknowledge it, and never will he to anyone but himself, but the normally idiotic guardian’s presence in this suffocating place is most comforting. There’s a strange assurance with him around that everything will work out somehow. He stopped himself from smiling and instead, fixed him with a signature scowl, “What do you think?”

“Don’t worry, Zero-kun, everything will work out somehow.”

Zero watched as the honey haired man smile encouragingly. He wanted to point out that it won’t be that easy but decided against it. He knew he’s being cheered up and he didn’t want to be an ass about it. That thought made him internally raise an eyebrow. They said that pregnant women were irritable but it’s somehow the opposite with him as he spent less time getting pissed off at the chairman recently. Is it because he’s a man? Anyhow, he just grunted in reply as they continued in their way, feeling much better than he did earlier.

They entered the large metal gates leading to the hunter’s building and passed several pillared hallways that are connected to the largest building inside the compound where the president’s office resides. When they reached a large white building, both went through the already open heavy double doors all the while ignoring the glares of every hunter they encountered.

“It’s amazing that Kaname-kun let you come here without him.” Kaien conversationally commented after a moment of silence.

Zero didn’t say anything, his eyes avoiding the chairman’s, as he tried to blissfully forget about his clueless lover.

“Err… Don’t tell me you didn’t inform Kaname-kun because you did… right?” the chairman asked, hopeful, as he tried to convince himself.

“…………….,” the silverette frowned at his guardian’s optimistic expression, “He didn’t need to
know.”

Kaien’s jaw hit the floor.

‘Oh, no!’

He shook his head in exasperation, silently bemoaning his own naïve and careless decision of letting the silverette himself inform the pureblood. Why, oh why, did he even think for one moment that Zero would tell Kaname? Why did he trust this obstinate child? He should have known better and now he shall be the receiver of that quiet look from the pureblood which conveys a thousand sighs and remarks of disappointment.

Because, of course, Kaname will inevitably find out, one way or another.

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It’s early morning and he’s pacing nervously just outside the Moon dormitory’s front doors, the bell of his new hair tie ringing noisily at his every step, as he didn’t know how he could possibly broach the subject of his concerns without really revealing anything.

Oh hell.

He’s really going to be roasted alive by his brother.

He couldn’t even find the courage to knock on the door even after going out of his way in ditching homeroom, thank goodness for the cultural festival preparation and to their whatever-may-be booth or café, also fearing on calling on the occupants so early as most of them are still undoubtedly asleep.

He hopes Hana is still asleep because he’ll hang himself if he ever found out the reason why he’s there.

He was contemplating retreating for the meantime when the door opened to reveal a curious Anne, already up for the day.

“Uncle,” the young child greeted, “Good morning. I was wondering what’s taking you so long to knock. Is there any problem?”

Ichiru blushed. Of course she’ll be able to sense him and no doubt she can also hear the party in his chest. Oh, how he dearly praised the heavens for gracing his brother with a kind and tactful daughter who didn’t openly pointed it out, “Anne-chan, err, good morning. You’re quite early, aren’t you? I mean for a… uhm… vampire.”

She smiled at her nervous Ichiji to somehow put him at ease. He seems to be bothered by something.

“Well, it’s been a habit of ours to wake up early for there are lots to be done in this time. And with the cultural festival coming and the arrangement of the evening ball, we’re quite busy. As you well know, nothing was done for the last days as it has been understandably hectic for everyone so we must work overtime,” she chuckled as she opened the doors to let the silverette in, “Akira and Kohaku are already up as well though Nao, Sui-chan and pretty much everyone else are still asleep.”

“Oh yeah, the Night class are handling the ball’s preparation right?” Ichiru asked conversationally, hoping for the chance to finally ask his question, “It’s better than preparing for a class booth.” He
added with an awkward laugh.

“But it must be marvelous to attend one,” Anne excitedly exclaimed, “It’s a shame that it’s not something that the Night class students will be able to do.” She let a bit of disappointment hint in her tone though she already decided that she’ll definitely attend them, even if it means abandoning sleep altogether as it will start very early indeed.

“Uhm, yeah. Well, it can’t be helped since you’ll all be asleep by then and you still have a grand ball to organize. At least we’ll all meet at the evening ball.” He didn’t need to point out how risky it is to let out all the vampires unsupervised during the event so he just pacified his niece whilst being led to another room which turned out to be the dining hall where the identical twins Akira and Kohaku were seated with breakfast already served.

“Oh, Ichiji, good morning. What a pleasant surprise.” Kohaku greeted him once he entered the room. It was empty except for the four of them.

“Good morning uncle! Would you like some breakfast?” Akira offered after Ichiru seated himself in front of Kohaku with Anne taking the one besides him.

“Oh, no, I’ve already eaten, thanks.” He politely declined, his nervousness returning again.

They sat in companionable silence, awkward for him, while he internally prayed to all who’ll hear him up above to give him the chance to put him out of his misery. The suspense is killing him.

Because he’s stupid and he’s clearly not thinking right.

It all started with the advertisement that he saw yesterday as he was waiting for his brother and the chairman to get back after some kind of interrogation. It was just about the normal, cute and adorable commercial for baby diapers. He was smiling at the cute cherubic face of the infant in the ad and was innocently wondering what Hana’s child would look like. He imagined a beautiful child with the same golden tresses, cupid bow shaped pink lips, and fair skin. His eyes travelled at the white bracelet he’s wearing. For the eyes, it would be nice if they’ll get his own lilac colored ones.

He was stupidly trying to rein his grin at the thought when it struck him.

Children.

Oh shit.

It’s not impossible!

He jumped on his feet at the idea, not that he’ll have children in the future but that they might already have successfully made one.

That night.

Oh hell, they didn’t think of using contraception that night.

That’s what one gets for being such a horny, hormonal teenager.

It’s not like he didn’t want it, it’s just that he might not be ready for it yet.

But he’s human… no, that’s irrelevant.

Anne-chan said that conception was most definite what with the abysmally small number of their kin, like two. Duh.
So he’s really…. Huh…

Will he be able to take responsibility?

He wanted to but he’s somehow scared.

So much so that he didn’t know what he wanted more.

For him to be pregnant or not.

He needed to know so he immediately went to the closest pharmacy earlier, in disguise of course, and bought a pregnancy examination kit as soon as the store has opened. He was furiously blushing and unsure as he did the test.

Will this even work on male? Goodness, what completely sane people with dicks would even think about using them? The Kiryū twins, who else?

He was grimacing at the thought while waiting for the result and was quite surprised to see a negative sign. He looked at the instruction and read the label again but the result clearly meant that he’s not pregnant.

Why?

He was so confused and unsure, thinking that it might be because this kind of examination doesn’t work for men but he doubted it. The contraption was hardly a feminist. Surely, it won’t condemn him for being a man. He was unsettled but could only sigh as he decided to ask the children for they would of course know when he’ll have his first child. He was actually proud of that smart assumption, only now that he’s here, he can’t just ask outright or actually didn’t know how.

“Is there something bothering you, Ichiji?”

Ichiru was pulled out of his head at the sound of concerned inquiry by his niece. He looked beside him to face Anne, “It’s nothing really,” he swallowed and in the most natural voice he could muster continued, “I was just curious, you know, seeing you all here, w-when I’ll have my own c-child.”

The children were clearly caught off guard. The silverette bit his lip as he watched his brother’s children look at each other with alarm in their eyes. Did he just say something he shouldn’t have? “I mean, I’m human so I didn’t know if… if you know… I-I’ll experience something like nii-san is experiencing.” He added just to give some explanation, “You did say that conceiving is very high with only the two of us remaining, right?”

Anne looked back at him with concern, “That’s indeed correct Ichiji. Normally, it matters not if you’re human or vampire, you’ll still be able to rear a child but…” he dreaded what she’ll say next. And he was right to fear it, “it will be hard for you, Ichiji,” she finished softly.

“W-why? You said it’s possible, right?” he can’t help the small quiver in his voice as he asked.

“Certainly, uncle,” it was Kohaku who continued, “Your blood will want you to bear children but it will first and foremost prioritize your own safety.”

“…You mean…”

“You could possibly die if you’re to conceive now,” Anne answered. She was tempted to add ‘with your body as it is now,’ but she can’t without raising any questions.
Ichiru was speechless. He felt cold and he somehow couldn’t breathe. He wanted to laugh no matter how hollow he felt. He’s extremely stupid. How can he forget?

Of course, no matter what, he just can’t escape what he is.

A pathetically weak and sickly human.

He won’t be able to survive it.

“Uncle, are you okay?” Akira asked, concerned with his silence.

The silverette looked up at them. He smiled, albeit weakly and forlornly, and was about to say something when they were joined by the Moon dorm president.

“Good morning. It’s a surprise to see you here, Ichiru-kun.” Kaname greeted as he walked towards their table. The older brunette smiled as he bent down so his children can kiss his cheeks before returning his gaze to the silverette. He frowned at his expression, “Are you quite alright? Is something the matter?”

“Yeah, yeah, senpai.” He assured them as he stood, “Please don’t worry about me, I’m fine. I just… I just remembered that my classmates are probably shouting for my bones so… I need to go back to… to help them,” he laughed awkwardly and knew he didn’t fool anyone, if the concerned expression on their faces was any indication. “I better go back. Uh, see you around then.” He quickly made for the door before anyone can say anything in response.

He didn’t know where to go. He sure didn’t want to go back to the festival preparation or the dorm and the chairman will kill him if he finds out that he ditched homeroom so he can’t go back anywhere the teachers can spot him. In the end, he just decided to go to the woods.

He felt so empty.

He can’t believe that even after all this time and his every attempt in at least passing the bare minimum to be recognized, to be less pathetic and not entirely useless, he still can’t get anything done.

Sure, it’s not like pregnancy is a duty or something. Hell, it’s not even supposed to be possible for men but that fact didn’t stop him from feeling like an utter failure. He felt as if he let Hanabusa down.

What will he say once he found out that though it’s supposedly possible, he still won’t be able to bear him a child? He wondered if he’ll be disappointed.

Hana is the only son of his parents. The heir to their noble line.

Isn’t having children like… important to them?

He sighed dejectedly.

He hopes that the vampire loves him enough to be able to forgive him for that.

He managed a smile at the thought. Yes, he’s sure that Hanabusa will forgive him for that.

The real question was… will he be able to forgive himself for letting him down?

His thoughts were prematurely cut when he sensed some intruders nearby and heard some rustling among the leaves. He was instantly on alert as he tried to feel the presences with his meager hunter abilities, a hand on the plain red stud in his ear to be able to take out his katana if an attack happened.
He waited in suspense silence but suddenly the auras were gone.

Did he just imagine it?

He stood waiting for a few more minutes for good measure but no surprise blows happened. No gunshots or even whispers. He was alone in the woods with his thoughts and though he still doubted it as he can’t be too sure with his abilities, still he could have sworn that he felt something.

Some vampires were watching him.

*Okay, this is it!*

She took a deep breath before going out of her designated room to charge at her older brother’s study. The door opened, just like usual, even before she could knock. Yuki made a tentative peek before entering. Her brother sat behind his desk with his vice-president beside him seemingly discussing something and his three eldest children, in chibi form, sat around the coffee table as they go through the short stack of papers with some tea and biscuits.

“Err, g-good morning Kaname-niisama, Ichijou-senpai, Anne-chan, Kohaku-kun, Akira-kun.” She greeted as she closed the door behind her.

“Good morning.” Everyone greeted her back, Ichijou a bit meekly in contrast to the children’s lively one.

“No, nii-sama?” Yuki began, fidgeting the hem of her top. She specially dressed extra cuter today for, if everything goes as plan then, she’ll be out with her crush in the next ten minutes, “I, uh, I need some help in… in buying some tablecloths for the, uh, our booth. I-I hope you can help me.”

“Ah, is that so,” Kaname replied in a serious, flat tone, “I would have loved to help but I have some pressing matters to engage to today. I’m afraid I can’t accompany you.”

“Oh dear!” Anne exclaimed anxiously, with more feeling, a hand on her cheek, “I would have loved to come with you instead aunty, but I’m afraid we’re quite busy as well.”

“W-w-”

“Indeed, there are some films and photographs to be developed,” Kohaku joined in as he perceptively read the intent, immediately putting a hand on his twin’s mouth to prevent him from speaking, “I’m so sorry, aunty.”

“Takuma, please escort my sister for today.” The pureblood nonchalantly commanded.

“Eh?”

“Since Aido is still with Ichiru and the rest of the Night class handles the preparation for the evening banquet, I’m afraid no one is free to protect Yuki.” The pureblood stressed the word ‘protect’ to make sure that the responsible gentleman in the noble will accept for given the occurrences last night, there was no way they’ll allow their pureblood princess without any escort, “The children and I will handle the remaining documents.”
“Uh, o-okay, if… if you say so.” Ichijou hesitantly agreed as he put down the papers at hand.

They were ready to set out but before leaving, Anne made a request, “Ah aunty, if you could be so kind as to do me a favor, I’m in great need of some stationeries and some fruits for otou-chan. Also, Rima-bachan told me that there’s this café that sells these divine strawberry short cakes. I hope you could get some for me as well, please.”

“Oh, no worries. Leave it to us!” Yuki enthusiastically accepted.

“Thank you, aunty. Have a safe trip!”

And then they were gone.

“……….”

“Seriously, what’s going on?” Akira suspiciously glanced at the three other vampires. He found the earlier exchanges quite unnatural since he knows that in some other detached space, his sister owns and conceals so many stationeries, food, treats, and other useless (and not so useless) things to last anyone a lifetime.

“Oh dear Akira, you have a long way to go.” The little princess sighed sympathetically.

Akira scowled. ‘And you have a long way to go in acting,’ he wanted to say out of spite but thought better of it.

“It was good thinking, Anne, to send them to several places as well.”

“Thank you, chichiue.” She beatifically returned her father’s smile. “I figured that aunty might become too nervous to invite Takuji for tea and stopping by so many places will allot them a longer time together.”

“Well, the rest depends on their own feelings and determination.” He spoke as he refocused on the paperwork at hand.

Akira made a face as he finally understood, chagrined at being so slow while his twin only continued with his task.

“By the way father, where is otou-chan this morning?” Akira asked after a few minutes of companionable silence. He concentrated briefly and found that their other parent was nowhere inside the academy.

“He went on some business with the chairman.” Kaname answered simply. Zero told him that they’re running a short errand for the association though he didn’t expound further but he’s not worried for his trustworthy friend is with him.

“How about Ichiji? Did you tell Hana-jiji about earlier?”

Kaname stopped for a moment, quite concerned about his mate’s twin. Being a pureblood, he of course heard the conversation between his children and his lover’s brother and immediately understood the concern. He was still debating with himself if he should let his subject know of this as it clearly bothered and troubled Ichiru but since the silverette chose to come so early in the morning just to ask his question even after knowing full well that no one should have been awake yet means that it was deliberate and that he didn’t want anyone else to find out. He quietly sighed, “No, I did not. I think that your uncles’ affair this time should be handled privately between the two of them. We cannot mend this for them.” He decided.
Aido Hanabusa might irritate him most of the time with his overzealousness and interventions but he knew of his sincerity. If he’s any judge at all, he could confidently say that this shan’t be a problem for them, Ichiru only needs to have the courage to talk about it.

“Uh, okay chichiue.” Akira conceded. He was so worried that he wanted to inform his uncle Hana but if his father ordered otherwise then he’ll obey.

“We understand, father.” Kohaku and Anne also nodded.

They were having a quiet time as the four went on with their respective work and were almost finished when Kaname felt a sharp ache. He abruptly stood up, a hand over his heart, when he felt the surge of pain kept on flowing through the bond.

“Chichiue? Is something the matter?” the elder twin inquired upon noticing his disturbance.

But Kaname didn’t acknowledge it as his whole attention was focused in feeling his mate through their connection. His eyes were tempestuous pools of blood as rage and apprehension filled him, unconsciously releasing his stormy aura causing havoc inside the room, creating fissures in the windows and glasses simultaneously alarming the children.

*It can’t be.*

“Zero.”

Finally, they reached the center of the building where the president’s office is located. It was just as he remembered, with high ceiling supported by several pillars. The hall was filled with the sound of their steps on the marble floor and murmurs of the hunters present huddled in the dark corners.

“Hmmmm,” came from a buffed blond hunter who was leaning on a pillar, “There’s a ward placed at the entrance of this building to repel vampires but if you were able to come in, that means you’ve been *domesticated* then,” he taunted, “Ah, there’s your brand.”

Zero glared at him but said nothing while Kaien opened his mouth to say something but the voice of a new arrival prevented him.

“That should be enough,” intervened the association’s president as he elegantly glided towards them wearing his ornate and colorful robes, his hair beautifully tied up like a woman’s and his decorative fan held gracefully by long delicate fingers, “Zero is a respected ally. He was born to the Kiryū family, a family superior even among hunters and with the power of a vampire, he has become an even more dependable ally. And perhaps more…” He trailed meaningfully.

The buffed blond bowed apologetically, “Forgive me, president, I just…” he glared at the silverette, “He is, after all, a vampire…”

“You’re being stubborn.” The president mildly scolded as he lightly hit the blond hunter with his fan.

“Forgive me.” He apologized again, half-heartedly, before going away.

The president turned to Kaien and Zero the moment the other hunter was gone, “Zero, you’ve grown
big.” He pleasantly remarked, the closed end of his fan on his lips, “Shall we go have some tea?”

“We’re only here to report.” Zero coarsely replied. He didn’t want to play niceties with this bastard and pretend everything is pleasant and fine between them.

“My, you’re cold, Zero.” then turning to the old veteran hunter, “Cross-kun! I think you might have made a mistake with your education policy.” He shook his head when neither of his visitors rose to his playful banter, “I understand, well then Zero, why don’t we talk in the library? Cross-kun, please stay here, I want to talk to the little Kiryū alone.” He didn’t wait for any reply and went on his way to the direction of the library.

“Zero, if-,” Kaien started but the silverette cut him off.

“I’ll be fine.” was all Zero said as he quietly followed their president. The sooner it’s done, the better.

He entered the old library, the president already waiting for him inside. The smell of old books and dust immediately filled his nose with the eerie and gloomy air hovering as light scarcely peeked from the closed windows. There was no one else inside but the two of them. Zero stood in the middle of the room as the president glided near one of the shelves, feigning interest in the books encased.

“A most interesting information has reached my ears, Zero,” he started, “I wonder… why an ally happened to forgot to report acquiring some powerful and dangerous creatures to the headquarters?”

The silverette took a deep breath for calm, “If you meant my children then you’ll have to excuse me. I didn’t think that my family is any of your business.”

“Children, eh?” he slyly glanced at the hunter, “But yes, I’m afraid it is my business, a very important business, especially if they were conceived together with a vampire.” he turned towards the silverette, “Or have you forgotten? He’s a pureblood.” He sternly looked at the silverette, “like the one who murdered your parents and doomed you.”

“I haven’t but he’s not like those vampires who kill just because it’s fun.”

“Regardless, he’s still one of those creatures. He’s dangerous.”

“Kaname Kuran is not a danger to you.” Zero steely replied as he followed the president’s movements with his eyes.

The older hunter briefly looked at the silverette, a taunting smile appeared on his lips, “I see. You’re in love with him.” He accused with mock disbelief before letting out an amused laughter, “I cannot believe it. Have you gone mad? Must I remind you that you’re a hunter? One that was trained to kill vampires yet you shamefully stand here after offering yourself to a pureblood!” he further derided, “Tell me, did you cry in pleasure? Did he whisper in your ears as he rode you? Did he delight you enough to forget what you are?”

Zero squared his jaw but didn’t say anything; he only clenched his fists tightly to prevent himself from throwing a punch. He won’t succumb to these provocations. He ignored the president as he circled him who continued when he didn’t reply.

“You’re a Kiryū, from one of the most prestigious line of hunter families and yet you stand here unabashedly when you’ve already sullied yourself. Can you even swear to me that you’re still a loyal hunter when you’re in love with one of them?”

“Who I chose to be with is no one’s concern but mine.”
“You didn’t answer the question, little Kiryū. Are you still one of us?”

“I am and nothing will change that. I’m still a hunter.”

“But you’re now mate to a vampire who is king to those who killed many of our kin.”

Zero closed his eyes in order to block the unsightly image of their president. He knew what this bastard was trying to say and just how badly this plays for him because he’s a hunter mated to a vampire.

But isn’t it the same for Kaname? He’s a pureblood mated to a hunter, no matter if that hunter is now a turned vampire with ancient blood desired by vampires. Still, he’s a hunter that killed many of Kaname’s kin and will more likely continue to do so. Zero just realized that not once did Kaname ever ask him to stop being a hunter. He always just encouraged him to be what he is, always telling him how he loves him, awkward and broken as he is.

“Why can’t I just be myself? A hunter that still protects even though I’m a vampire and a vampire’s mate?” he asked the president. The he from several years ago will find his own words ridiculous but it’s what he has learned recently. To accept. For even through his darkness and abjection, there are still people who loved everything about him.

That’s right, as even when he thought he has fallen to the lowest circle of hell, he was still accepted and loved. The chairman, Yuki and Ichiru never left him even with the danger of his level-D status; his sensei and even that irritating Kaito still treated him like they always did and Kaname still cared for him even after everything. He even took that strike for him back in that island. For him. For a worthless level-D.

Why did he never saw it in this way before? Why was he so blind to all of this?

“And how could you even protect when you’re already a monster?” the president drawled, cutting off his internal revelations.

The hunter tightened his grip, almost breaking skin, “I’m not-, I won’t become a monster. I have people who’ll prevent that from happening.” He hissed.

“It seems to me, Zero, that you’ve accepted, no, embraced your vampire self.” He sneered, “Have you fallen so low?”

“I’ve embraced myself. I am who I am.” A hunter, a vampire, a vampire’s mate, parent to a vampire child, each face is all him, “No matter what I’ve become and who I choose to be with, I’ll still be a hunter.”

The old hunter let out a chuckle, “Fufu. Zero, you’re being ridiculous and pathetic. Do you expect me to believe that you can still be a hunter when you let yourself be used by a vampire?”

Zero cringed, hating the president more each second, “I haven’t done anything for you to suspect my loyalty and let me remind you that Kaname is fighting for the survival and protection of humankind.”

“I see he has a devoted advocate in you, little Kiryū.” He remarked tauntingly, “You know, I don’t care what those leeches fight for. They cannot be trusted and so I cannot let such a powerful weapon fall in their midst when they could turn against us anytime.”

The younger hunter gritted his teeth at his child being called a weapon.

“So I want that thing as soon as it has come out.” He finished, finally expressing his goal, unmindful
of the anger he can see from the silverette as he pointed his fan at him.

Zero can’t help the growl that erupted at that statement, “My child is not a thing or a weapon,” he breathed slowly, “You’re not going to use her like you will a gun or a sword.”

“Don’t be a fool, Zero.” He chastised as he went near him, “You’re being used like a breeding pig just because of that blood in your veins. Don’t prove yourself to be whore and do what you owe to your people.”

He gritted his teeth, “No.” he answered firmly.

The association president narrowed his eyes before taking Zero’s wrist, “Follow me.” and forcefully led him in another part of the library. He pulled a lever and part of the wall swung open wherein he dragged the silverette inside.

Zero stumbled, gagging at the scent of dried blood, panicking slightly as bloodlust attacked his system. His heart sped as he clutched his neck to control himself.

“Look here, Zero,” he held out a strip of bloodied paper, “the reports here have been soaked by the blood of our brethren. Everything here was sent from a place of death. These symbolize what our people tried to live for, to protect. What they sacrificed,” he looked into his eyes, “Even after knowing this, can you still refuse? Will you dishonor them? Even what your parents died for?”

The silverette swallowed several times in between his labored breathing as he curbed his thirst. It wasn’t that hard though he was still shaking and considerably sweaty by the time he managed to look at the president who only coldly watched his suffering.

“Ah, how remarkable. Drinking the blood of your mate has done wonders to your savage side. Tell me, how does it feel? To forsake your kin? To betray your parents?”

“My parents died to protect me and my brother. To see that we’ll live,” he panted, “and I am and will always adhere to that which I gave my oath to and that’s to protect humans and kill all the dangerous vampires that are a threat to them but my child won’t be a piece to your games.”

There was silence for a while as the president sternly scrutinized him.

“How disappointing. And I so dearly wanted you to work more for me,” he replied as he took out a piece of paper with unfamiliar symbols from the inside his sleeve and threw it at the younger hunter.

Zero tried to swat the paper away but the moment it made contact with his skin, bolts of severe electric-like current steadily struck him. He collapsed on the floor as he screamed at the agonizing blows, it was like being continuously lashed and beaten by steel whips. It violently swung at him that he heard his own clothes get ripped by brutal currents. He wasn’t even able to stop his howls of agony as it left him a crumpled mess on the floor, his arms around his stomach, fully covered by terrible marks before it stopped after many excruciating minutes.

“How was it? Did it hurt? Was it painful?” he leaned as he asked mockingly, “That’s only a small piece of what you’ll experience if you defy me, young Kiryū, so let me give you another chance. Bring that thing to me and let me raise it once it’s born or you’ll experience a far worst pain than that.” Then he whispered closer to him, “And not only you, what do you think will happen if that twin of yours experienced that? Or your beloved sensei?”

“You!” he weakly jerked his head, “You’ll fucking start a war!”

“And it won’t matter once I have an exceptional weapon in my hands. A trump card. This will be
key, Zero, for the hunters to stand superior. Peace will be eternal if we can be at the pinnacle of power so we’re going to teach that thing to be a loyal hunter even before it can be contaminated by vampire values.” he spoke as he straightened himself, “You’ll have months to think about this. Don’t make the wrong decision that will cost you everything.” He gave out a final warning before he glided out of the room.

Zero was left seething inside that damnable chamber. He barely staggered outside and it already made him feel hell, like all his bone had melted and his skin was slowly being peeled off, and with his healing ability completely impaired because of some sort of hunter spell in that attack, he was mending very slowly. He didn’t know how long he stayed lying on the floor as he embraced his lower middle protectively. Somehow, he wanted to cry, in hopelessness and anger, as he felt powerless against something greater than him.

It’s frustrating.
It’s agonizing.
How could he have let such evil hurt his child?
Why is such a demon the Hunters’ president?

He still has not yet recovered and was almost unconscious when Kaien walked in, seemingly in search for him, and happened upon his body half lying outside the secret chamber.

“Zero!”

He gaped in shock at the sight of his son thoroughly battered, with his coat completely torn and his skin marred by deep distinct slash marks though there’s fortunately no bleeding. Rage instantly filled him and he would have flown to take that wretch’s head if not for Zero needing immediate attention. He helped the silverette sit down and the pained expression, burning sweaty ashen skin, labored breathing and the way he hugged his stomach sent fury boiling inside him as he clutched the red ring adorning his thumb.

“Don’t even think about it.”

“Zero.” Kaien breathed in relief at the first sign of life from the young hunter.

The silverette opened his eyes, welcoming the sight of his relieved guardian, “Don’t even dare go after him.” He rasped as he adjusted himself in his seat, “even if you manage to kill him, that bitch has many supporters and followers.”

It will only cause the academy to be raided by that bastard’s goons.

The blond turned grim, understanding the consequences. He shook his head to redirect his attention to his son instead, “Let me get you out of here then.” He knew there are lots to be discussed and that a new problem just arose but he wanted to take Zero to a much safer place before anything else is done.

His heart heaved as he assisted his beloved son up but more than him, he just knew Zero felt even worst.

Oh, how the pureblood king is going to kill him.
‘You’re a disappointment.’

“Ichijou-senpai?”

Yuki’s voice drowned the voice of condescension in his memories and he was instantly jarred out his musings. He turned to give her smile, albeit one that didn’t reach his eyes, as he willed away many unhappy thoughts, “What is it, Yuki-sama?”

The pureblood was momentarily frozen at the epithet, frowning as she tried to think about what to do or say first. She’s worried, nervous and confused. She didn’t know which one to address first. First, there was this uncharacteristic silence from the noble since earlier then there was that unbefitting melancholic expression and lastly, that sudden formality which drew a high and sturdy wall between them. She knew she’s being pushed away but she wanted to know why.

Even if she’s scared of the answer, she still needed to know.

“Uhm, I wanted to thank you for coming here with me,” she started in a cheerful manner which broke when she started to stutter, all the while fiddling with the beverage coaster of the café that Anne mentioned. She’s so nervous that she began to wonder if she should have ordered tea instead of coffee, “Ehm, I… uh… would have been in trouble, I mean, carrying all those bags…”

“It’s my pleasure to be of assistance, Yuki-sama.” The noble replied in an unexpectedly quiet tone.

The brunette looked at her companion briefly before finally venturing dangerous waters, “Ano, senpai? You know, you can call me Yuki-chan like you always did before.”

Somber emerald orbs met nervous and pleading sardonyx ones. Pain ate his heart as he watched those expressive eyes on him. He knew of what she’s feeling, how could he not? When he’s been watching her for so long and it hurts more to know that he can’t have it even now that she’s freely holding it out to him, “If that’s what you wish, Yuki-sama.” He responded in a hollow tone that greatly reflected his dying heart.

Yuki’s delicate brows creased even deeper at that. No, she didn’t want this. It’s like he’s complying because he was ordered to. She didn’t want that. Yuki only wanted to go back to how it was before. What’s wrong? What changed exactly? What happened? She wanted to cry out but before she can voice any of her questions, Ichijou spoke again.

“Are you excited for the coming Winter Solstice Yuki…chan?” he started, redirecting their conversation to safer fields.

“Eh? Ah, I don’t know.” She distractedly answered, getting more and more confused each second.

“I’m sure you’ll love it. You’ll be introduced as a pureblood then and for sure you’ll meet many with the same status other than Kaname. I’m sure many await your debut.” He bleakly continued as he sipped his tea.

Eh? She didn’t know why but these words were like premonition of an impending storm. Yuki felt unsettled as she glanced at the aristocrat. Is this what changed? Her status? Her being an exalted pureblood? She swallowed, “I… I think… I like it better with the Night class nobles,” she tightly held the hem of the table cloth as she spoke, “o-other p-purebloods may not l-like me anyway. After all, I’m clumsy and inelegant.” she convinced.
“Please don’t say that,” Ichijou disagreed as he looked straight in her sienna eyes, “Yuki-chan is surely the most beautiful and outstanding pureblood, that I’m certain.” He supplied with utmost sincerity.

She smiled as he spoke, seeing a glimpse of the Ichijou she knew, feeling relieved as it showed she was not hated after all.

The aristocrat caught himself as he realized what he just implied and so added, “I’m sure that the other purebloods will love to meet you. I just know they’ll be scampering to ask for your hand.”

The pureblood’s shoulder slumped at that, “Is there a law saying a pureblood must be together with another pureblood?” she thoughtlessly asked.

Ichijou froze, “None.” He answered truthfully though he didn’t meet her gaze.

“Then are there laws stating a noble must only marry another noble?”

“…None.”

The silence that permeated their space cut them off from the rest of the world as the pureblood stared at the golden crown of the noble who adamantly refused to meet her scrutiny.

Yuki swallowed her heart to stop it from climbing up her throat as she gathered all her faltering courage. At this point, it’s impossible not to ask for she knew that he knows just how she felt. “I-Ichijou-senpai, if you don’t hate me then p-please go out with me!” She blurted out as her heartbeat deafened her, surprising even herself at the confession. She can’t believe she finally said it!

Ichijou’s heart stopped as his fear came true. He clenched his fists while his heart suffered the most unbearable torment as he feigned ignorance, “Aren’t we already out, right now?”

Her pink lips trembled at his reply. She stared blindly at the tablecloth as fear burned tears in her eyes, “Y-you know I didn’t mean t-that. I-”

“Please Yuki-sama.” He interrupted her, fully knowing what she wanted to say but he can’t allow himself to hear it, “You don’t know what you’re saying. You… there… there are still a lot of vampires you have yet to meet… and I-”

“But Ichijou-sen-,”

“I’ll go back to the academy first. Let me bring this back for you.” Takuma immediately stood up as he carried all the shopping bags they procured. He didn’t want to hear it for he feared what he might do the moment she uttered more of those beautiful words. He can’t allow himself to waver.

He went outside the shop to find that raindrops started to fall but that didn’t deter his feet from carrying him away from the café, away from his heart. The rain immediately got stronger and fell harder but he didn’t even try to cover himself or walk faster to escape despite getting wet. He just let it be, half wishing that it could somehow wash away his fears, insecurities and pain. Better yet, let this tiny drops of water grant him the courage and power to hold on to her but he knew that was next to impossible.

In his heart, the happiness that he felt the moment he realized that his love was reciprocated was brutally murdered when he learned of her lineage. The matter of other more suitable vampires was true but he’ll willingly spend an eternity fighting for her love as long as she chooses him but what he was concerned about the most was the cruelty his own family can deliver to her.
His grandfather…

For sure, the minute that he learned of their understanding, he’ll waste no time in telling him to use her for whatever reason.

And he has no doubt that he’ll gladly go against his wishes no matter the cost in his expense but what power does he truly possess?

Not once was he able to stand up against his grandfather…

So how will he be able to protect her?

With him, she’ll only be used as a powerful piece in his grandfather’s ambition.

And he won’t have that.

He won’t let it.

No, she’s far too important to be put at risk.

She’s much better without him.

Away from the dark tentacles that he, himself, cannot escape from.

He halted his steps and his thoughts when he heard his most beloved call out his name. The sounds of splashing waters resounded as she ran after him. He closed his eyes as he steeled himself and forced his heart to accept the decision he made.

For it’s the only way he can shield her from those ambitious and greedy clutches.

“Do you think I don’t know my own heart better?!” Yuki shouted at his back, stopping a short distance behind the blond, when she finally caught up to him. Both of them were already soaked but they were unmindful of their clothes and hair sticking closely to their skin. Even her tears that steadily fell and mingled with rain water were left unnoticed as her heart tried to reach out to his.

She fiercely looked at the frozen back of the noble, waiting for him to answer and turn back to look at her. She wanted to know why. Please, please, look at me. Please senpai… But to her immense pain, the blond merely continued to walk forward.

He didn’t even glance back at her.

And she was left standing alone under the kind rain which hid her tears as the cruelty of his rejection finally dawned upon her.

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“Oh, dear.” Kaien miserably uttered as he saw who welcomed their return to the academy. In front, leaning against one of the trees, grimly stood the vampire king. He can already tell that this could turn as ugly as the unexpected storm that just passed. He sighed, “Please let us off here.” He ordered the driver of the cab they were riding. Better have no civilians near a raging pureblood, he thought.

Zero swallowed as he turned away from the sight. Damn it. He was planning on not meeting him
until the gash marks disappeared completely for even though it was not as prominent as before, one can still trace obvious pinkish bruises on his skin and his pale complexion only made it more obvious. He clicked his tongue and how would he even explain his clothes? Surely he won’t get away with the simple ‘I tripped’ as a reason.

Why in hell is he even there? Zero distinctly told him he was just running a short easy mission with the chairman. He was sure it sounded simple and nonthreatening so why does he look so serious?

Oh fuck.

The bond.

Okay, now he’s convinced he’s in deep shit.

He dreaded even more when he realized it. He really didn’t feel like getting off the car but knowing better than to test Kaname’s temper in front of a normal human, he swallowed his trepidation and got out with seeming nonchalance and ignorance. Argh! He would much rather face any pureblood in a death match than a serious confrontation with Kaname over his lie. Shit.

“Ara, Kaname-kun! What a surprise! We didn’t expect such a warm welcome!” Kaien cheerfully greeted once the cab was gone, doing his very best to lighten the mood even though the three of them know just how ineffective it was.

The pureblood didn’t even glance at the chairman, his eyes was immediately on his hunter, narrowing as he closely observed his present condition. He tensed as he drank each detail of his battered state, from the mark on his skin to the torn up coat. His aura aggressively stormed around him, silencing even the chairman’s futile cheers and freezing his stubborn lover who looked even more petulant as if he’s refusing to acknowledge his wrong-doing and Kaname’s anger.

“Where did you go?” he asked with strained calmness akin to a taut string that will snap at any given moment, “Who did this to you?”

The young hunter swallowed, not willing to look at his lover, “It’s nothing serious.”

“Don’t even try to mislead me, Zero.” Kaname warned dangerously, “What happened?”

Zero breathed harshly, gritting his teeth as he answered, “I got summoned by the association president.”

“You told me it’s a mission.”

“I…”

“You lied to me!” the pureblood lividly shouted, now with the rare open display of his emotions. A violent gust stormed around them that even the chairman worried that he must take drastic steps to calm the pureblood.

“It’s not-,” Zero was taken aback for surrounding him was the dark current of his lover’s aura, “Kaname, it was just the headquarters!”

“You put yourself in danger!”

“It’s the Hunter Association!”

“Don’t try to fool me. You know as well as I do that it has become rotten to the core and even more
dangerous for you than most places.”

The silverette opened his mouth to retaliate but could not think of any words to say. Of course, Kaname was right. Now, the association could easily be the second most dangerous place for him after wherever that Rido bastard is. Only the Kiryū family’s legacy, his guardian and master’s capabilities and reputation are sheltering him from being attacked by his own kin.

It’s saddening. To think that he’s now unsafe in the midst of those who he still considered as his people. Being a vampire’s mate carrying a vampire child of immense power just shows how he’s being considered part of the vampire world instead of the hunters. He’s more likely to be revered by those creatures he hunts rather than killed. Now, he’s their king’s mate.

And it’s what he has chosen.

To be with Kaname and to stay by his side through the changing era even as a hunter.

The pureblood startled Zero when he held him in a crushing embrace. He remembered the maddening sensation when he tried to pinpoint his lover’s location only to be blocked by some ancient spells. The pain was so unbearable that he would have murdered anyone just for the information of his whereabouts. It killed him not being by his mate’s side even after knowing he was hurt. He started to think the worst. He thought… Kaname tightened his hold around his silverette, “Don’t ever go anywhere where I can’t follow. Please Zero,” he whispered, “Don’t ever let yourself be in danger again.”

Zero relented, all his anger and hatred already melted. It’s because of this person that he can’t come to regret his decisions, even continuing this mere pathetic life he thought of ending multiple times in the past and choosing to live.

He didn’t provide a reply instead he just wrapped an arm around his lover; the apology he wanted to say got stuck in his tongue though hopefully Kaname understood. He sighed, exhaustion finally attacking his senses as the sudden comfort his mate’s warmth and scent lulled him to peaceful trance and he would have fallen asleep right then had it not for the sudden flash of a camera towards them.

“Eh?” the chairman uttered in surprise as if he didn’t realize what he was doing, “this old thing, where did you come from?” he turned to the contraption in his hand as if completely baffled.

“Chairman,” Zero snarled. He detached himself from Kaname and stalked menacingly towards his guardian who immediately hid his precious camera inside the red ring’s dimension around his thumb. “Give me that!”

“No, Zero-kun, not my baby.” He pleaded as he hugged himself.

Kaname sighed, mildly shaking his head at his friend’s old antics, “Don’t exert yourself, Zero. You need to be treated.” and fed, he thought as he took his lover’s hand and led him away from the headmaster who sighed in relief and towards the Moon dormitory, the ex-hunter cheerfully following behind them.

Up the nearest tree, unbeknownst to the three of them, comfortably perched their five little royals. They merged with the darkening sky and concealed inside their brother’s barrier as they watched the exchanges between their parents.

They all smiled contently, Akira sat on a big branch with his feet comfortably stretched out along it, his back on the bark while his elder sister boldly and fearlessly stood just in front of him unsupported by anything and his twin Kohaku, with the young silverettes leaning on his either side, sitting with
their feet dangling freely.

Anne sighed happily and relief after seeing that their otou-chan made it back quite safely.

“Nee-chan.”

“Hmmm?”

“Nee-chan.”

“What?”

“Isn’t that a bit too much?”

“What do you mean ‘that’?”

“I meant that camera you’re holding!” Akira pointed at the video camera his sister was using to record their parent’s touching moment. Really his sister, it’s been decades but sometimes he can’t help but be exasperated because of her antics as she’s currently holding the most high-tech video camera back in the future, eighty years from now, and only used by media companies.

“Well, this is a precious, treasured moment! I’ll be very sorry indeed if I let such important occasions pass by unrecorded and I shall irk myself should I find low quality footages in my collection of our parents’ special moments.”

“You look suspicious, nee-chan.”

“Nonsense.”

“Really, you look like a stalker.”

“My dearest little brother Akira, you should thank your God-given gifts. If not for your barrier concealing us, you would be swimming with the fishes by now.”

“Nee-chan, without my barrier, you would be called a pervert by now.”

“Ho-ho, is this retaliation I hear from your lips, little brother? Are you so courageous now that I do not have any means of giving you a little expedition to Antarctica? Do I need to remind you that I happen to have an excellent memory and I have never, I repeat, never forgotten an insult?”

“Come on, nee-chan, I was just joking.”

The two smiled at each other (Anne, icily while Akira, pleadingly) for a few minutes while Naoto watched them in silence.

“Ignore them, Nao.” Kohaku said in a quiet tone as he unalteringly observed their silverette parent. He squared his jaw as he reined his anger as to not make a fuss about it that would throw those two monkeys’ efforts to waste. It will be disastrous should these two little silverette angels attack the hunter’s association in vengeance as they all can clearly see the abused state of their father.

“Haku-niichan, otou-chan -,”

“Shhh, Sui-chan,” he soothed as he gently rubbed their backs, “otou-chan is well. Look, he’s walking perfectly fine. Don’t worry. He’s with chichiue now.”

“Is it the association president?”
The three eldest swallowed.

“Err, we don’t know, Nao. And don’t think about it anymore. Chichiue will handle it. Don’t worry, alright?” Anne lied but it was for the best. Being with hunter blood and enormous power, it will be a piece of cake for any of them (though excluding her, presently) to just waltz inside the association and take the president’s head but that would cause repercussions against their chichiue, otou-chan, grandpa and Toga-sensei/jiichan.

It will most definitely ignite a war between their races and while they’ll likely be victorious, a lot of lives will surely be lost. No, that old coot is not worth it. They’ll not waste their parents’ and grandpa’s efforts for someone like him. And also, not while there’s still the danger of their grandpa Rido threatening their peace.

So they can only endure for now.

But surely, there’ll arise an opportunity to exact revenge for what he did, in the near future.

And when it comes, they’ll take it unhesitatingly.

Only if their father didn’t beat them to it.

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“The food is here!”

Kaien cheerfully announced to his children after receiving the ordered foods from the delivery man. He was surprised to find all three of them at home. They all decided to eat in his house tonight but since he was out almost the whole day and nothing was prepared, they just opted in to ordering take out. Normally, this always causes some sort of celebration by his children because for some unknown reason they were really averse to home-cooking - come to think of it, they were only if it’s his turn – but now, no one even acknowledge it let alone make any move. All three sat dejectedly on the sofa causing Kaien to awkwardly stand in the middle of the room for a few minutes like an idiot.

“Uhm… Let me prepare this.” He notified his children but no one even uttered a syllable again.

Three humongous sighs escaped from the three melancholic prefects. It would seem as if they were carrying the weight of the whole world on their shoulders if judged by their grim expressions.

Yuki’s chin was placed on her bended knees which she hugged tightly together. Her despondent chocolate orbs displayed gloomy depths, remembering what passed during this horrible day.

That jerk! Stupid, selfish prick! She whimpered at the reminder. How could he even steal her heart one moment then mercilessly crush it the next? What hurts most was that she was so sure he felt the same. She felt it in their everyday encounter recently, in his gaze, in his smiles, and in the way he tenderly called her name as if it’s a song to the heavens. Had she imagined all that? Was it wishful thinking on her part? Was it all just an illusion made by her weary heart?

Damn it. It hurts!

She really wanted to beat the crap out of him for leading her on, for building her hopes up then smashing it to pieces, but every time her anger bubbles from within her, images of the brief time they
spent together flashes beneath her eyelids as if she needed a reminder of why her heart is in pieces. Suddenly, she was back in that fiery afternoon in the amusement park, in the mall hunting the perfect gift, under the rain while he embraced her trembling body, in her room as he watched her sleep. She closed her eyes and his bright smile would immediately welcome her, she listens and there’s his voice sweetly calling her name and when she closes her hands, there was his hand holding hers tightly.

She mewed inaudibly and buried her face on her knees, feeling her pain intensified by ten thousand folds.

She’ll really clobber that bastard.

Ichiru blindly stared at the ceiling, not noticing the people around him, at once transported to the depressing facts at hand. Hana kept asking him if there was something wrong for he noticed his preoccupation earlier. He wanted to confess what happened but every time he looks into those clear pools of sapphire showing nothing but affection and concern towards him, that sad news kept getting killed in his throat.

He didn’t want anything to take those lights in his eyes and so he was banished to silence while he kept his considerate and loving vampire under the ignorant but blissful shadow of unawareness. Deep down, he’s worried and anxious. He wished for the noble to be informed of this so he can attest that everything will be alright. If Hana still accepts that future even with this knowledge then and only then can he be at ease.

A part of him rebels though for in his musings, an idea suddenly popped up in his mind but he immediately silenced it. He glanced at his brother before he shook his head, feeling guilty for seriously contemplating such a way. He’s being completely selfish…

But really, if he became a vampire…

Zero groaned again, his eyes closed, as he willed unpleasant memories and distasteful facts at hand away for the meantime. It’s freaking exhausting having to deal with one bullshit after another.

He sighed, a hand unconsciously covered his lower abdomen. That nasty old bitch. He’ll really fry him the moment he got his chance. He opened his darkened lavender orbs to blindly glare at the ceiling. He won’t give this child to that bastard Rido or to the association’s rotten dogs or to any smelly greedy assholes trying to stand above everyone else using an innocent life.

What has become of them? The vampires he was no longer surprised with, but the fact that even some of his kin wished to land their abominable paws on his child was so disappointing and depressing. That president really poisoned the previously noble Hunter’s association. He unconsciously gritted his teeth. They needed to be purge.

And he will see it done.

There was also the matter with his pissed off pureblood. He really needed to direct his mate’s anger elsewhere for now. He groaned once more. After what happened today, Kaname has been such a pain in the ass. He even needed to convince him to let him eat in his guardian’s house! It was the idiotic chairman’s own abode and yet he was still reluctant in letting him leave! He even discussed his transfer to the Night class which he already declined once when it was mentioned the night they awakened Yuki. Even she didn’t want to leave the Day class since they can’t leave Ichiru to be the lone prefect.

Argh! This is all messed up! It’s all that bitch’s fault!
But perhaps, he was also to blame for not informing Kaname… *Che. Bonds and mates are all too troublesome.* Zero sulked internally. He’s not feeling guilty, damn it! And he only agreed to sleep in the Moon dorm because he needs to drink from Kaname. He’s not trying to make up to him or any shit like that!

He unknowingly growled. Relationship sucks.

“Zero?”

The honey haired ex-hunter called out to his son who at least let on a sign that he’s alive but when he was fixed with his ever present glare, his smile froze and he shrunk even smaller. He travelled his gaze to his other silent son, “Ichiru?” but then soulless lilac orbs met his inquiring hazel ones. No luck with him as well and so his eyes flitted to his only daughter and he started at her expression. She scowled but her puffy eyes bellied more unshed tears. “Yuki?”

When all three did and said nothing but glare and stare at him blindly, he sighed. Is it the time for the so-called Family heart-to-heart talk? Is this where he gives out advices? Speeches? Should he isolate each of them to talk to them? What should he do?!

He stared at each one of them again. Well, it seems that what they needed, more than a solemn tête-à-tête, are some positive air. It’s better to shower them some sunshine! So after bracing himself for the punches and shoving that are sure to come, he opened up his arms and run to them, “Oh, my beautiful daughter and lovable cute sons!” he dramatically exclaimed before jumping at the trio.

It successfully managed to wake them up for they got suffocated by strong arms that persistently didn’t let go even after they shoved the nutcase away from them.

Yuki’s impending tears instantly dried up as strong arms snatched her into a big group hug, “Wah! Chairman, where did you come from?!?”

Ichiru, who got most of their insane guardian’s weight, was trapped under the blond whack-job and was almost completely smothered, “Chairman, what are you doing?! You’re heavy!”

“Get your ugly mug outta my face!” Zero roared while shoving their mentally challenged guardian’s face away with his hand.

All the ruckus and struggle the three made as they tried to pry the ex-hunter away from them were frozen at his gentle and surprisingly serious words, “No matter what happens, remember that papa’s here, okay? You can talk to me anytime.” He whispered, tightening his embrace.

The prefects all looked at each other and had to fight down a smile as they suddenly felt very light and happy. A faint blush appeared on their cheeks. *Really, the chairman.* They internally sighed in resignation.

“Why do I feel that talking to a dog is much better than talking to you?” Zero muttered, looking away and pretended to be unaffected.

“Wah! Papa’s hurt!”

Ichiru took their guardian’s distraction as an opportunity to throw him off his lap, “I said you’re heavy!”

Yuki chuckled while watching their ever so weird headmaster lament his unfeeling children while sprawled on the floor like a pitiable maiden, “Come on chairman, let’s have dinner!” she invited, holding out her hand.
“My daughter!”

“You didn’t cook, right?” the older silverette asked their guardian who clung to the pipsqueak pureblood like an overgrown koala while they made way towards the dining table.

“Unfortunately, my dear beloved son,” Kaien started, ignoring Zero’s ‘I’m not your son’, “I wasn’t able to cook any of my masterpieces tonight.” All of them sighed, him in dejection and the other three in relief, “but don’t worry! I have set aside a delicious dish I’ve been wanting you all to taste!”

“Hah?!” the prefects chorused in varying degrees of alarm. They thought they were safe! Damn it! They all sat around the table as the enticing aroma of the much preferred ordered take-outs pleasantly attacked their noses but their appetite plummeted when the blond laid out his homemade dish.

Zero’s eyebrow twitched in irritation while staring at the lump of something-whitish that the chairman presented, “What the hell is this?”

“Mashed potatoes!”

_Is he kidding me?_ The older silverette thought though upon looking at the guardian wearing nothing but a face depicting pure joy, he was convinced otherwise. He shook his head before piercing the said unidentified object with his chopsticks and was no longer surprise to lift all of it at once for it was un-mashed and very solid indeed, “I don’t think it’s supposed to be rock solid chairman.” He frowned, scrutinizing it further.

“Indeed, I don’t know what happened,” Kaien wondered, “and I was so sure that I followed the rec-,” he was cut off by the sudden movement his oldest son made as Zero scrambled to get away from the table while covering his mouth before running towards the bathroom.

At this, the two remaining prefects stared in horror at the questionable dish in front of them, “Chairman, what have you done?” Ichiru asked in horror. He saw it when his brother sniffed it and instantly turned sickly pale. Surely this must mean that their guardian has successfully concocted the deadliest poison of all.

Yuki, all the while, was seriously wondering if even she can survive after eating this highly suspicious object, “You-you’re amazing, chairman.”

The honey blond perpetrator turned to his children with a look of utter heartbreak, profusely claiming that it was one of the superbly delicious dishes he has ever cooked using only the finest ingredients and even while the prefects looked at him sporting blatant disbelieving expressions, he still managed a smile.

Ah, at least now, they’re feeling much better even for a moment, he mused. _Guess it was worth it to keep that masterpiece stored. Hmmm, was it yesterday or the day before?_ Oh well, he knows it will still taste fantastic. He’s convinced as he persuaded all his children, even the ashen Zero who was edging away from him and his masterpiece since he came back from the comfort room, to partake in his lovely dish.
Another night, just like any other night in Cross Academy, she still walks and patrols like a normal prefect. Still in her black Day class uniform and other than the newly acquired vampire instincts and power, nothing should have changed… and yet, here she was, doing her undertaking soullessly.

That jerk. Yuki sniffed, downcast.

That was a load of crap, that date was. She wanted to cry again in frustration for she can’t understand what was wrong with him. How can he even say those things? What was the real score? Where does the problem lie? To her who was now an exalted pureblood or to him, who he believes was an undeserving noble?

Why was it even an issue?

Who dictated anything about a pureblood being together only with someone of the same high status?

What was the point of her reclaiming her memories if it was the reason why she cannot have him?


Yuki suddenly jerked, halting her steps, after becoming aware of a presence… a powerful one…

She immediately took Artemis from its ridge, wincing at the sudden painful current of her weapon (it has been reacting strangely to her ever since she awakened as a pureblood) but enduring it, she looked up to see multiple bats hanging upside down on the branches of trees around her and though it would normally alarm her, the bats seem somehow familiar.

“Bats… Weird…” she murmured, trying to feel more and identify them as she can be sure that they were not normal winged mammals…

Vampire’s bats.

“They seem to be the same type as onii-sama’s bats, but… but…” she frowned, trying to pinpoint the difference. She only saw her brother’s bats once or twice and since she’s only been a pureblood for a short time, she’s still not that familiar with sensing another’s power. She was still deep in thought, trying to sense more, when the bats flew and assembled just in front of her.

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The creatures formed and Yuki was wide-eyed as she beheld another vampire seemingly with child-like anatomy. After the cloud of bats dissipates, she was able to make out a light haired male wearing an odd attire of laced white shirt with blue ribbon tied around his neck, black puffy short, tights, boots and top hat.

“Good evening~!” the new vampire greeted in a sing-song and playful tone, “What a surprise~! I was thinking of meeting that hunter but look who I met instead~! You must be the little brat from the Kurans.”

Yuki’s eyes narrowed, immediately assuming defensive stance. How did this vampire learned about her? She has been awakened only for a while… and how did he manage to get in Cross Academy undetected until now? No, wait… this aura… “You are… a pureblood too, aren’t you?” she asked experimentally.

“Right on the mark~!” the childish vampire replied, giving her a smile that didn’t reached his eyes,
“I’m the head of the Touma clan and I’m here juuust to introduce myself so can you tell me where Kiryū Zero might be?”

This alarmed Yuki. She gripped Artemis tighter despite her weapon’s apparent aversion to her new form, sensing something sinister about this new intruder, “No.” was her firm answer.

Touma made a tut-tut sound in mock disappointment, “The stage is finally starting to move towards the bloody violence that I love so much! So, you know what that means~?” his smile and tone fell, replaced by wickedness unbefitting his adorable visage, “It means you need to get the hell out of the way and don’t disturb my enjoyment!” he finished nastily as he dispersed in to multiple bats once again.

The prefect was only momentarily frozen at the instantaneous movement of her enemy but was able to brace herself for the attack. She was already prepared to swing Artemis at the first bout of bats coming her way when three presences made themselves known. She gasped as her view got obscured by broad shoulders clad in white with the longish dark brown hair of her savior. She watched as Kaname easily slashed the attacking bats, disintegrating to black puddles on the ground and heard the noise of a gun releasing its rounds near behind her but what caught her attention so strongly was the sound of sword being unsheathed close beside her. Her heart clenched as she turned and sure enough, Ichijou-senpai also came to her rescue.

From then, it became a blur of movements and noise of weapons as Kaname, Zero and Ichijou made short work of the bats that it didn’t even take five minutes before it all fell but just as Yuki thought that it was already over, her brother and best friend turned towards the collection of black puddle.

“Awwww, they noticed me~~” the playful voice came from the black pool where Touma’s head emerged from, “Awwww, bummer. I just wanted to sharpen my blades on her a little. No need to look so scary.” He playfully stuck his tongue, “Well, tooooobaaad~!”

“Disappear. I don’t care if this is just an alter version of you. I’ll still beat it to a pulp until it doesn’t work anymore!” Zero ferociously threatened as he pointed Bloody Rose at the irritating pureblood.

Touma’s eyes flashed at the sight of Zero but when his gaze fell on the vampire king intimidatingly towering over him with a promise of slow murder hinted in those bloody pools, he was forced to reply, “Okaaay~~!” he pouted, seemingly unaffected, “Bye-bye~~!”

All four closely watched as the last of the child-like pureblood’s body turned to numerous bats and flew into the night.

Kaname eyed the bats, already calculating the exact revenge he’ll do, contemplating actually attacking the audacious and foolish vampire in his own castle though it could very much be a breach of their ‘etiquette’. But still, he needed to question that brat of the reason for his rude intrusion and surely, the attack against his sister, no matter if thwarted, needs proper punishment.

“Touma,” Yuki answered, “He said he’s the head of the Touma clan.” She informed them though judging by her brother’s unsurprised reaction, he already knew that.

“Did he say anything?” Kaname asked as he went near his sister, quietly inspecting her for any injuries though he can’t smell any of her blood.

“He said he was here just to introduce himself… he was looking for Zero.” She supplied hesitatingly,
hating that she’s giving them another reason to worry about.

Upon hearing this, Kaname looked back at the pitch black sky even though the shadow of that vermin has long been gone, eyes narrowing. *One pest after another,* he thought bitterly.

“Are you alright?” Zero inquired, easily brushing the fact that another troublesome fellow has been targeting him, no doubt for some dubious reasons. He’s been concerned about Yuki ever since he sensed the intrusion of another pureblood in the vicinity and though he’s sure that they made it in time, he’s still worried. Though that leech appeared to be a child, he seemed knowledgeable enough in combat and Yuki is just like a new born fawn in utilizing her vampire powers. She wouldn’t stand a chance even if she’s more powerful. He sighed, and knowing that he was the supposed target made him quite guilty for mixing her in his mess.

“I’m fine, Zero, don’t worry about me!” Yuki smiled brightly, expelling the forming gloom. That grim expression on the silverette’s face tells her that Zero is slipping in his bad habits again. He’s always been so fast on blaming himself. Geez, this guy. *You can’t just leave him alone.* “I’m great even! I was just about to show him my best technique but you beat me to it.” She answered animatedly, balling her fists in a fighting pose.

Kaname smiled at her adoringly for her lively spirit, though Zero was a bit more troubled as he noticed the burns Artemis made on her hands while Ichijou only stood quietly, closely observing to ascertain her well-being but not saying anything, feeling he has lost all right after what has passed between them.

They eventually trekked their way towards the chairman’s abode to report. It seems like they needed to revise and strengthen the barrier they planned to erect and security measures they’ve been starting to prepare since the first invasion. They really needed to put up that barrier as soon as possible for a third attack might happen anytime. Clearly, they’ve been too lax and careless, it was just their luck that no damage has been done but they can’t rely on good fortune any longer.

‘What do you think he wanted?’ Zero asked his mate through their bond as they continued their silent walk. Hell if he’ll believe that leech with his reason. He didn’t look like *just introducing himself.* His action spoke volumes of trouble.

‘I shall find out. I’m planning in giving our little guest a visit soon.’ Kaname replied, smiling comfortingly at his lover.

The silverette scoffed at the word *visit.* He’s already too sure it will not be done over tea and cakes. Well whatever, he’s sure that brat deserves it. He was just lucky he didn’t manage to hurt Yuki because he would have definitely accompanied Kaname in *visiting* him had he been successful.

Yuki walked in silence, lagging just a bit behind the others, while quietly staring at the familiar stands of golden hair on a certain noble’s head. How can he act like nothing happened when she feels like her heart was being painfully ripped out repeatedly? But if he didn’t care then why come here to save her? Was it because she’s their princess? Is it because of duty? Obligation? Because of Kaname-niisama? Did those previous actions mean nothing? Were those memories merely out of kindness? Was that affectionate smile something he gave to everyone else?

*Hey senpai, what do you really feel about me?*

Yuki halted her steps, clenching her teeth and balling her fists. She felt so confused and hurt. *If you’re not in love with me then don’t act as if you do!* It’s only making it harder to ascertain the truth in his feelings. *And if you really do love me then why not fight for me!* Argh! He’s either a liar or coward. *This conniving and confounding bas-...* Yuki swallowed the hateful words as she
remembered those precious moments they shared together. No, he’ll always be the one who saved her from those nightmares and the one who protected her when she was most scared.

Wasn’t he the one who held her hand the whole night, who got hurt from holding a vampire weapon just to embrace her and said that he’ll be crazy with her should she fall to madness? Were those out of pity? She believed it was out of love. For he... He... He...

“You jerk!” Yuki yelled at the retreating back of the blond.

All three vampires turned around, quietly surprised at the sudden outburst of the pureblood princess.

Yuki huffed, unable to rein the anger and pain she’s been suffering from, almost in tears because of frustration. It’s unfair. She glared as she walked nearer the blond, her long dark brown hair swung wildly with wind, the other two were forgotten pieces in the background, “You’re such an asshole!”

“Eh?” Ichijou blurted in bewilderment, shocked that his innocent Yuki would say such a word so seriously and vehemently whereas Zero was used to it being called as such many times in the past while Kaname only looked mildly interested and amused as he sensed his sister rising to the challenge of her romance.

“You bastard!” she continued on as she grabbed Ichijou’s collar forward, “Was it fun to keep my hopes up?!”

“Yuki-sa-,”

“I believed in you!” she shouted in agony, tears finally formed and fell down her flushed cheeks.

“Please listen to me.” Ichijou pleaded, a hand around Yuki’s wrist that’s holding him to try and pry them loose.

“No, you listen to me! What you said was discrimination! How could you treat me so specially when I was a human and then just discard me now that I’m a pureblood?!”

“I-,”

“How could you let go of me so fast? Doesn’t that make your feelings for me so shallow?” You loved me, didn’t you? She sobbed, “You’re horrible. Isn’t that the same as playing with me?”

“That’s not true!” Ichijou shouted as he gripped her shoulders tightly, successfully startling Yuki speechless. “I...” he started, tormented emerald-green eyes met equally miserable reddish-chocolate ones. His exquisite face contorted to something heartbreakingly vulnerable as he finally whispered the words that he painfully withheld deep inside his crippled heart, “I love you.”

Tears fell even harder from soft brown eyes as she both rejoiced the confirmation of her deepest wish and lamented the reality of their unhappiness, “Then why?”

“I can’t,” he shook his head unconsciously as he wiped away the proof of her torment with his thumb, “Yuki-chan, I... I’m cowardly and weak... I’m nothing but a puppet. You’ll be in danger if you’re with me and I’m afraid... I’m so afraid I won’t be able to protect you.” He weakly confessed a voice almost breathless.

“Senpai, what do you mean?” she anxiously asked when she saw deep anguish in her favorite green orbs. Who is it? Who’s this nefarious creature that tortures him? Anger seeped inside her core as she cursed the malevolence she didn’t know surrounded the gentle and kind creature in front of her, “Senpai, please.” She desperately urged when he didn’t answer.
The noble was rooted where he mutely stood, looking tenderly in those strong and beautiful chocolate pools. He didn’t want her to know for he knew of her admirable spirit and how she’ll do everything she can to protect him. He cursed himself, ashamed at his own weakness and cowardice but one look in her eyes and he felt like he was completely forgiven. Ah, how was it that she loves him? What did he do to deserve it?

“Senpai, please,” Yuki repeated, gripping a handful of his white uniform. She can’t take it anymore, “Please tell me, senpai. Why?”

Her imploring eyes crushed his resolved that he can’t help but confess, “If you’re with me then you’ll be a pawn to the ambition of the most senior vampire in the council of ancients, Ichijou Asato… my grandfather,” he smiled bitterly and weakly as if the name alone poisons him.

Wide sienna eyes stared tenderly at the blond. She only met that old aristocrat once as a human and even then, she could feel esteem and apprehension towards those indiscernible but undoubtedly cold and cruel icy blue eyes. No wonder. He was so intimidating that his enemies would surely cower in fear under his scrutiny but not her.

Soft chocolate eyes hardened to sardonyx jewels as she made her decision to free her only light from the darkness trapping him. How dare he torment her love? It’s unforgivable. She’ll fight him with everything she got for there’s something she absolutely can’t lose. Nothing can make her let go of this hand! Nothing! Her silent battle cry was halted when slightly shaking hands pulled her closer.

“Please…” Ichijou closed his eyes while embracing her tightly, “I don’t want to hurt you.” He begged, “You’re too precious to me.”

Affection surged her whole being at those words which made her eyes water again. *Why? How can you be so kind? Aren’t you the precious one?* Yuki wasn’t able to say anything and only tightly wound her arms around his trembling body, all the while making a wish.

*Someone, please, please, grant me his heart.*

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“Ichijou tightened his embrace even more as he listened to those miraculous words, unable to utter a single word. Ah, so this is how it feels to hold the whole universe in one’s arms. Elating and frightening at the same time. Overwhelming feelings poured inside him in violent waves as incredible happiness flooded him until his heart hurts. It was strange, how impossible fear chained him and yet he never felt freer than he does at this moment. How precious. How unbearably precious.

“So please, just let me love you.” Yuki continued, giving logical conclusion in their circumstances. It was supposed to be simple anyway. If he loves her then it’s only right that she’ll have him, right? And no ambitious and greedy old schemer should get in between them, “Be mine, okay?” she brightly smiled even as a tear escaped from her.

Ichijou managed a genuinely delighted smile as he loosened his hold to take in the lovely sight of this amazing woman, “It would be a privilege.” And as if it was a force of nature, he instinctively leaned down and took those pink lips in his. He sighed. It was even sweeter than he expected and the innocent and clumsy way she kissed him back only made it more endearing.
Yuki returned the kiss as much as she can while her heart betrayed how nervous she was as it thumped wildly in her chest and her face burned bright crimson. She never knew anything could be better and sweeter than her favorite parfait and pudding. She sighed as he softly moved his lips against hers. It was brief and gentle and while she was not yet ready to part with those silken lips entrapping her in an innocent seduction, she still let him break it to lightly kiss her forehead afterwards. This should be enough for now.

They only stared and smiled at each other for a long while, his forehead on hers, as they enjoyed the cold night wind that cooled down their heated faces and softly ruffled their school uniform and hair. They were silently basking in the contentment of having accepted their understanding when they remembered classes that the noble must attend to and at that, they were reminded of their two companions who they rudely ignored and associated as accessories of the landscape.

Yuki and Takuma snapped their heads to look for the other two, burning bright red from their toes to the roots of their hair, as they realize having performed for them an amazing spectacle only to find they were alone with the trees. For somewhere in the middle of their argument, they didn’t notice when Kaname snaked an arm around a stunned Zero before yanking him to another part of the academy in blurred speed to give the couple some privacy so when the two finally came to, they were unaccompanied in the middle of the woods.

No, seemingly unaccompanied.

“Nee-chan…”

“Silence, Akira.”

“But nee-chan, wasn’t it finished?” Akira whined at his older sister. They were currently inelegantly sprawled and hidden under a dense bush to shamelessly stalk the couple in front like common perverts as their aunt and uncle unfolded their romance. Really, he can’t take it anymore. When they felt another intrusion from a pureblood just earlier they, of course, flew after their parents to help out but even before arriving, it seemed like the ordeal has already been dealt with.

They were about to go back but then they heard their dear aunt’s shout of frustration. He didn’t know if it was a natural talent of their sister to know when such moments were about unravel but she immediately ordered a barrier be made and grab both him and his twin to duck ungracefully under this dense vegetation in order to, again, watch and record the happenings. If he’s any judge, he’d say it’s a crime and he’s being forcefully turned into an accomplice!

“Be silent, dear Akira!” Anne hissed again, “Now I have to make some editing to take out your infernal voice from this.” She shook her head, “That’s right! I’ll just insert some lovely melody since I plan to make this the perfect gift on their 100th wedding anniversary!”

Akira sighed. He wanted to point out that the said event was not even for more than two long decades even back during their time but he just decided to give up. He’ll be nagged again and again so he just held his tongue and copy his twin brother who seems to be feigning slumber all the while pleading to his guardian angels.

Someone save me!

He sighed miserably.

This is indeed the tragedy of their family, to have a daughter who has such insane hobbies.
“'I came here with no expectations, only to profess, now that I am at liberty to do so, that my heart is and always will be yours.'”

Everyone inside the parlor turned to the new arrival and they were all graced by the animated sight of their vice-president. Considering that he just quoted a famous line from a romance novel and movie, they, especially the three little brunettes, were sure of the reasons behind it. No one asked nor commented regarding his cheery mood instead, a certain young lady rose to the occasion.

“Oh, that was absolutely lovely uncle!” Anne swooned, “How about ‘In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.’” She finished with a sigh as she hugged herself.

The blond and brunette smiled at each other in understanding while her little siblings also joined in by quoting different lines from several movies to entertain themselves.

“‘Hope guides me, it's what kept me through the day and especially the night. The hope that after you are gone from my side, it will not be the last time I look upon you.’” Suiren quoted as she looked up from her sketch.

Naoto surprised everyone in the room by quoting one of his favorite lines from a play. “'Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind, and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.'”

“'You had me at hello.'”

“'Swoon. I’ll catch you.'”

"'I think I'd miss you even if we'd never met.'"

“'I wish I knew how to quit you.'”

Ichijou froze for a moment, “I do hope you had parental guidance when you watched that.”

All five children turned at their uncle at this, smiling beatifically but still with no hint of a direct answer. Well, perhaps they were old enough. Ichijou comforted himself as they continued on blissfully quoting famous lines which then turned into a guessing game.

Meanwhile, the only two other nobles sat in silence as they listened to the children and their vice-president happily guess which line came from what movie.

“'It’s a wonder how someone could be so annoying when they’re depressed because of love and be even more so when they’re happy in love.’” Hanabusa grumbled.

“Don’t be like that Hana, you were worse than Ichijou-san.” Kain supplied, deadpanned, also watching the green-eyed noble waltz around as if flying while carrying with him a smile bright enough to burn anyone.

The blond turned to his cousin, looking scandalized, “What? Excuse me but since when did I quoted cheesy lines from romance movies?!”

Kain stared at him, debating with himself if he should point out that while he didn’t spout movie lines, he did, however, bored him with countless poetry and sonnets enough for him to remember
several authors and in his book, that was infinitely worst. But having mercy, he swallowed his retort and instead asked, “What’s the problem?”

Hana sighed as he leaned back on his seat, “Ichiru was acting weird.” Of course his cousin can read him well.

This caught the red-haired vampire’s attention, “Did you ask him about it?” oh no, please let them make up fast. He didn’t think he’ll be able to endure months and months of sleepless mornings again. And he’ll just hang himself should his cousin start reciting depressing poems about broken hearts.

“Of course I did. He wouldn’t say anything,” he answered, his head on his hand, “I wonder…” He’s worried for he has several ideas and he didn’t like any of them.

He, of course, ruled out the possibility of his silverette falling out of love because that’s impossible. He’s confident that they’re no doubt the most perfect couple there is! It’s also not possible that someone else will catch his angel’s eyes for his perfect self has only been more radiant since acquiring his treasured lover. He also made sure that he didn’t miss any important details in their relationship! Their first monthsary is not for several days though he already prepared the perfect gift as always. And even when his popularity threatened to overwhelm them, he always makes sure to assure his lover of his eternal faithfulness and adoration to him… though jealousy is really hard to conquer. Damn. So that’s one infernal possibility.

Though it might not be because of their relationship…

Maybe it that scary costume he’ll be forced to wear? No, that’s ridiculous since it should be obvious that his Ichiru will turn extremely cute no matter what he wears and he was told that he didn’t even know what they will wear just yet… Perhaps, the upcoming midterm examination after the cultural festival? He remembered that it was always a cause for his depression, and Yuki-cha-sama’s, but he somehow doubted it.

Or maybe, someone is bothering him! A persistent stalker maybe and considering his angel’s beauty and natural grace, that’s definitely not impossible! Then he caught himself. No, that can’t be it since he would have noticed being with him at every possible hour… did someone got passed his sharp eyes? That irritated him. Admittedly, their precious moment together were always inadequate because of classes and since the chairman didn’t allow him anymore overnight tickets to his house after finding out about their relationship which mightily depressed him so someone may have taken the chance to get closer to his precious lover! He might be exaggerating but he can’t rule out that likelihood since this is his angel he’s talking about whose innocence still unwittingly seduces him even now. So definitely a possibility.

He sighed.

There are hundreds more other likely reason for Ichiru’s distress and he’s irked that he can’t take it away for him. He blindly stared at his companions only to see silvery lavender orbs in the face of a pale beauty. There’s this one other possibility that he didn’t want to think about…

Hopefully, that was not it. He knew his gentle Ichiru… who’s always been blind about everything perfect about himself… He smiled sadly.

He needs to figure it out fast since his adorable lover could be an idiot sometimes.
“Oi, Kaname. Wake up.”

He felt a nudge and heard Zero call his name apparently trying to rouse him from his sleep. Somnolent eyes slowly opened to find his lover sporting a disgruntled expression, “What is it, Zero?” he languidly inquired reaching out to gently rub a thumb on his cheek as if to wipe away his unease.

“I… I can’t sleep,” the silverette answered, frowning even more as he turned away from the sleepy pureblood, “I’m… hungry.”

Kaname sat up and was about to offer his blood but before he was able to speak, Zero added, “Not for blood… I want to eat.”

The brunette raised an inquiring eyebrow, baffled not because his lover is hungry but because he found his reaction quite confusing for when he was able to shake away drowsiness, he observed Zero’s embarrassment. He stared at his hunter’s blush, his hands clutching the blanket with an unsettled expression, an air of indecision around him as if he didn’t know what to do with himself. He smiled. Ah, how adorable.

“Shall I wake the kitchen staff?”

“No!” Zero blurted out, immediately turning to the pureblood and looking exasperated, with his eyes asking ‘are you an idiot?’, “I just want to eat some… fruits.” He would have done it himself but he didn’t feel like rummaging someone else’s refrigerator as if he owns it. He didn’t know why but he really wanted it. It was the first time his mouth watered for anything other than blood. He wanted it so badly he can’t even sleep even when he tried! Damn it.

“I see. Let me get some for you.” He indulged but before he could even get out of bed, Zero added:

“S-strawberries. Just that.”

He blinked when he saw embarrassment, unrest and amusingly, great determination and desire in his lilac eyes expressing a loud ‘we’ll-have-problems-if-I-didn’t-get-it.’ Kaname affectionately smiled in a reassuring way and nodded before making his way towards the dormitory’s kitchen all the while chuckling while thinking about how incredibly cute Zero was.

He entered the silent and dark dining hall to unsurprisingly find it empty and only then realized that he actually didn’t know where the kitchen is or even how it looked like. For a moment, he seriously contemplated waking someone to help him but decided against it for its shameful and rude to disrupt someone’s sleep for such a reason. Perhaps it was exactly for the same reason that his lover was flushed and embarrassed when he made this request.

Instead, he looked around and went to the place where servants often disappear to whenever he makes his orders. It’s lucky that he has been spending more time eating in this hall to join his children during their meals rather than eat alone in his room. To his relief, he happened upon just one door that immediately led him to a huge kitchen containing more than what he saw in the chairman’s own house.

He looked around trying to figure out where one keeps their fruits. As far as he knows, fruits are kept in one single bowl atop the dining table… ah yes, that was the case in most household… it might be different since this is a dormitory. Alright, then it should be kept… ah, of course, the fridge, isn’t it? It’s a good thing that he already saw a refrigerator once in the chairman’s kitchen… now where was theirs? He turned from side to side, eyeing everything inside the room but none looks exactly like
what he saw in his friend’s house. It can’t be that Moon dorm doesn’t have one…

With no other choice, he tried the classic trial-and-error to search for the godforsaken appliance. Kaname went to the nearest cabinet and opened it to find stacks of plates, then another to find bowls and the next one containing small electrics. He was opening the fifth cabinet when the lights he didn’t even turn on came to life and the gasp of one Aido Hanabusa resounded.

“Kaname-sama!” he exclaimed in surprise. He was just about to refill his water pitcher when he sensed their leader. He blinked at the sight of their beloved king doing something so menial like opening a kitchen cupboard. No, the pureblood standing in the middle of the kitchen is already too unbelievable and unprecedented. “Err… ah… What are you doing, Kaname-sama?”

“Aido, perfect timing. Could you direct me to the fridge?”

Hanabusa blinked for a few minutes before he comprehended just what he was asked, “F-fridge?” “Why is Kaname-sama looking for the fridge? “A-are you hungry, Kaname-sama?”

“Not at all but I’m looking for strawberries.” The pureblood quietly smiled, still waiting for the noble to answer.

“Strawberries…” the blond numbly parroted. Huh.

“Aido?” Kaname jarred the blond out of his thoughts. Zero’s waiting for him, he needed to hurry.

“Hai! Ah yes, the fridge.” He walked towards the large cooler and opened it.

The brunette quizzically looked at the large metallic appliance, wondering why it looks very different from Kaien’s. Never mind, he thought as he watched the blue-eyed blond search for the contents and looked for those reddish pip-full strawberries that his mate currently craves.

The noble searched the inside in the pureblood’s stead but didn’t find one. He checked each shelves, the vegetable rack, the little containers and even the freezer but found not one teeny tiny strawberry. “………….” He nervously looked up at the expectant pureblood, “Err, Kaname-sama? I don’t think the staff stocked some… Uhm, there’s none here. Maybe, it’s because it’s not in season?”

Kaname fell into a deep thought. “How troublesome.” He remembered how Yuki wasn’t able to buy the fruits on her date for reasons she didn’t want to inform him though perhaps that mystery was already solved but his own dilemma still stands: They have no strawberries.

“But there are some apples here. Maybe you’ll like this instead?” the noble hopefully offered.

He blankly stared at the unwanted fruit then remembered the look of his mate when he made the request. “No, I’m afraid that won’t do.” He decided. This is the first time Zero actually made a request so he won’t allow himself to fail him. “Surely, there is somewhere we can purchase them.”

“Of course, Kaname-sama.” Aido answered which unknowingly caused enormous relief in their president.

The pureblood looked at the noble companion currently still squatting in front of the open appliance. Someone needed to go out and buy some. How unfortunate, he sent Seiren out in a mission and though Aido will most definitely obey him, he didn’t like the idea of just waiting whereas someone else fulfills his Zero’s request. He sighed, “Aido, do you know any store that still operates at this hour?”

“Eh?”
“…….” Hanabusa’s in a daze, torn between happiness and lamentation. For sure, he was the only one graced by such rare sights of their beloved Kaname-sama in the middle of the dormitory kitchen and his serious expression while scrutinizing a produce in a 24 hour supermarket but he bemoaned the fact that it was all because of that stupid hunter’s pregnancy cravings. Kaname-sama… their beloved Kaname-sama actually being forced to an errand to satisfy that hunter… He deeply grieved the fact but knowing just what one will be willing to do for the sake of a loved one, he let out a defeated sigh. Well, he knows he’ll do the same for Ichiru so he can definitely relate to it.

And so the noble allowed himself to be blissfully entranced and distractedly followed the pureblood while he shopped for other nutritious foods he deemed Zero might need and pushed the cart containing all the strawberries the market had on their rack. He was content with just watching their leader read the label of a fresh milk carton when he spoke to him.

“How’s Ichiru-kun?”

Hanabusa caught himself, “Eh? Ah, he…” he trailed, slumping a bit at the reminder of his clearly distressed lover, “Physically, he seems healthy but I noticed that something seems to be troubling him as of late.” The blond admitted, fiercely frowning at the red fruits as if they’re the cause of his beloved’s suffering.

“How’s Ichiru-kun?”

Hanabusa caught himself, “Eh? Ah, he…” he trailed, slumping a bit at the reminder of his clearly distressed lover, “Physically, he seems healthy but I noticed that something seems to be troubling him as of late.” The blond admitted, fiercely frowning at the red fruits as if they’re the cause of his beloved’s suffering.

“Is that so? And he didn’t tell you the reason?” Kaname asked while glancing at his subject from the corner of his eyes.

“No, Kaname-sama…”

“You’re the sole male heir to your family’s noble line, aren’t you, Aido?”

“Eh? Yes, of course,” the noble blinked at the sudden change of subject.

“Then before the knowledge of the Kiryū’s lineage and power, have you ever thought that it might just end in your generation?”

“I… I was never concerned about it, Kaname-sama, for I’m hardly the last of the Aidos. My sisters’ child…” he stopped once comprehension dawned on him the moment he looked at his president’s knowing eyes. He immediately understood the unsaid meaning. So that was why…

“Ichiru is quite fragile, take care of him.” Kaname smiled before proceeding to the counter.

The noble followed. He knew that his leader’s words pertained to Ichiru’s emotional strength and his self-confidence rather than his lover’s physical aspect. He knew it. So that was really it. Ichiru really is such an idiot. He smiled sadly. He must quickly fix this erroneous misunderstanding.

“Thank you for your assistance, Aido.” Kaname turned to face the noble before proceeding upstairs after coming back with their purchases.

“No, I thank you, Kaname-sama.” He respectfully bowed down. He’s extremely grateful for letting him understand the reason for his lover’s gloom. He then went back to his room, completely forgetting his empty water pitcher that was left in the kitchen and the initial motive why he went out of his room that evening.

Kaname watched as his subject returned to his chambers, a hidden smile on his lips. Well, so much for letting them handle it privately but he cannot let his lover’s twin be in pointless agony much longer which may become a reason for his own mate’s unhappiness. Still, the rest shall fall in their hands for, right now, he has far more important things to worry about. He must quickly go back to his hunter. Having been gone for much longer than was expected, his lover must be feeling impatient.
and sure enough, a disgruntled expression on a pale face greeted him.

“You’re slow.” Zero grumbled as soon as Kaname opened the door, a knot on his forehead, too impatient in his waiting. He would have gone back to the chairman’s house already had he not remembered that he already used all the damned strawberries when he baked that cake for that party. Oh hell! He didn’t know why he felt so unsettled. He just wanted to eat them. Damn it! What is wrong with him?

Kaname quietly apologized. His lover’s unintentional bright expression at the sight of the fruits washed away any displeasure he would have felt because of his ungraciousness. He smiled as he watched his hunter silently eat, clearly enjoying his meal, surrendering for he can only feel contentment in knowing it was he who delivered such satisfaction in his mate.

“What the hell are you looking at?” Zero mumbled uneasily, his lover’s constant gaze unnerving him.

The pureblood genially smiled, “Please do not mind me. I’m just enjoying the view.”

The silverette fixed his resentful scrutiny to the unperturbed brunette who, if possible, only turned even more delighted as if his annoyance was something extremely captivating and purely adorable. He sighed. Kaname’s disease runs deep.

After being completely sated, Zero was able to rest easy. The crease on his forehead completely vanished as if the sweet fruits were panaceas to his unexplained craving. He fell in a deep slumber, unmindful of the vampire who contentedly watched him sleep with undying devotion in his wine-filled eyes.

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“Quick Zero! Hurry!” the female prefect excitedly exclaimed as she dragged her companion while their other female classmates took hold of a still sleepy Ichiru.

“What the hell Yuki, there’s still more than an hour before the start!” the grouchy older silverette grumbled in annoyance. He was kicked out of bed by Yuki so early in the morning even when he just went to sleep no more than three hours ago because they were busy heightening the security after some vampires got inside the academy. He felt he barely rested at all.

“There are lots to be done, Zero. Remember you’re going to be in a costume today. It… err… will take a long time to put on so come on. You can sleep while we put it on you.” The short prefect supplied while still effortlessly dragging her best friend in one of the empty classroom where his attire awaits. Thank goodness to her vampire strength. It’s now so easy to tow along the towering hunter with her. She gleefully snickered.

“Wakaba-san, Cross-san, I’ll leave Kiryū-san to you two.” Tachibana-san, their class’ vice-president, called out to them before pushing a half-asleep Ichiru inside a different classroom followed by Suzuki-san who’ll help her with Ichiru’s garments.

They looked back at the group as they disappeared in to the other room and Zero had to wonder, “Why are there separate rooms needed?”

Both girls looked at each other for a brief moment which the silverette failed to catch before Wakaba Sayori answered, “It’s to make sure no interruptions are made when we prepare. The other boys are changing in a different room as well.” She provided calmly. She of course left out that all the other guys in their class get to change together in another room as they’re fully aware what they’re getting into.

They just decided that it’s better not to give the Kiryū twins a chance to advice each other against the class’ plans should one of them find out. Even the full length mirrors are covered until the preparations are done. She felt that such precautions were a bit too much but the whole class agreed. It’ll be bad if the Kiryū twins found out and decided to run away. She felt guilty for tricking the twins and honestly do not know how all will play out for even after they manage to dress them, if they decided to hide away and not do their part, hardly anyone can stand up to them though Yuki seems to have a final hidden weapon set aside based on her confident and joyful expression. Hopefully it will be enough.

They entered the room where everything they’ll need were pre-arranged but still covered in white cloth, again so the unknowing victim will remain clueless, and Sayori grabbed a red silken underrobe with a white cord that can be used to tie it close and handed it to Zero who looked at it skeptically.

“Kiryū-san, please take off your clothes and put this on.”

“Why?” the silverette asked as he frowned at the items given to him.

“Well, you wouldn’t want us to undress you ourselves, right?” she innocently answered.

“No, I mean, why is it red? And silk?” he also wanted to add that it’s too thin. He’ll freeze to death before he can even scare anyone. And isn’t it supposed to be white? He’s starting to be confused.

“Well…” Yuki tried to make an excuse but none came into her mind. Thankfully, Sayori was able to
“Well, you’ll know once we’re finished. We’re going all out with this Kiryū-san. Please don’t worry and leave the rest to us. It’s better to close your eyes and attempt to rest since you’ll need presence of mind later on.”

“Huh.” was all the hunter could utter. Is the prize really worth it? He mused as he shook his head. It’s crazy what these people will do just to be able to get near and dance with the Night class at some flashy evening ball. How ridiculous but he didn’t say anything or ask anymore question as it may irritate the normally sweet tempered girl. He has this feeling it will a terrifying thing to behold so he did as he was told and made for the partition already set up for him.

Afterwards, he stood in the middle of the room and let the two girls do what they were task to do but was surprised when Yuki suddenly covered his eyes with a cloth. “What the-, Yuki!”

“This is important too, Zero.” She explained seriously.

“It’s to make sure that no debris… you know, like… like glitters and such, will go into your eyes.” Sayori offered to ease his mind though she internally apologized for all the lies she said. “I think… it will also help you… rest.” your mind, you’ll be happier that way, she guiltily thought further.

Zero could only sigh in surrender. Everyone is being ridiculous. He still felt that the two girls were too suspicious but he let it go for what can a sweet and innocent looking girl together with a harmless idiot, albeit powerful, scheme and do against him? So he resignedly stood still and let his mind wander to even more important matters instead and tuned out the two workers – it was a skill he developed with years of practice to ignore three troublesome creatures who were more likely to spout out nonsense rather than anything sensible through the course of their entire life.

His mind flew to their crazy president. That bastard. He squared his jaw at the recollection of his threat. He has no doubt that he’ll go through with it, that sick asshole. He’ll even touch his brother and his sensei. His master… they weren’t able to get a hold of him just yet…

It can’t be… That bitch wouldn’t touch him until after he knew he’ll never give up his child so surely… surely… Toga-sensei should be safe…

Zero deeply contemplated as he convinced himself. He was so immersed with his thoughts that he didn’t register what his other two companions were talking about.

“Whew, this is hard.”

“Indeed, that’s why there are two of us.”

He’s worried. After explaining everything that has passed in that damnable library, the chairman immediately attempted to contact the raven haired hunter but for some reason, the call wouldn’t connect. This caused a great deal of apprehension. Sensei said something about the president giving him a complicated mission. Zero balled his fists. That rotten bitch. He wouldn’t dare. No matter what, his sensei is one of the best hunters in the association’s history and if that greedy bastard still has any sense and brain cells left, he wouldn’t touch such a prized hunter…

He wouldn’t…

At least, not yet…

“I can’t believe you managed to borrow all of these. These look expensive.”
“Eh? Ah… ha ha… well, the chairman… well, he has a lot of weird things you know…”

“I think it’s admirable. Look, there’s even a koshimaki though we didn’t use it, all of these looks genuine. I don’t believe it’s costume anymore.”

“Well, it’s the chairman…”

There’s also that bastard pureblood, Rido. They haven’t heard or seen a single appearance just yet and while that’s something to be thankful for, they can’t help but worry more. It’s just not possible for him to keep quiet.

No.

He’s definitely planning something and clearly just waiting for the right opportunity…

But what exactly?

“Yori-chan, remember not to tie it too tight, okay? Definitely not tight, okay?”

“Why?”

“Err… because Zero… Zero has a delicate stomach! He… he easily gets s-stomach ache…”

“Hmmmm, I didn’t think you’ll get stomach ache just with this but I understand. I won’t make it too tight, just enough to hold the robes.”

The others were convinced that it will happen during that winter solstice or whatever but even then, they can’t be too sure. They’ve already been invaded twice but both accidents were not initiated by that demonic vampire. Or so they claimed…

“Whew! It’s looks heavy!”

“Hopefully, Kiryū-san will be able move.”

“Don’t worry about Zero. He’s not only a man, he’s also a vam—*cough* *cough* a prefect! He’s also a prefect! So he has lots… lots… lots of… exercise! Yeah, that’s it.”

“Is that so?”

Those photographs from the vampires who claimed to be journalists turned out to be only about him and the children. Nothing about the images suggested any relation with Rido nor will it be something that will be helpful to him in anyway. What he needed to know about him and the children, he already got when he possessed his own son and that idiot pureblood, Toma, swore that he didn’t come by anyone’s order but his own.

Stupid curiosity.

And he got his ass handed to him inside his own castle because of that… Kaname said he didn’t do any excessive damage but it’s that bastard we’re talking about so little things could turn out ridiculously huge but not that he cared anyway. It was that brat’s fault for taking more than he can chew.

Really, they can’t keep to themselves, can they? Stupid, the lot of them.

He sighed.
“Wow! We’re finally finished! Just the hair and we’re good to go! Whew! Well, just on time.”

“Hmmm, that’s five robes in total but he’s still standing still… Can he not feel the weight?”

“Eh? Well, it’s Zero. When he wants to ignore someone, he ignores them well. Did you know that Ichiru and I even managed to doodle on his face once when he pretended we didn’t exist? *a laugh* Yeah, then afterwards, we were condemned to a week of chairman’s cooking… We didn’t do it again…”

“Well, Yuki-chan, I suggest you prepare for the worse. I don’t think you’ll be punished by horrible cooking this time.”

“……” “I’ll manage. I have some back up this time.”

“….. I’ll also pray for you. Just in case.”

He vaguely felt an arm guiding him to sit down and he was already nicely seated before he even realized that he has moved. He was feeling confused as he felt like he’s wearing even more than what he normally wears during winter. It’s incredibly warm and the fabric seem soft and comfortable though his middle, shoulder and arms felt heavy but before he could even ask anything about it, Sayori spoke.

“Kiryū-san? We’re almost finished. We just need to add your head… err… gear. So just relax okay?”

He must have nodded but he can’t be too sure for after a long time standing, the realization of the sudden heaviness of his body, his prematurely cut sleep, the warmth caused by the generous garment covering his skin, stress and the silence of the room drove him to a peaceful nap. He’s so comfortable despite his position and his attire that he can’t even remember why he’s there in the first place.

He didn’t know how long he slept. He just woke up by Yuki’s delighted exclamations and admiring sighs from Sayori. He belatedly register that they already took off the covering around his eyes though when he made a move to straighten his head from its bowed position, he felt almost dizzy at the sudden weight that attacked him.

“What the-?” he asked in confusion. He reached back to feel his head but with the action, he then caught a glimpse of his attire and registered the heavy weight of what appeared to be kimonos burdening his shoulders and arms which arrested his movements. His eyes widened as he looked carefully at his sleeves. He’s definitely seeing kimonos and fancy ones at that.

Zero stood up, flabbergasted as he slowly realized what he must be wearing, the true weight of his garments and head now fully dawning on him as he looked around. His gaze passed through the two nervous looking girls, and was caught by the full length mirror, judging by the size and shape, still covered by a white cloth. He immediately went towards it, unmindful of the burden as even though the overlapping kimonos were heavy, it’s still nothing against his vampire strength.

He snatched the obscuring cloth and froze at the reflection of a bewildered beauty in an Oiran’s garb looking back at him. He blankly reached out to touch the mirror and to his horror, so did the vision. His jaw dropped in shock as he fully grasp that he’s truly the one in the reflection.

He also understood why it was so heavy. Basing on the number of collars he can see, he’s wearing about five layers of kimono with the uchikake and his hair, apparently covered by the same colored wig of silver, was arranged in a bizarre and flashy hairstyle of a courtesan which also looks like a pin cushion with the many black kanzashis he’s wearing.
There are six hirauchi hairpins in the front, three at each side preceded by an ogi-birakanzashi in both sides. There are also six more hairpins sticking out at the lower back, and four more, two red tama kanzashi in the left side and two hirauchi at the right sticking vertically at the top back of his head, just after two ornate black kushi combs.

He’s wearing a black uchikake brocaded with silken threads of red and gold for the humungous flowers with narrow green leaves which were all connected by a bronze colored branch where all the flowers bloomed. There were also scattered petals littered near the red colored hem guard.

Under the uchikake lies an autumn red kimono with black lining tied by a yellowish obi. The kimono was decorated by several white and pale pink colored tsubakis bundled together near the collar and hem while the heavy obi was in pale straw, embroidered with white long-tailed cranes perched in light brown branches where many small pale red flowers grow.

He was left speechless as he observed the details. It’s enough to blind him. He was red faced and was readying to bellow the infernal name of the little imp who dared trick him when a repulsed yell from the room next to his erupted followed by several exclamations and shouts punctuated by a clamor and slamming of a door and some running. A moment later, another blushing, shocked and panicked silver haired beauty threw open the door of their room.

“N-n-nii-san?” asked the new arrival who sounded very much like Ichiru but with evident disbelief in his voice,

“Ichiru,” Zero breathlessly uttered.

Any other words were interrupted by a loud, “Ichiru-kun, wait!” from Tachibana which forced Ichiru to close the door rather violently behind him before locking it safely shut.

Once inside, he was able to observe his brother fully and notice the layers of kimono he’s wearing. They put him in kimonos with varying shades of blue and violet based on the collars he can see. The fourth one was with an iridescent color of violet shades as it was black to dark purple from the hem that goes lighter to lavender and lilac until it reached the shoulder which was already white. It was filled with fluttering falling pinkish white flowers and petals from the abundant bundle from the stem branching out from the right shoulder.

It was tied closed by a large obi in gold making the embroidered image of a soaring dragon also in gold almost indistinguishable. It has black scales and claws lined with the same gold color, the horns in rust and fire in blood red, surrounded by lilac and grey clouds.

The uchikake covering was of light blue brocaded with two large golden phoenixes, one flying through the left side of the kimono through one sleeve while the other sings from the lower branch near the dull orange guard hem to the right, with red eyes and trails of flame, and being surrounded by coral colored and bronze flowers.

He’s also wearing the same ridiculous hairstyle with the same kanzashi arrangement but with an extra pair of longer ogi-birakanzashi at the back. By the looks of it, he’s also feeling the great weight of this regalia and at this, Zero finally remembered his voice.

“Yuki!!!!” Zero finally shouted at last and repeated, though with some hysteria, by the younger Kiryū.

There were loud knocks outside their door as the twins slowly stalked towards the nervous prefect.

“Wait! I can explain!” she pleaded as she held out her hands to calm the two silverettes.
“Yuki-chan,” Sayori glanced nervously at the three of them.

“Ichiru-kun, please open up!” shrieked their vice-president outside as she continued to knock on the door.

“What will we do?” Sayori asked again despite the distracting noise of their classmates.

“Ichiru-kun, you forgot your geta!” shouted Suzuki from outside.

“Err,” Yuki closed her eyes to take a deep breath before looking at her two furious brothers now towering over them. She swallowed, “Can you go outside first and calm those two outside, Yorichan? I’ll talk to Zero and Ichiru.” She smiled as she turned to her best friend. There’s still a chance that she’ll be maimed really badly but she did ready herself for this moment so she can only try and with about ninety-five percent chance of success, she’s only a little bit worried.

“Are you sure?”

“Yup,” she nodded for reassurance.

Sayori looked at her then to the seething silverettes before sighing, “Okay,” afterwards, she went outside to explain to her classmates what happened and to give them some privacy.

After the door closed behind the petite girl, Ichiru promptly exploded in rage, “What the hell, Yuki!? You said we’re doing a horror café!”

“I didn’t say anything about a horror café! I told you it will be horrifying AND a café. I was right!” Yuki immediately defended to which the younger silverette groaned in frustration.

“Why didn’t you even tell us?!” this time, it was Zero.

“There’s nothing you could have done. The whole class was in it. Even I didn’t know until it was decided... I just thought... you’ll be... happier... if you didn’t... you know, know...” she explained haltingly.

The hunter growled. Of all the -! “You should have at least warned us! Then we could have made arrangements to be in the preparation team instead!”

“They wouldn’t agree anyway! Everything was centered with you cross-dressing to attract customers to the café. All the guys just became collateral damage in doing the same to make sure you two wouldn’t complain!” and Yuki thought that was very perceptive of their president. Clearly the desire to dance with Ruka Souen has done wonders with his conniving mind. “So if it will make you feel better, all the male in our class will cross-dress as well.”

No, it didn’t make them feel better. They feel definitely cheated. They weren’t informed! Surely, they can still make an appeal somehow. “Fuck this, I’m not doing something so ridiculous!” the older silverette finally declared as he made a step towards the door to get their class president, Ichiru followed.

“Oh, forgive me!”

“Ha?!” the twins chorused. ‘Forgive me?’ The hell?

The twins turned back at the sound of lamentation to find Yuki dramatically sprawled on the floor, a hand supporting her leaning body while the other was balled on top of her chest. Her long dark brown hair covered most of her face so only her quivering lips were in sight. It painted a classic
woman in tragedy.

“I’m so sorry,” the brunette continued in a more solemn tone, “I’m worthless, I’m sorry.” She didn’t look at the twins to see them exchange skeptical looks but instead continued in a slow theatrical manner, “You said you wanted him to enjoy his high school life… You gave up all your powers to see it done… you even risked your budding life to make it possible… and prayed for his happiness every night…” Zero’s eyebrow twitched as realization of the meaning dawned upon him, “I’m so sorry Anne-chan, I couldn’t protect your wish!” she cried out before fully collapsing on the floor in mock bawl leaving the two silverette with very unsettled expressions.

After a while, Zero finally spoke through gritted teeth, “Yuki, don’t…”

“Why? It’s true! Anne-chan wants you to participate in these kind of events! She even lost all her remaining energy just for that! Zero, how could you even waste all of that for something so simple as not wanting to wear women’s clothing? Will you really dishonor your own daughter’s wishes like that? For which she even risked her life!”

He didn’t say anything. For the love of God, why? Of all the times he asked for this pipsqueak to have some sense, will it appear when she’s harassing him?! The silverette hunter huffed many times to calm his frustration but to no avail. He really wanted to punch something right now. He growled for the last time and after an incredibly heavy sigh, he turned to Yuki, “I won’t forget this.” He threatened menacingly before turning towards the door.

“Eh? What? N-n-nii-san, you’re… you’re going to do it?” Ichiru asked frantically and paled even more as he saw the dark look of resignation in his brother’s expression and victorious glee in Yuki’s eyes, “N-no, I care about you and Anne-chan but her wish only concerns y-,”

Zero cut off his brother by gripping both his shoulders almost painfully as he leaned forward to look straight in his eyes before voicing in a hollow tone, “If I’m going to do it, so will you.”

“N-no, nii-san spare m-,”

“It’s our duty as students from our class. What man runs away from duty?” he asked rhetorically as he dragged his twin with him.

“You didn’t even think those minutes ago!” Ichiru countered but all his whining fell on deaf ears as he was imprisoned by his brother’s strong grip.

“Why? Didn’t you already crossed-dress and pranced around once?” the hunter also added in the same dead tone when he remembered his brother’s prank.

“T-that was… you were… we were fighting! It was just to piss you off! This is different!” Ichiru retaliated. That was once, with just a wig, not a whole courtesan’s regalia! But his brother was relentless, not even sparing him a glance.

They were almost at the door when the hunter turned at the smiling pureblood again, “Yuki, you didn’t tell Kaname, right?” he asked dangerously as he glared at her.

“What? No! I didn’t! I didn’t! I promise! I didn’t tell nii-sama as well as Aido-senpai!” she added when she turned to the sobbing Ichiru. I didn’t need to. I know my niece shan’t fail me!

Zero only glared at her one last time before proceeding outside the room.

Yuki followed, a bit troubled at the clearly displeased look of Zero and cheated look from Ichiru though mostly pleased with her success, as they let in their waiting classmates.
After making sure that everything was ready with their attire wherein a heated argument of whether they can apply make-up on the twins erupted and was vehemently disagreed to (“I’ll crush you!”) and grudgingly accepted by the girls (“Well, they’re paler than the make-up powder anyway…”), they then headed to their classroom. Zero ignored the astonished and admiring expressions of the other students while Ichiru did his best to hide his face with a decorative fan he was provided with, his other hand carrying his koma-geta (“Who the fuck can even walk with these?!”). They’re both walking barefooted which was a good thing for Ichiru as he can barely even walk straight with the robes and headdress weighing him down, he didn’t need those towers to make his life even more miserable.

Once they entered their room, they were amazed at the decorations made. Ichiru instantly felt like a fool. If only he made it a point to wander inside their room even once then he surely would have figured that they weren’t doing anything remotely scary as the whole room was littered with tables covered by simple maple red colored tablecloths and partitioned by several folding screens of varying designs of autumn. Each table has a small vase containing either red hibiscuses or white camellias at the center.

The left part of the room where cream curtains hung to cover their would-be kitchen and preparation area was preceded by a peculiar looking cubicle. In front of the center of the curtains was an elevated, about fifteen inches high, square wooden stage only big enough to house three to four people. It’s barricaded by two identical looking Japanese six-paneled folding screens with maple wood frames at each side and was painted with rows of red maple trees and fluttering red leaves. The center front is covered by a fabric screen. Almost the entirety was of a simple straw colored hard fabric but was framed by rust colored padded silk.

Yuki moved towards it and pulled a cord that had the fabric screen rolling up, it revealed the inside of the small cubicle which contains an antique looking shōgi board on top of one of the two chabudai (short-legged table) and around it were three dull coral zabutons.

“Where did you all get this?” Ichiru asked in amazement. It’s hard to believe that they were able to buy or rent all of this with their meager class budget as everything looks genuine and classy. And now that he thinks about it, even what they’re wearing seems very expensive and not like those used in cosplay conventions or photo studios.

“Huh? Aren’t all of these the chai-,”

Tachibana began but was abruptly cut by Yuki, “Ahh!! Aren’t we such a resourceful class? Kind hearted people everywhere!!” she exclaimed dramatically which made the girls frown though the twins completely missed it as they continued to look around.

Any further questions were forgotten at the arrival of the rest of their class. Zero turned to see admiring looks from their other female classmates and stunned expression from the male who were all wearing colorful furisode with varying designs and cheap looking wigs, some with incredibly loud colors of pink or purple that may have been used for cosplay purposes, pulled up in a bun held by ornamental hair chopsticks.

Zero was exasperated and pissed off. He immediately went for their bespectacled president who was left gaping at the twins and grabbed the collar of his mint green kimono, “What the fuck?! Why are you wearing normal kimono while Ichiru and I are stuck with this?!?” he bellowed, successfully shaking his classmates from their trance.

“Ah, ah, please Kiryū-kun. Let me explain.” Kageyama Kaseumi pleaded, a bit frightened.
The silverette unhand him and waited as their president fixed his kimono and his brown wig in place again. “Well, Kiryū-kun, as you well know, each class will compete to be the best in aspects like who was most visited, most popular and one with the most profit and for us to win in any of those categories, we needed something unique. A-and as you may already know, a cross-dressing café had been done by many already so we needed to have something different!” he explained in a would be happy tone though the glare Zero gave him immediately deflated any more attempts to brighten things up, “Well, so… we thought we’ll add a little game in our shop, you know… and that’s where you and Ichiru-kun will come in. See, people can pay to challenge you in a game of shōgi other than just coming here to have some tea and confectionaries.”

“Huh.”

“And with that, we won’t have much to lose! As long as you can beat all the challengers and attract customers by the need to see you, or players who just wanted to gaze at you two then surely, we’ll have more profit than the others!” and surely, the awaiting challengers will also be forced to buy drinks and snacks as they wait their turn. Their president smirked, the thought made him increasingly positive.

Zero stepped back at the now disgustingly happy schemer. To gaze? At us? What the fuck? He thought suspiciously, still unconvinced while Yuki and Ichiru chortled quietly behind him.

“And what if we lose?”

He looked around when he felt everyone in their class stiffened at the question, suddenly finding something significant on the floor or wall, even their president stood frozen. He exchanged looks with a confused Ichiru before turning to the female prefect currently observing her shoes with fierce interest, not daring to meet his eyes.

“Yu-ki,” he pronounced viciously. He narrowed his gaze as she visibly flinched.

“What? Why me?”

“Just answer. What will happen if I lose?” the hunter asked darkly.

She darted her eyes around as she answered, “Eh? Well then, Ichiru will play next…”

“And?” he asked and towered over her but she didn’t continue.

“Well Kiryū-san, you’ll have to spend the rest of the day with that person. The same goes for Ichiru-kun if he were to lose.” Sayori finished in a calm and informative tone. After all those lies, they deserve the truth.

“What?!” the twins yelled in chorus.

“Who the hell thought of that?!?” Ichiru asked, exasperated.

Zero was incredulous, “Was that even allowed as a prize?” wasn’t every booth and games in need of the Student council’s approval? Why did they allow this?!

“The chairman allowed it. Class 1-D is even doing a host club.” Sayori supplied again.

“That hare-brain idiot! I’ll pulverize him!” the hunter growled as he went for the door but he was intercepted by the rest of the class and further slowed down by Yuki who dove to hug his silk covered legs.
“Kiryū-kun, wait!”

“Please, Kiryū-san.”

“Wait Zero, kill him later! It’s almost time! We’re going to start soon! Later please! I’ll even help you!” the brunette begged as she tightened her hold, “Just remember Anne-chan and them! It could be a good bed time story in the future you know!”

Like hell will he even mention this nightmare to his children ever. He sighed harshly, “Arrgh! Fine, let go of me already!”

The whole class sighed in relief when the silverette relented and turned towards the cubicle. They didn’t know what that was about but they’re thankful that it worked in convincing the prefect.

Zero grudgingly went inside the small chamber all the while muttering profanities about senseless ideas and bumbling idiots, followed by Ichiru, while Yuki neatly arranged their unused getas outside before finally lowering the fabric screen again to hide them from the public’s eyes.

Yuki hummed as she went to work. This small room was a great idea. That cunning president, he made sure that the people who wanted to see Zero and Ichiru will actually be forced to pay and play the game. This will be fun!

“Well, since they can’t see us, I don’t think many will actually challenge us.” Zero commented as he watched the screen unfold in front of them.

“Nii-san…” Ichiru sighed, “I don’t think so.”

“Why?”

“Didn’t you see the poster they just pinned up?” the younger silverette hunched his back as he spoke. He caught a glimpse of a large blown up photograph in between two wall hanging tapestries, depicting a temple’s view in the fall and the other of a river in the mountains in the same season. The added image was of a silver-haired oiran, her face was partially covered by a decorative fan, making only her tantalizing reddish-lavender eyes exposed and teasing anyone who’ll look to try and reveal the rest. God, this is going to be a long day, he grimaced internally.

“What poster?”

“Poster?” Yuki asked as she went inside the game area through the curtains of their ‘kitchen’ to bring them a tray of hot tea in a white porcelain dobin teapot with two small porcelain Japanese teacups and a plate of strawberry daifukus. “Oh, you mean this?” she guessed as she handed them a photograph, just returned to her by their president, from her pocket after setting the tray down.

Zero was wide eyed as he stared at the image of a silver-haired beauty. “I-Ichiru, you…” he spoke accusingly as he turned to his brother.

“No! That’s not me!” the younger Kiryū immediately denied, “It was just edited!”

“Tsk, tsk, tsk, you two are so arrogant,” Yuki sighed as she shook her head in mock disappointment, “Don’t think that you two are the only silver haired, lilac eyed male students anymore in this school.”

The silverettes frowned at each other in confusion for a second before they finally realized.

“No!” Zero breathed in shock as he comprehended her words. How dare they?! Even his son! He would have erupted in rage but Yuki was quick to escape so he was left in exasperation as he stared
at the photograph while Ichiru quietly sipped his tea, only looking at his brother from time to time.

Ichiru wanted to comment something positive about it like ‘he’s cute’ or ‘he looks just like you’ but decided against it. It might have the opposite of the desired effect so he kept his mouth shut.

The older silverette was only diverted from his silent plans to torture the midget prefect when Wakaba Sayori peered inside their small space, “Kiryū-san, Ichiru-kun, please just stay here. We’ll be starting soon. We’re just going to attend the opening ceremony but someone will be left here so please don’t hesitate to ask if you want more tea or snacks, okay?”

The twins only nodded as they listened to their classmates gather outside to proceed to the gym.

“They’re trying to bribe us, aren’t they?” Ichiru asked conversationally after everyone else was gone. His brother only scowled in reply, clearly not in the mood for pleasantries. “Well, this is a small welcomed relief. Have some nii-san. It’s quite delicious. This is clearly from Yamaguchi-san’s place.” He added as he offered the daifuku he guessed was made by their classmate whose family owns a traditional Japanese confectionery. “They’re clearly giving it their all.” He commented as he stared at the antique looking tea set, wondering who among their classmates own something so expensive and generous enough to let it be borrowed as a prop. It will be a tragedy if they accidentally break it.

“This is stupid,” Zero muttered, still pissed as hell though he took Ichiru in his offer and had some daifuku. He still didn’t have breakfast so he’s quite hungry.

The younger silverette hummed in agreement, “Well, everyone is pretty desperate since the prize this time for the overall number one class will be able to sit with the Night class during the evening banquet.” He explained as he ate some more. “Since we’re in this already, might as well do a good job. We only need to win nii-san and it’s shōgi. You’re great at it.” Ichiru was more worried about himself. True, he’s better than average but he’ll definitely lose against their school’s shōgi club members. Hopefully, they’re not into such challenges. Or that it will be Zero’s match as he has a decent chance against them. Oh yeah, he need not worry, Zero needs to lose first before his torture began which is unlikely for coupled with his twin’s natural prowess in shōgi was this current avenging state, it will be hard for him to lose. As long as Zero wins, he can continue to pig out on the tea and snacks and silently enjoy the show. That thought made him relax even further.

The day is finally starting to turn up for them. Or for him, at least.

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“Chairman sure is taking his sweet time, huh?”

It’s already been more than half an hour since the opening ceremony started and they’re growing bored. Ichiru already managed to pester Suoh-san with several requests of different snacks that they managed to eat everything in the menu (manjū, daifuku, dango, mochi, and taiyaki). They’re considerably full and were enjoying the fragrant tea when their classmates filed inside their room.

“Whew, about time. Still awake nii-san?” Ichiru turned to ask his brother who’s been silent for a while now, his eyes closed and seated formally. He’s been wondering how his brother can stay still in that position for a long time without his feet killing him.

“What do you think?”

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“Easy now nii-san. You can pour your anger to your challengers soon enough,” the younger Kiryū replied smoothly, totally carefree. He has already forgotten their misfortune after eating through the menu. Better take advantage of it, right? So he’s in a better mood despite the weight of his clothes and head accessories, “Brighten up, okay? Isn’t that the whole reason why you agreed? To enjoy your youth?”

Zero sighed, defeated. His twin was right. Everything annoyed him so far but he might as well try and loosen up like Ichiru, who seems comfortable enough to enjoy sipping his tea, so that he can give some justice to his children being trap longer in this time. “Yeah, I guess…” He also felt bad for his reaction after observing just how much effort his class put into this. Though this is still stupid and ludicrous. Still, he resigned himself to his fate. It’s just one day of humiliation. He’ll just eat as many strawberry daifuku as he can as consolation.

“Zero? Ichiru?” Yuki called out to them. She was relieved when she felt their auras still where she left them. She was half-expecting them to run away by now but she should have known better than to doubt her brothers for no matter how annoyed Zero is, he will never go back on his words once he made a decision and Ichiru always keeps his promises and both has always been kind enough not to ruin something especially if they can see the effort others has given to it like the occasional chairman’s tea party or the yearly twins’ birthday celebration.

She smiled as she peered inside the small room where the silverettes are drinking tea, “Here, breakfast.” she handed them two slim, elongated black bento boxes containing onigiris. Kohaku-kun gave her three boxes for their breakfast when he informed her of her brother’s message. She looked at the twins solemnly as they opened the boxes and started to eat. She should feel guilty, really she should, but it’s being overpowered by glee. I’m just fulfilling requests, I believe in you two.

“What are you grinning at?” Zero asked suspiciously, “Did you put anything in these?” as he eyed the rice ball he’s been eating. It’s delicious so that can’t be it.

“Oh no, I’m just… you know… dazzled by your beauty.” She answered haltingly, amazed that it actually sounded teasingly instead of uncertainly, and laughed when both glared at her. “Why? It’s true! You guys are gorgeous!” she added sincerely though she already expected such fine results given how handsome they are.

“Whatever, just go away before I flip this table on you,” the hunter just turned his head as he dismissed the pureblood. He acted unaffected by the compliment but his embarrassment must have been obvious as Yuki giggled one last time before leaving.

“You probably don’t want to know but I think I should still tell you. You’re blushing, nii-san,” Ichiru mentioned nonchalantly as he continued his meal. He would have teased his brother more but not when he’s in a reachable, closed space with only himself as the lone recipient of his brother’s wrath. Maybe next time, when he’s also not looking like an oiran just like his twin.

“Shut up.”

Ichiru only smiled.

A few moments later, when the cheerful buzz outside got louder and cheerier as guests increasingly pile inside Cross Academy and their male classmates in colorful furisode chorused an enthusiastic “irrashaimase~!” they knew the game has begun.

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This is extremely stupid, he bitterly thought as he made his move. Everything is just so ridiculous that he’s even surprised that he allowed himself to get tangled in such a ludicrous idea. He internally grimaced as lilac eyes glanced at his opponent who seemed to have forgotten that they were currently having a shōgi match and true enough, he found the student, a male second year, stupidly gaping at him. He sighed. How many does this make it? He gritted his teeth. Treating him like a damn woman! He wanted to throw the shōgi board on his ugly mug to remind him again that he’s Zero Kiryū, a damn prefect with solid muscles and well-functioning male genitalia.

He glared at his senpai and to his infinite annoyance; the stupid man just blushed even more.

What the fuck is happening? Damn it! Did he mention that this is stupid?

He was about to bark at their challenger to get a move on already when another pale hand jostled the dreaming idiot out of his trance. He watched in quiet amazement as his twin smiled charmingly as he reached out for his arm, “Senpai, it’s your turn.”

The poor man flushed even more, if that was possible as he’ll be combusting next if he goes even redder than he already is, “E-eh? A-ahh, m-my bad.” He nervously sputtered before he moved one of his pieces without any thought that made Zero shake his head.

What a pathetic move. The silverette sighed internally as he took his turn. He didn’t even need to think deeply into it, he already knew the inevitable, “Check.” he announced unfeelingly.

Only then did the competitor managed to refocus his attention as he studied the board and after confirming his lost, he graciously admitted his defeat.

“Please come challenge us again.” Ichiru invited as he bid the player farewell with an incredibly gorgeous smile that made the poor student stumble quite painfully on his way out.

“Don’t ever come back here again.” the hunter viciously muttered under his breath as his twin waved at the flushed challenger who fortunately didn’t hear him as he was busy straightening himself from his fall.

Zero then looked suspiciously at his twin. He’s been marveling at his brother’s antics since earlier. How can he pull that off? He wondered. It’s weird and creepy, not that it didn’t suit Ichiru. Oh no, it suited him so perfectly it was scary and that was what made it creepy in Zero’s opinion. And for someone who was vehemently against this idea as well, he seems to be enjoying himself. Too much, in fact.

Though to be honest, Zero was a bit thankful for Ichiru’s suspicious acts as it came extremely useful in the face of very capable challengers, namely from their shōgi club. He can’t remember how many times he was in the brink of losing when his brother would make subtle touches in the guise of sweetly offering tea and snacks making those previous opponents lose their head and make the stupidest mistake known to the history of shōgi matches.

See? Stupid, right?

“Good job, Kiryū-san, Ichiru-kun!” Kageyama’s cheerful face peered inside their small chamber. “Take a break first. We’ll send the next player after fifteen minutes.”

“Thanks, pres.” Ichiru replied while Zero only grunted his acknowledgement.
“Good work both of you!” Yuki exclaimed, coming from the preparation area with another tray of hot tea and snacks for them.

Zero loudly groaned as he tried to relieve his stress. He’s uncomfortable, a bit hungry, pissed as hell, and has been feeling unsettled inside for some unknown reason. Maybe because this is the stupidest thing he has ever done. It even surpassed that one time when he let himself wear a ‘family’ shirt the chairman insisted they all wear during a ‘family’ vacation in which he even suffered a full month of whining before relenting. He sighed. He knew grumbling about it now wasn’t doing him any good but he can’t help but be exasperated. He would have definitely taken any task other than this to enjoy his youth. Why must it be the cultural festival anyway? Why not the sport’s festival? Test of courage? Or that freaking field trip? Then he remembered his beloved daughter and the reason he complied. He sighed again, too defeated to even think anymore.

“How many are still waiting?” Ichiru curiously asked as he took a taiyaki.

Yuki peeked outside their small quarter, seemingly counting the remaining challengers, “Huh, wow.” She muttered, “Err, 20 more…”

“What?!” the twins yelled in exasperation. Fuck, weren’t there only 10 before that last match and it wasn’t even that long. Damn it!

“Well…” Yuki started, her eyes still surveying the hopeful individuals falling in line, “There’re some previous challengers who came back.”

“What the hell?” Zero frowned, “Are they crazy? They’ll waste their time and money just to have their ass kicked again?” Why would anyone come back to this shitty place? He’d rather enjoy eating yakisoba and takoyaki if he can. Those dumbasses.

Yuki and Ichiru only shook their head at the oblivious hunter. They’ve been prefects for a long time so he really should have known just how far beauty can drive anyone into doing anything. They sighed. Well, Zero’s problems lies in his inability to recognize his own good-looks.

*The heaven shall hate thee, you colossal moron. Yuki smirked. Ah, is this the face that… that… geez, she can’t remember… sent straight men astray?* Oh well, that was more appropriate anyway. She snickered to herself.

Ichiru stared at his weird adopted-sister who’s wearing a highly dubious smirk on her pretty face as she no doubt thought of something moronic. So that’s how to ruin a beauty… He shook his head before sighing in exhaustion. He’s already tired of this game. Admittedly, it’s amusing when their challengers, the majority of them were male, would get flustered at the single stroke of his hand and a simple smile on his lips but it’s tiring. And now, knowing that there are 20 more unlucky bastards waiting to see them, he just got even more tired. There’s only so much even the benevolent him can put up with.

Why can’t they just enjoy the festival like normal people? Eat! Hit on girls! Go to the horror booth! Buy souvenirs! Or watch the play! Don’t come here! The younger Kiryū internally grumbled. He can of course see why they’re piling up like bananas in a plantation. They want to hurry since it’s first come first serve. It’ll be over once someone finally defeated them and sweep them off their feet. He snorted. Like that was possible. His nii-san here was like an avenging death god because of overwhelming irritation and with him to distract capable opponents, they’re unbeatable.

So really, they should just enjoy their time at their leisure. Even outside guests are waiting in line to play against them which was a pitiful waste of time. Ichiru suddenly wondered if the visitors who played the game were informed that they’re just cross-dressing bishōnens. Poor guys.
His pity for those oblivious and hopeful creatures was soon forgotten as he indulged himself during their well-deserved break. The silver twins ate as many confectionaries as they can while sitting in a much more comfortable and careless manner, wondering when the tedious job will finally end so they can be free and work on forgetting the nightmare of cross-dressing. If one fucking soul even harped on it afterwards, there’ll be hell to pay. Though, considering the smitten looks of pure adoration from all their opponents so far, it should be fine.

They already lost track of the time but they knew they already defeated quite a lot. Just a few more… Just a few more… Just a few fucking more… they both internally chanted to give themselves strength and patience to finish the festival and the torture.

“Ichiru-kun, Kiryū-san, we’ll continue now, okay?” the class president quietly announced after their break. The silverettes only nodded before resuming formal sitting position and awaited the next challenger.

“When I heard the Kiryū twins are cross-dressing, I didn’t fucking expect this.”

Zero and Ichiru were frozen on their seats as an unwelcomed visitor entered their small chamber, unable to utter a single sound as two pairs of horrified amethysts found a pair of haughty hazel orbs. The older Kiryū cursed as he grinded his teeth and balled his fists while the younger twin immediately hunched down to bury his blushing face on the make-shift stage while willing the heavens to take him right now. Zero glared even more when his new opponent sat down, as he flashed him an irritating smirk that grated his nerves like nothing else did, his ash-brown mane swung with him as he moved.

What a clusterfuck.

“Fuck you, Kaito. What are you doing here?” Zero ferociously asked through his clenched teeth, already expecting some annoying retorts and crude remarks.

“Is that anyway to talk to your patron, Zero-chan?” Kaito replied in an aggravating tone that almost made Zero flip the table on his arrogant mug.

“Go. Away.” the silverette pronounced viciously, the taut string holding his thinning patience already in danger of snapping.

“Oya, is this what your class does? Cheat your customers off their money?” Kaito said in a cool tone, still unaffected by the look of pure murder in his kohai’s eyes.

Zero didn’t say anything before fixing his burning scrutiny on his shōgi pieces; he needed to finish this game as fast as he can so he can kick this damn bastard out of here. He can’t believe the idea that something like this may happen never crossed his mind. He thought that as long as Kaname isn’t here then he’ll be able to survive anyone else seeing him in his humiliation. He completely forgot this other bastard that cannot be allowed to see them like this. Damn belated. He’s sure that this asshole won’t let them live it out any time soon. Fucking great.

“Oi, Ichiru-chan, how long do you want to freaking kiss the floor?” Kaito turned to the other twin whose face was still hidden from him even when the game already started. Hey, hey, don’t take away the fun!

Ichiru eventually removed himself from his slumped position but only to glower at their insensitive and rude senpai. How did this person managed to become an instructor? He’s heartless!

“Just shut up and play the game, Kaito.” He hissed. This shitty asshole.
“Easy now, lassie. You wouldn’t want to ruin your make-up.” Kaito snickered, enjoying the freaking hilarious moment.

Ichiru scrunched his eyes close, willing away the irritating sight of Kaito and his infernal smirk, while gripping a handful fabric of his kimono to assemble his diminishing patience. He might just take out his katana and accidentally slash the annoying bastard. But if that happened, that wouldn’t be his fault. This moron is clearly inviting the trouble.

He repeatedly breathed deeply to calm himself before opening his eyes and directing it to his brother. Zero looked even more murderous than earlier as he moved his pawns, his silver-lavender eyes burned with such determination to kick the older hunter out. Do your best, nii-san!

The twins would have been contented with the heated silence surrounding them but of course, the demon in the name of Takamiya Kaito just wouldn’t rest until guns were fired and blood was shed because he’s a walking catalyst to the end of all mankind. Damn it. He wouldn’t be satisfied until everyone around him finally ripped their faces out in irritation. What a total jerk.

“I have to say, I didn’t know you two had it in you to dress like hussies.”

And the jackass continued to taunt. Really, what did his daughter see in this annoying dumbass? Zero will wonder about that for all eternity.

“Girls, girls, don’t get your panties in a wad.” Kaito continued sarcastically when they didn’t reply, “Really, no retort? Meh, you guys must really be sprouting vaginas under th-,” a decorative fan that hit him square on the face disrupted any more taunts.

Zero just gave the older hunter a glower before taking his turn while his twin straightened himself from his throwing stance, taking a sip of his tea afterwards as if nothing happened.

“Oi Ichiru, that freaking hurt!”

“You really waited in line just to fucking mock us?”

“Waited? Please.” Kaito snorted, irritating the twins further, as he massaged his forehead, “Like this great sensei will be forced to waste his time. There are certain privileges a handsome and popular teacher like me can get.”

The Kiryū twins looked at the ash-brown haired hunter like he’d grown two horns and a pig snout.

“Idiot.” Zero muttered under his breath.

Ichiru contended himself with silently insulting their senpai. Geez, he’s like a disease.

Kaito scoffed at the two unbelieving silverettes, “ye of little faith,” he said in a sagely tone, “you’ll be surprised to know what a dish I am.”

“Did you come here for a reason?” the older silverette irately asked, ignoring his claim.

“Nah, I just had some free time.”

“So you came here to lose?”

Kaito snorted, “Zero, my boy. The word ‘lose’ is not in my awesome vocabulary.” Ridiculous child. he thought as he took his turn.

“s that so?” Zero studied the board, “I find that hard to believe,” then made his move, “check.”
There was a brief silence that ensued wherein the brunette closely examined the shōgi board. The older Kiryū gave his senpai a hard look he only reserves for the stupidest morons while his twin shook in quiet laughter, trying to rein his glee lest he uncontrollably roll on the floor. *Yeah, in your face! You arrogant bastard!*

“You cheated.”

“Like hell.”

Kaito crossed his arms in front of him, suspicious hazel orbs still on the shōgi pieces, unwilling to admit defeat but the better man in him prevailed and so he just let out a gruff sigh, “Well, you’re lucky I go easy on pitiful brats.”

“What did you say, loser?”

Kaito continued as if the silverette didn’t speak, “I’ll give you this match, Zero, seeing you’re both too unlucky already.” Smirking brown eyes found the scowling courtesans. He’s intending to use this particular material to tease them as much as he can. So what’s a little game of shōgi anyway? Between them, he’s still the winner for today since he have this mocking material against the two that is sure to annoy them to death for indefinitely, “Well, I’ll just get out of here before I catch both of your stupidity.” Kaito snickered as he shook his head, earning him another vicious glare from the twins.

Zero gritted his teeth, “Bastard. Don’t treat us like idiots. We’re not stupid.”

“Oh yeah? Prove it.” The rogue teacher provoked, “What’s one plus one?”

Is he freaking with me? Zero thought but still complied together with Ichiru. “Nii (two)!“ stretching their lips wide in a heartfelt answer.

They were then frozen when a sudden flash of a camera blinded them. The twins gaped at a nodding Kaito who inspected the photo he just took, “Okay, see you then, lassies. Good luck!”

“W-wait! Kaito! Hey, you asshole! Come-,” Zero shouted at the hunter’s back who wasn’t fazed and didn’t even glance back.

That bastard!

“What happened?” Yuki inquired as she peeked from the front only to be welcomed by the sight of a blushing Zero whose one arm was still stretched forward as if calling his lover back with his mouth hanging open and a groaning bright red Ichiru whose back was hunched in deep grief and mortification, “Did… Takamiya-sensei do anything to you?”

No one provided an answer as the angry older Kiryū harshly palmed his face while his lamenting twin groaned even more loudly as if for good measure, just in case the shitty heavens didn’t hear him the first time.

*That fucking asshole. That shitty bastard.* He’s going to kill him and if he ever dared show that to anyone else, he’s going to freaking cut out his balls. He didn’t even want to know what his sensei’s expression will be once he saw that. Shit! He needed to steal and crush that camera to a million pieces! Zero thought furiously.

“Err, Zero?” Yuki cautiously inquired, tiptoeing at the scary expression on his handsome face, careful not to further irritate him, “We’re going to send in the new challenger, alright?”

The silverettes both glared but didn’t say anything to stop it and so the short brunette hesitantly sent in the unfortunate player who’ll undoubtedly be the receiver of the Kiryū twins’ wrath.
Their class didn’t know what their Takamiya-sensei did to the silver prefects but they got increasingly curious as it wasn’t even an hour and the twins already defeated eleven opponents in astonishing speed.

One Kaseumi smirked gleefully at their booming business and judging by the growing line of awaiting challengers, the busy preparation room and continuous flow of visitors; it seems like his wish to finally be able to dance with his true love, Souen Ruka-sama, is no longer a pipe dream.

Oh, he could cry in joy!

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“Here you go.”

“Thanks!” one cute and very happy Akira smiled as he gratefully took a nice smelling grilled dried squid on a stick from a blushing Day class student who’s tending their class’ booth while his twin handed over the payment for their purchase.

Kohaku immediately dragged his munching twin from the stall since the female students seem to be in danger of cooing them for they no doubt reminded them of a very much admired Night class student. An exhausted sigh escaped from pouty lips while contemplating having to do a swift evasion from almost every booth tended by female students. “Let’s search for masks, Akira.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. You’re being paranoid again, Haku.” The boisterous kid quickly dismissed the idea as he continued to bite his squid, “Let them look. We mustn’t deprive anyone of chichiue’s beauty.”

“You just want to get more freebies.” Reddish orbs narrowed accusingly at his twin before looking down on the bag of other treats they bought. They’ve been given some extras in most of the stalls they visited and he felt bad about it since they’re very capable of paying for them. He sighed.

“There’s that too.” Akira admitted, smirking, “But really Haku, there’s nothing wrong with it. It was not like we conned them in to giving those to us.”

*Smiling so dazzlingly at them knowing full well of its effects is the same as conning them.* Kohaku thought dryly. “Still, they cannot make any profit if you just take without paying.”

“Okay, alright. Fine. We’ll just *politely* refuse them. Happy? But we’re not going to wear masks. This is not a matsuri, this is the Cross Academy’s cultural festival! Okay? Okay? Lighten up will you, Mr. Straight-lace.” The little rogue grudgingly accepted as he rolled his eyes to which his brother merely raised a judging eyebrow. Really, his twin is such a worry wart. If Haku said it like that, of course, even he will feel guilty as well at his ready acceptance of those free gifts, he thought while petulantly filling his cheeks with air. “Ah, I want to eat some dango.” He muttered off-handedly, suddenly craving something sweet, successfully redirecting their conversation elsewhere while he stared at his half-eaten squid.

“Bear with it for a while. We can’t go to otou-chan’s class because he might see us and nee-chan will undoubtedly spot us there.” Haku dully reminded him as they continued to browse each stall for the next attraction.

Their beloved, crazy older sister will surely be spying on the happenings in their father’s class,
waiting for the exciting moments that will surely come, somewhere around the perimeter. They knew she’ll insist on doing it, which was why they immediately took Akira’s blood pill which hid their presences to avoid being dragged once again in her undying schemes.

Heavy sighs escaped from the brunettes as they thought of the same thing.

“Yeah, I know… I don’t know why she wanted to record it herself when we even planted hidden cameras all over the room already… Nee-chan just can’t rest about it, can she?” Akira sighed again before taking another bite of his squid.

“Nee-chan’s the type who wants to do things herself as to not miss a single detail. She’ll surely want to record aunt Yuki’s and Ichiji’s romance as well.” Kohaku supplied absentmindedly as he looked around at the other booths that might interest them, “She won’t rest unless she did it herself. Well, leave her to her own devices. She’ll emerge from whatever vegetation she tangled herself in once she’s had enough.”

Akira merely nodded in assent as he finished his food. Oh well, since he’s not being forced under a bush today, he can definitely forgive his sister for her stalking. They’ll just forget about it and enjoy the festival, “Oooh, Haku, want to try that?” he pointed at a target shooting game near them.

“It should be fine.”

They were almost upon the small booth when large hands grasping their little heads stopped their tracks. They didn’t even need to turn around to know it was a certain ash-brown haired hunter arresting their movements.

“Oi brats. What do you think you’re doing?” a terse voice resounded overhead.

“Ara, Kaito-jiichan, it’s a surprise to see you here.” Kohaku greeted monotonously, turning slowly at the tall hunter, unfazed by the frown decorating his handsome face while his twin beamed at him.

“Hiya Kaito-jiichan! Enjoying the festival too?”

“What’s wrong with you two? Why don’t you have a presence?” Kaito immediately interrogated without beating around the bush, dark brows creased severely over hazel eyes as he regarded the twins. How can he not feel their normally monstrous auras? He would have never spotted them had they not the only quaint sight inside the academy for it’s rare to see unattended children in this crowd.

“Oh, that. Don’t worry about it jiichan.” The younger twin carelessly supplied, “We didn’t want to be spotted by nee-chan so we took my blood pill.”

“Blood pill…” he distractedly echoed, deep in thought. He heard that before. It’s a variant of those damn blood stones that are made by purebloods which contain certain properties of their power or their unique ability. Huh. ‘course these brats can do it too. He only heard about what that other kid can do about their time but he kinda missed questioning the headmaster regarding these other children. “Yours?”

“Yup!” Akira declared proudly. “We drank something that can hide our presence.”

“Convenient.” He muttered. And fucking powerful, to be able to hide those mighty auras. He let out a gruff sigh before letting go of their head and squatting in front of them, “And why are you two awake at this freaking hour? You said you’re hiding from your sister?” he wasn’t able to stop a smirk from appearing, “Pretty heartless of you two, don’t cha think?”
The little boisterous devil’s face contorted to that of a pained and wronged expression that didn’t deceive the hunter one bit, “But… but… you don’t understand how annoying nee-chan can be, jiichan… Ah, what do I do with all these pain?” he lamented as if he didn’t just uttered outrageous words against his sister.

The little rogue’s unconvincing tone and expression only made the hunter snort while the other brat gave his twin a quiet look that spoke a million insults, “Oh yeah? Why? What horrendous things had she done to you two?”

Sorrow was immediately replaced by a conspiratorial grin as Akira jumped at the opportunity to cause some chaos. “Well, you see jiichan. Nee-chan lo-mph!”

Shocked and questioning burgundy orbs met quiet and warning burgundy orbs as the twins stared at each other after Kohaku blocked his brother’s attempt to play a prank on their elder sister by covering his mischievous mouth.

What are you doing, Haku?!

You can thank me later, moron.

“Ignore this little imp’s nonsense, Kaito-jiichan. There was really no particular reason why we’re hiding from our honorable sister. It’s just that my brother and I felt like venturing in this cheery festival without adult supervision.” Kohaku quietly supplied, sporting a listless expression that betrayed nothing of the truth, “Please forgive us if we caused you any inconvenience with our selfishness."

“Heh?” Kaito’s smirk didn’t diminish one bit even after such a convincing act since the other brat already let out the curious fact about the little princess. But seeing as this calm and collected kid, who seem to really take after a certain annoyingly expressionless pureblood king, didn’t look like he’ll forsake his sister and tell him anything, he just decided to give up asking. It’s not like he’s really interested about her antics. No siree. “Yeah, fine. Whatever.” The hunter finally straightened himself, “Just don’t freaking cause a problem, got that? Or I’ll hunt you.” He mildly warned.

“Hai, jiichan!”

“Of course, Kaito-jiichan. I’ll be sure to look after my brother.”

Akira awarded his twin with a scowl before turning to the tall light haired man, “Oh, take this jiichan. As a ‘thank you’. It’s the same pills that we consumed.” he took out a small bottle from his stone’s dimension, careful to cover it so normal humans won’t see something being conjured out of nowhere, and flashed him a big grin before whispering, “By the way, we would really appreciate it if you didn’t tell anyone, like otou-chan and nee-chan, that you saw us here today. Alright, jiichan?”

What’s this? A bribe? Kaito thought with a frown when the twins suddenly run away as if the devil himself was chasing them. “Oi, wait!” The hunter called out to the two retreating brats but gave up when they only gave him a slight wave of their hands.

What the hell? Brown eyes then found the small bottle with red pills inside. Will this seriously hide his presence? Does this even work on hunters? He asked himself and, even against his better judgment, took one and swallowed it experimentally.

He waited for painful agony to course through him but nothing happened. He frowned. He still didn’t know if the damn thing worked but he at least know now that it wasn’t toxic. Hmmm, well, how can he test it out?
Fiery and focus lilac eyes accompanying somber and downcast lilac eyes in the face of two amazingly gorgeous silverettes continued to seduce male and female guests and students to visit the now famous traditional café of a freshman class. Long lines can be seen in the corridor as these expectant new and repeat challengers talked about the rumors and truths of these two courtesans’ beauty.

There were some, most were male second years, who only came to mock the two infuriating prefects who repeatedly thwarted their attempts to be near the beauties of the Night class like Ruka-chan and Rima-tan but were left speechless in the face of stunning Venuses. The Earth-shattering visions caused them no small amount of dangerous rapid heartbeats and confusion. Whereas in the case of the female population, other than the want to eat the delicious confectionaries and look at the superb designs and props that were incredibly genuine, elegant and quite unlike all the previous booths they’ve been into, they merely wanted to see and perhaps make fun of the cross-dressing students and how the famous male prefects fared, only to be struck speechless at how defeated their own looks were compared to the elegance and allure of those two men. But instead of pure vehemence at the unfairness of it, though admittedly they can’t help but feel a little bitter, they only turned even joyous as they watch the beauties’ effects on male challengers, feeling giddy every time another blushing male opponent emerge from the small chamber.

Everyone who heard of it wanted to see the much fussed about attraction and game. Students and guests, those who were confident in their skills and those who have never even seen a shōgi board in their life, all waited for their turn causing those who didn’t know to be curious as well.

The long line of customers caused much joy to all the students belonging to Yuki’s class except perhaps the two silverettes who were forced to take on all these curious and admiring individuals.

He’s going to fucking explode any moment now. He swore internally as he took his turn, ignoring the sighs and simper from the female freshman in front of him, focusing on defeating her as fast as possible. Really, he’s sick of everything. The attention, the admiration, sighs, giggles, stares, glances and those freaking compliments from their opponents. When is this going to end? Even his brother seemed to be having a hard time keeping up with his genteel act. When will the evening come? Why is still just early afternoon?! Time, hurry up!

Heavy sighs escaped from identical lips once their latest opponent left their little space after just one more glance back. They want another break, perhaps one that will last an hour or two or forever. Isn’t it unfair that they need to engage with this mess for the whole day when their other classmates have rotational shifts so they can look around? Well, not like they can really complain about it when they had ten days of lazing around, so this might be fair. Oh hell. It made them want to be exemplary model students who will participate in every damn class activities in the future. This is the last time that they’ll be tricked into doing something so stupid.

Their internal promises were abruptly cut when their class president’s voice rang from outside their small quarter, “K-Kiryū-santachi, we-we’ll be sending in the next challenger.”

Both frowned at the small quiver in Kageyama’s voice and only then just realized the loud collective murmurs around them. Ichiru was about to stand up to take a peek outside when their newest opponent presented himself before them. The hand that held the fabric screen up revealed a handsome visage graced by a pair of smiling garnets, sharp eyebrows, elegant nose, pink lips and
creamy complexion. The unmistakable white Night class uniform was beautifully illuminated by the glory of the early afternoon sun.

But of course, since Zero and the world are official nemesis, it’s already been decided that such an embarrassment can’t go unseen by Kuran Kaname, the one person Zero wished and wished never to ever know of him dressing up as a woman.

The world stood still as the king of the vampire world sat down properly in front of his shell-shocked lover who seemed to still contemplate what kind of nightmare he was seeing before him. It made him smile. The pureblood took the twins’ apparent stupefied states to quietly assess the never before seen appearance of his petrified hunter. Hard rubies drank the sight before him. Kaname planned on surprising Zero but he was the one surprised instead. He knew about it, of course, but it didn’t stop the overwhelming astonishment and the rush of desire that instantly filled him at the striking spectacle of the ravishing beauty. He was simply astounded. He also can’t help the small bitterness at the realization that countless people had already seen and admired Zero like this. Hmmm, he really should have come sooner.

No words were exchanged for a while as the hunter held Kaname spellbound, at the same time, Zero was stunned senseless by the vampire king whilst Ichiru merely darted his lilac orbs between the two, all the while trying not to laugh at the horrific turn of events.

Zero didn’t know who to blame for the mayhem. His class who thought of the ridiculous idea? Yuki who kept it all from them? The chairman who approved of this nonsense? His own weakness at accepting the fucked up arrangement? Kaname who adamantly wants to kill him with humiliation? Or his shitty fate that’s been obviously played by the heavens? Anyway, he needed an outlet because he won’t accept the ‘shit happens’ as a reason. He needs to freaking shoot someone today.

“I assure you, it was merely by chance that I heard about this interesting class activity.” Kaname smiled at the glowering silverette once he caught wind of his annoyance through their bond.

“Yeah, right.” Zero glared at him. The awareness that started to kick in after being frozen stimulated countless feelings and realizations that inevitably produced a hot flush to cover his entire body, accompanied by the wild party in his chest. Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!

“I was just about to talk to the chairman regarding tonight’s event when I caught sight of the long line in front of your class. I’m afraid curiosity got the better of me this time.” He further supplied to his chagrined lover. “It was certainly unexpected but I can now see what the fuss was all about.”

Zero growled as he clenched his teeth and tightly gripped his kimono. He can feel his face heat up by the second. Fuck. He cursed, feeling both anger and disappointment at being seen in this ridiculous appearance even after convincing himself that this bastard will never find out.

“Shit.” He muttered as he averted his gaze from the teasing eyes and aggravating smirk from the annoying pureblood, “Why didn’t Yuki warn us?”

“Ah, please don’t blame her. The line was too long, you see, she must have missed it and I would have waited patiently but those kind people let me go first. I was already in front of her before she noticed.”

Amethyst orbs narrowed in suspicion and disbelief. Yeah, he knew of this bastard’s sneaky nature. Kaname can be behind or beside his victim already without anyone noticing. That’s really possible but somehow he just can’t believe that this fucking mess was not deliberate, “Bastard.” Zero cursed one last time before he readied his pieces to start the most troublesome and no doubt the hardest match of all. “What the fuck are you looking at? Focus on the board. We’re starting!”
“Please don’t worry about me. I assure you I have all intentions of winning.” And I will. Others can no longer be allowed the privilege of this sight.

“Fuck you.” Zero snarled. I’m going to defeat you, you bastard.

Ichiru wished he brought popcorn. This is the most hilarious situation that happened today. It’s even better than any romantic-comedy movies that he was forced to watch with Yuki. Never mind that his brother is currently miserable. It’s just that nothing beats his fierce expression ruined by the deep crimson painting his cheeks. Cute nii-san. He smiled while sipping his tea as he comfortably watched the players whose expressions couldn’t be more in contrast from one another.

The match of the century continued without much interaction from the three occupants of the small chamber as Zero concentrated on his pieces, Kaname fixated on his hunter, and Ichiru divided his attention on the game, the snacks and the funny look of his brother.

Despite how it seemed, Kaname’s thoughts, desires and feelings stirred unimaginable chaos in his mind which mercifully didn’t seeped outside his exterior as his calm teasing expression remained intact to mildly annoy his adorable lover. Inconspicuous glances drank the wondrous sight before him.

Russet eyes slyly trailed the long thin fingers that moved a pawn to the beautiful line of his kimono clad arm, up that slender white neck, then to the incredibly gorgeous blushing face normally veiled by his silky silver hair that is currently covered by a silver wig and now, free of any obstruction, made his enchanting lilac orbs even more stunning and eye-catching. It took his breath away.

’I knew he’d be beautiful but I didn’t expect this.’

And he’s even more beautiful now that those ever so defiant eyes display a complex mix of embarrassment, petulance, anger and pure determination to defeat him. Something akin to pride swelled inside the pureblood. No matter what, his little spitfire wouldn’t just go down without a fight, would he? Ah, but he can’t let himself fail now and this is a game he will surely win. At all cost.

Zero frowned at the board as he studied the possible outcomes that each move will result to. Isn’t he in a dangerous position now? How come it became like this? Where the fuck did he go wrong? He clicked his tongue before finally making a move that he believed was the safest when his fingers froze around the piece as he realize his moronic mistake. For a minute, he seriously contemplated breaking etiquette and put the damn piece back to its previous location. Oh hell. He risked a glanced at Kaname only to be greeted by an inappropriate smile. Damn it.

A tense moment passed in which a few more pieces were moved before a smooth velvety voice announced Zero’s doom, “Check.”

The hunter growled while scrutinizing the board closely, trying to find a responding move that might just remove the check to his freaking king, only to swallow when he found none. He knew it was already a lost cause but he can’t seem to find the voice to admit it. He squared his jaw, his mouth seemingly adamant in denying the bastard the delight of accepting his loss, only to be betrayed by his brother who rang the bell signaling a challenger’s victory.

Zero couldn’t even bring himself to care about the sudden commotion outside as he stared at the traitor he once thought was his twin brother. The renegade’s guiltless amethyst orbs calmly met accusing amethyst orbs.

“Nii-san, a loss is a loss. Man up and admit defeat.” This earned Ichiru a seraphic smile full of gratitude from the pureblood.
“Damn it, Ichiru. I-,” Zero’s fierce rant was interrupted when a hand captured his pale wrist which forced him on his feet.

“I thank you, Ichiru. I wish you good luck on the next challenges. We’ll see you at the banquet then.” Kaname pleasantly remarked as he pulled closer his captured prize who kept trying to wrestle himself free from his grasp.

“Damn it! Let go!”

“Sure thing, senpai.” Ichiru smiled widely at the comical look of agitation from his brother, which they blissfully ignored, compared to the brunette’s calm and pleased demeanor.

The hand he’s waving as he bid his struggling twin goodbye froze when the realization of his torture’s commencement suddenly resounded deep in his mind. Oh fuck. It’s his turn. Oh shit. And there’re lots of them remaining. Damn!

Senpai, give me back my brother!

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

“Fufu, really now. Father was really too impatient. Even after we repeatedly told him it’s better to wait until the late afternoon.”

A certain princess mumbled while training her large video camera towards the pureblood with a struggling beauty in his arms. She smiled with no hint of discomfort even in her position on the forest floor, surrounded by the leaves and thin branches of the large bush she was under, slumped on her stomach. Much too focus on her endeavor to worry about her appearance or the location.

Anne sighed, “There was no way otou-chan would have lost to those men. Chichiue was just too worried.” She muttered in a soft tone and despite her words, there was no hint of resentment in her countenance, only affection and fondness. Oh, this is such a great spot! Lavender eyes looked away from the peephole of the recorder to thank the heavens for such an advantageous location that enabled her to catch the wonderful way her father took her otou-chan’s hand. It was quite hard to find an elevated and well-concealed place in the academy that offers such a clear view of that specific classroom.

Really, going to this time and being able to witness these exchanges before her was one of the best things that happened to her. How many children get to see their own parents’ budding romance bloom before their very eyes? Certainly none but them!

Fits of giggles erupted from the jolly princess as her gaze fell on the small screen of her most trusted companion for it displayed her father carrying his mate in his arms in bridal style to stop the latter’s attempts in running away. Truly a beautiful couple. She sighed as she continued to watch through the feed. Ah, cameras are one of men’s greatest inventions! She internally declared. It’s infinitely much better than her two unfaithful brothers who disappeared even after knowing she’ll want some assistance in her schemes. Really now, those two! People will start to think that she’s been forcing them do anything highly inappropriate. Well, she must admit that it’s quite questionab-… No! No! No! This is for the sake of immortalizing their parent’s romance! Isn’t it something noble? She nodded to herself.

“Oh, there’s aunty and Takuji.” She mumbled, directing her camera to the couple seated in one of the
tables after her fathers disappeared to somewhere her lens can’t follow. Well, she needed to go on-location then. She wondered where her chichiue will take her otou-chan. Hopefully it’ll be somewhere she can sp- observe them freely.

She wriggled out of her current position, smearing her beautiful dress with dried dirt in the process, and crawled backwards in all fours to finally emerge out of the bush. She moved slowly, careful not to break the camera she’s holding on one of her hands. She was almost out, feeling her butt and back free from the pressure of the plants above her, and slowly but surely went out of her hiding place.

A sigh escaped from bow-shaped lips when the little princess finally extracted herself from under the large vegetation and was shaking her head in an attempt to remove the leaves that got stuck in her long silken hair when she caught an image in her peripheral vision. She abruptly halted any wild movements and blinked. She could have sworn she saw… Her heart instantly hammered in her chest as she collected what courage she have against mortification and slowly turned her pretty head around.

For sure, she’s never been more horrified until this very moment.

Lilac eyes gaped with disbelief as she beheld her one and only giving her a quiet look while squatting behind her. He is sitting on his heels with his elbows on his upturned knees, his jaw resting snuggly at the back of his folded fingers. His beautiful hazel orbs trained on the chibi princess as if he’s watching an unknowing cat caught in the act of stealing a fish.

‘K-Kaito-san!’

Why didn’t she sense him?! They stared at each other for a quiet moment. The tiny pureblood still slumped on soft grass with her big amethyst orbs displaying unveiled embarrassment and humiliation, with few leaves and twigs sticking out of her messy dark brown strands to further erase the elegant image she tried hard to imprint in his mind, unable to utter a word of explanation for her highly dubious actions nor for the convicting video camera that was still on her numb hands. A hot blush filled her from her noble toes to the tips of her royal hair as her lips continued to hang open in surprise.

The hunter merely watched the young princess in her evident struggle, hard put in not showing his mirth at her amusing expressions, for he knew well what must be going through her mind. How funny. The little royal was obviously unsettled. He didn’t know what demon possessed him but he just can’t find it in him to put her at ease. He wanted to tease her until she cry and see more of that unmasked and sincere expression. She’s beautiful in her adult form but she’s simply adorable in this.

After a few minutes, however, he finally felt pity on her. Well, it will not do to have that hilarious expression permanent on her pretty face or his kohai will have his head, “Wha’cha doing brat?” And as if the entire heavens suddenly conspired against her, Anne squeaked like a dying rabbit in reply. No, no, no! Get your act together, you shameless woman! Anne berated herself as she struggled for composure, gathering all her remaining wits to try and salvage her beautiful image in his mind that she’s been trying to create. She was about to speak as elegantly as she can when the hunter, who she didn’t notice was already shaking at the hilarity of her reaction, suddenly burst out laughing.

“What was that, brat? You okay?” he asked in between laughs.

She gaped this time. Drinking in his laugh and recognizing the timbre and pitch and his every movement. From the way his shoulders shook to the way he tried to hold himself up. She recalled that familiar way his hazel eyes crinkled in euphoria which in turn drew a faint wistful smile on her
face. He’s really unchanging, isn’t he?

When Kaito was finally able to rein his glee to look down at the funny little princess, who he expected would be pouting petulantly by now, he was surprised to be welcomed by a serene smile instead. His laughter completely died in his throat when he saw a woman’s regard in him. Again, those eyes. Soft lavenders holding so much affection unbefitting of a child and should never be directed towards a full grown man. Really, what’s with this child? She’d better be not looking at everyone with such eyes or she’ll cause an uproar and much confusion. Good thing it was him since he’ll never make such a mistake.

He interned shook himself and coughed once to ward off the awkward air that was starting to hover over them, “Well, sorry about that, kid.” He supplied in his normal voice, totally unaffected by innocent charms, “Don’t worry, I won’t tell anyone your secret hobby.”

At this, Anne instantly remembered what happened. Oh no! Kaito-san just saw her doing her *Family Romance Collection Scene Gathering!* Oh, how ruined she must be. She lamented internally as her mind raced to rectify the situation, “I assure you this doesn’t usually happen.” She hastily supplied, “I’m merely desperate at the moment but I definitely, definitely don’t crawl under such vegetation for fun. As you know, my hobbies are extremely *normal* ones like playing the piano and embroidery. Yes, those incredibly *elegant* and *graceful* occupations. I don’t normally engage myself with such unladylike diversions. Definitely not.” Why does it feel like she’s only digging her own grave deeper?

Kaito merely looked at the child in amusement, a smirk adamantly forming in his lips as her words reawakened his mirth, “Yeah, nice try, kid.” He replied once she was finished giving excuses, chortling internally at the expression of disappointment and defeat in her features, “It’s okay, you know. Who even said you need to have such *elegant* hobbies just because you’re wearing a dress?”

Anne felt indignant, “But really, Kaito-san. I do play the piano and make embroideries as a pastime.” With some tea and biscuits, she wanted to add but felt she’ll only look more like an idiotic child. Oh, how can she rectify such a situation? *Heavens above, give me back my good reputation!* “This rarely happens, please believe me…”

“Yeah, yeah, okay. I believe you.” The hunter relented, finally feeling mercy for the princess, “Why were you even there in the first place?”

A soft gasp escaped from small pink lips once she realized that she’ll only be furthering such bad reviews of her behavior should her favorite hunter learned of her stalking… scratch that… suspicious… oh no, not that… highly *unique* tendencies. Yes. Her thoughts raced as she attempted to conjure a reasonable excuse or at least divert his attention entirely, “Oh, ah, uhm, well, certainly an *interesting* questi-, no! please-,” she wasn’t able to finish when he suddenly tilted his head up to look at the other side of the bush.

“Oh, I see.” Kaito smirked as he caught a glimpse of the view she must have been looking at earlier and found a certain blond and brunette couple happily chatting away in a familiar traditional Japanese café and with the recording device she’s holding, he finally understood, “Having aspirations to be a paparazzi, eh?”

Amethyst orbs vehemently trained their scrutiny at the invisible imps taunting her for such a blunder, fiercely avoiding the amber ones she knew was looking at her, internally willing mother nature to swallow her whole that she may become fertilizer and be a better help to the world. Her stupidity is certain to be a catalyst for something horrifying and possibly dangerous in the future. Surely, she just disgraced the noble name of her father at her shameful actions. She’s worse than Akira! She thought in full remorse.
This is such a grievous day indeed. And to think that she could have used it better for her own advantage but she foolishly missed it!

She didn’t know which fact to lament more; The fact that she was caught in such an embarrassing situation or the fact that she wasn’t able to use this perfect occasion to get closer to the hunter? But she can’t help it. She’s been saving her remaining blood pills so they can still continue attending the Night class. Oh, what a tragedy! And to think that she’s been trying to charm him with her exquisite beauty (Let’s not be hypocritical, since she inherited much from her parents, she knows she’s beautiful.) and mature grace! She thought she was having at least a little success but now…

She just showed him a child.

Goodness! Really, how could she err in such important matters!

She just proved herself a brat! Ohhh! Is this the punishment for all her schemes? Why? It was but an innocent diversion with an intention to bring couples closer together. And so what if she found it very entertaining? She’s still doing something for the sake of her parents’ and uncles’ romances! She was in the middle of severe criticism of herself when her castigation was interrupted by a gentle hand on her hair. She looked up to find the amused but kind hazel regards on her that she knew so well.

“Hey, it’s okay.” Kaito sincerely assured. He can’t help but want to ease her self-hate. Crying is still fun when it’s because of something trivial but self-depreciation should never be administered and endured by anyone. Her lilac eyes must only be allowed happiness and petulance but never hatred. “I’m just playing with you, brat. You’re too damn serious, lighten up will you?” he spoke while playfully ruffling her hair.

Anne managed a smile at this. Ah, he’s really the same no matter what timeframe. She felt extremely happy at that thought as she satisfied her heart with the image of a still squatting Kaito-san with his jaw resting on one hand while the other continued to ruffle her hair, a familiar soft smile on his lips.

Ne, Kaito-san, will you be mine in the future?

She could only hope and do her best but she still continue to chant her wish. There’s no harm in asking the heavens’ favor as an extra for a better chance. Right?

The little princess was already content with just staying in such a position, even when she knew that her dress must be unsightly with her hair full of dead leaves and small sprigs, as long as the hunter’s hand was still on her but alas, as all scenes have endings, so was this moment.

“Better get up already, brat. Don’t you have to prepare for that ball?”

“Indeed Kaito-san.” She resignedly agreed as the hunter helped her stand, “So, shall I see you at the evening banquet?”

“Yeah, sure brat.”

Kaito didn’t know why he said that when he already decided that he won’t attend that ridiculous nonsense. His tongue just slipped but he didn’t know how to take back that mistake in the face of a joyful smile.

Oh well, someone do need to look after the vamps anyway.
Well Played Games

“You think they’re okay in there?”

The pureblood princess’ chocolate eyes followed the gaze of the beautiful pair of emerald green orbs of her boyfriend and found the covered space where they’re sure a raging silverette hunter playing against the pureblood king can be seen. A smirk formed on her lips as she imagined the funny look on Zero’s face.

“They’ll be fine, senpai. Don’t worry about them.” Since Rose, which she knew Zero kept inside one of those earrings gifted to him by his children, was not yet fired. It must mean that Kaname is still alive and Zero’s stuck with clenching his teeth.

Ichijou smiled at the look of pure enjoyment on Yuki’s face. She must be having fun. Hopefully, Zero-kun will be able to forgive them for tricking him like this. He internally sighed. Even Kaname seems to take pleasure in it. Oh well, at least many people appreciated it. *Forgive us Zero-kun, Ichiru-kun. Please rest assured, your sacrifices were not in vain!*

“What would you like to eat, senpai?” Yuki’s happy voice jarred him from his internal encouragement towards the two silverettes, “We have dango, taiyaki, daifuku, mo-,”

“Cross-san…” Kageyama’s chilling voice suddenly resounded behind the prefect, “What are you doing here? You’re not a server! Please go back outside and keep the line straight!” he barked while dragging the small prefect by the back collar of her shirt to her original post.

“A-aah! Wait! Senpai!” Yuki wailed and uselessly flailed her hands. Dang! Her shift won’t end until after another three hours. She sighed as she gave up struggling and caught her handsome Ichijou-senpai’s lips mouthing an *‘I’ll wait for you’*. It made her smile. She nodded and waved at him. She’ll just have fun later!

After their heartless class president dump the useless prefect outside, at the end of the line for those waiting for their turn to play, Sayori immediately helped the brunette up and patted her dirtied jersey, “Are you okay, Yuki-chan?”

“Yup, no worries.” She laughed sheepishly while scratching the back of her head. Yuki frowned when she caught the silent inquiring eyes of her best friend, “Is there anything wrong, Yori-chan?”

Light hazel eyes probed dark sienna ones before finally asking, “You seem very close with Ichijou-senpai. I was just wondering if anything happened.” she kept on thinking about it.

It’s been a few weeks since Yuki started acting strange. She was depressed and seemed to have fought with the older Kiryū then confused and dazed afterwards then giddy and happy then pale and frightened alternating to another bout of giddiness and joy. She was relieved when her fright and distraction vanished even when she appeared to have changed entirely. She can’t quite convince herself that it was only because of her hair extensions. She knew something was completely altered with her best friend but seeing that she was the same cheerful and bubbly girl that she knew since they first met in junior high, she was not overly curious about it. She was just concerned for after that, she became even more depressed, more than when she fought with Kiryū-san, but after just a day or two she came back with such energy and bliss like never before.

Sayori is happy for her of course, even though she terribly missed her best friend who seemed to spend more time at the headmaster’s house these days, though she can’t help but be concerned.
Yuki’s position as a prefect made her very unpopular with the students, especially when the esteemed Night class president openly favored her, and now that she seemed even closer to the vice-president, she fears that her best friend will be even more hated. And if she’s any judge at all, she’ll say that there was already an understanding between them and when her brown eyes found her squirming friend who seemed to have been caught off guard with the question, she knew she was right.

“Y-Yori-chan… You see… well… I wanted to tell you something… but we… we were so busy that I didn’t know when to actually… you know… say it but…” Yuki spoke haltingly; a blush decorated her cheeks, as she fiercely thought how to confess. She really wanted to share her joy with her best friend but knowing just how everyone else seem to focus their attention to the preparation, she didn’t think it was right to suddenly say it. She admitted being flippant since she was worried more about her love life while everyone in their class pushed themselves for the café. She slumped remorsefully.

The short haired girl managed a smile. She can almost see what’s going on in Yuki’s head. *She’s still as readable as ever.* Sayori thought. “It’s okay, Yuki-chan. I understand. It was indeed hectic since last week. I’m just very happy for you.” She didn’t know how Yuki’s affection transferred to their blond senpai but as long as Yuki is happy then it doesn’t matter how.

“Y-Yori-chan!” Yuki’s large watery eyes found her best friend’s kind and soft smile, “I love you!” she declared before hugging the petite girl, totally uncaring of the task that they were supposed to be doing, while Sayori patted her head like she always did.

Yuki was still affectionately embracing her best friend when the clear sound of a ringing bell filled the air. The mark of the first winner for the much desired game loudly clang which elicited startled gasps and murmurs from all the challengers and their classmates. Of course, they cannot say that they were completely surprised; after all, it was Kuran-senpai.

The lively buzz evolved into full grown cheers and shouts of compliments when the triumphant challenger emerged from the covered space with a struggling and cursing silverette beauty. The never before seen blush painting the infamous scowling prefect scarlet silenced most of the cheers as they gaped at the sight of a beet red Kiryū Zero. While the other people who have yet to see the much talked about silver beauties were left stunned and immediately lengthened the line of hopeful individuals who wished to be the next victor.

Yuki got frozen in her clinging posture as she watched her beloved respectable brother drag her beautiful silver male best friend by his wrist, unmindful of Zero’s attempts to free himself. Pleasure radiated from Kaname even though his face betrayed nothing of his present feelings. Even after they passed by them, Yuki can still hear the adorable rants of the poor hunter which made her chortle, much to Sayori’s confusion.

“Damn it, Kaname! Let go! Don’t drag me!” Zero hissed at the back of the pureblood bastard who refused to listen to him. It’s not like he’s low enough to run away just like that once Kaname freed him. A deal is a deal and he’s fucking out already, what else can he even do?

“Be silent now, Zero. You’re only making a spectacle of yourself.” Kaname mildly scolded, not releasing even an inch of his hold. It wasn’t like they’re not attracting everyone’s attention already. He highly doubted that they’ll go unnoticed even if they’re as silent as the dead for Zero would be able to keep the attention to himself even if he just stood motionless for a whole day. No, such striking beauty can’t possibly go undetected.

“Shit. I don’t even have my freaking shoes on, Kaname! Let me go back to the chairman’s house so I can change!”
This effectively put a halt on the pureblood’s steps. He turned to look at his lover’s feet and true enough, he found bare white feet a little pinkish because of the freezing stone floor. “My, what thoughtlessness on my part. Please forgive me, Zero.” Kaname apologized to his lover who was still attempting to pry his wrist free from his steel grip.

Zero thought the pureblood finally saw some sense when he liberated him only to let out a strangled yelp when his world turned and his feet left the cold ground. It took him a full minute to realize he’s now looking at the smooth expanse of his lover’s jaw and neck as Kaname effortlessly carried him, not even feeling the weight of a full grown man and the numerous robes he’s wearing, and continued on to his destination like nothing happened.

The silverette promptly burst in rage as he wriggled even more violently in the brunette’s arms, “Fuck, Kaname! I swear I’ll really clobber you! Let go! This is damn embarrassing!” he yelled even louder, not even noticing the stunned expressions of everyone they passed.

A fierce one sided struggle happened for a while as the hunter fought to be let down. Not even getting a hold of the pureblood’s collar had any effect on the vampire king who only continued on his merry way. Zero only halted his rants when he accidentally met a pair of wide eyes on the face of a blushing female Day class student. He was suddenly aware of the hundred pairs of eyes on them.

“Shit.” The silverette breathed through clenched teeth after promptly burying his blushing face between his hands that were still tightly grasping his lover’s white uniform. How was he to face the world tomorrow? What a fucking humiliation.

“There, there, Zero. There’s no need to feel embarrassed. You’re absolutely enchanting.” Kaname placated his hunter when he felt embarrassment flood their bond. He really should feel pity towards his lover but he can’t help the fondness overpowering any other sense in him at his silverette’s adorable reaction.

“Shut up.” Zero mumbled, his face still hidden on his lover’s chest as if to smother his breath so he could die in peace. “I’ll fucking get you for this.”

“I’m looking forward to it.” Kaname just smiled at the threat.

He already anticipated as much but oh well, there is indeed much to be looked forward to.

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“Where do you think you’re going?” Kain asked his cousin as he caught her wrist when she attempted to follow their retreating leader who was currently whisking away a certain silver prefect who was in mid-outburst.

“Where do you think?” Ruka irately asked back.

“I don’t think you should go. You wouldn’t want to see what happens next. You know that, don’t you?” Senri provided listlessly, uncaring of the light haired beauty’s blush and pained expression, to which his partner lightly hit his head in admonishment.

“Shiki!” Kain warned. He can’t believe he said that in front of Ruka even after knowing full well of her feelings for their pureblood leader. Everyone can guess where their King was heading but he didn’t need to say that. Really, he’s still as tactless as ever. “Ruka -,”
“Shut up. I know.” The beautiful blond snapped as she snatched her hand but instead of storming off, she just sat down again and glared at the tea she’s been drinking. She could feel Kain’s worried gaze on her but was too crossed and pitiful to acknowledge it. She’s not stupid. Of course, she knew. Even the fact that it’s hopeless to even hope has already been understood and it’s not like she’s still under any illusion that the relationship between those two is only a passing fancy. She’s not a fool. One look and it could already be understood. It’s a bond no one could ever break. It was just an old habit. It’s not like she could kill her feelings just like that. She loved him, admired him, respected him, nay she worshipped him. She accepted everything but that doesn’t mean that her love and admiration will just as easily die.

“Maybe we should order more snacks.” The red-headed vampire commented, not even feeling the heavy atmosphere that was starting to surround them, “It’s unfair that Ichijou-san is allowed over Yuki-sama’s class while we can’t even go there.”

“Give it up, Senri. Akira-sama and Kohaku-sama asked us not to stand out. Be good and content yourself with this class’ made-up English tea.” Rima said over her own cup.

“If you didn’t want to stand out then maybe you shouldn’t have left the dorm at all.” Kain shook his head at the two’s uncaring behavior before surreptitiously looking around to see the admiring glances directed in their way. He’s thankful that no one has yet to come barging in to their space. Perhaps it’s all thanks to Ruka’s foul mood.

“Where’s Hanabusa?” Rima asked, ignoring Kain’s comment.

“Tied inside the Moon dorm. He insisted in coming here very early so Ichijou-san asked me to prevent it. It’ll be bad if he came in there early. That will be awful for Yuki-sama’s class. Nao-sama and Suiren-sama said they’ll let him go after a while. It should be after another hour or so.” He can almost hear his cousin’s furious rants. He’ll be hearing about his treachery for weeks to be sure. Hana is not the type to let go of this so easily. Why, oh why, must he be the one to suffer because of it? Really, why only him?

The silent pair only nodded in acknowledgement while Ruka continued to stare in contempt at her cup. Kain sighed internally. Why was he even here? He should have stayed inside the Moon dormitory. Heck, he was supposed to be asleep around this time but since he found out that these three vampires planned to join the festivities, he can’t help but make sure they didn’t do anything stupid that will make their president, the prefects, their little royals and the chairman angry. Really, why did the headmaster allowed this? He really shouldn’t put his trust in these troublemaking children.

“Ah, isn’t that Anne-sama?”

Kain’s internal lamentation was halted at Rima’s mention of their princess. All four watched the little brunette through the window whilst looking around as if in search for someone. Brows met at the look of pure irritation on her beautiful face. Whoever she’s searching for is in for some serious trouble. Four pairs of eyes met each other’s gazes. They all instantly came to a mutual and silent decision to not interfere with her. They promptly went back to enjoying their relatively peaceful day without any more words. They didn’t see anything.

They have self-preservation after all. It’s best not to get tangled up with an apparent, in coming storm.
This must be what they call retribution.

Ichiru thought while moving one of his pieces. Challengers just kept on coming and the line is even longer now that someone had won against them. His brother’s appearance must have also provided them no small degree of advertisement and now, he’s the one to suffer it all. What a mistake. He sighed to himself as he dealt the final move to defeat his female challenger currently gaping at him. This is what he gets for selling out his brother and for teasing him earlier. Really, what a mess. He internally groaned.

He didn’t know how long it has been since Zero got beaten but he knew that he’s been at it for hours and he’s growing tired. He really should apologize to his twin later on. He swore never to betray him like that ever again, no matter how entertaining it was. Ichiru silently made an oath to be the best brother there is as he watched each challengers come and go.

Nii-san, oh nii-san, please forgive this unfaithful brother of yours and come save me!

Ichiru sighed one more time as he waited for the next challenger. He steeled his nerves and willed some strength and patience. No point feeling sorry and regretting the fact now! I must face the consequences of my actions! He nodded to himself with a conviction of a martyr heading for his execution.

The silverette was already arranging his pieces once again when the next challenger entered the room. His fingers froze around his pawn as something white got caught in his peripheral vision. He swallowed, his hard-earned conviction immediately evaporating into thin air. Suddenly, loud murmurs and excited exclamations filled his ears.

Why? Why? Why?!

Were his sacrifices not enough? Was his noble acceptance of this humiliation not enough? Was his answer to this call of responsibility not enough? Why have the heavens forsaken this warrior? What did he do to be tormented like this?!

He didn’t even need to look up to know who was currently before him because with his shitty luck, it could only be one person.

Of course, it could only be one person.

He took one extremely deep breath, exasperation and dread filling him to the brim, before finally facing his new and most unwelcomed opponent and true enough, he was met with the animated sight of his lover currently smiling so beatifically and whose eyes seemed to have caught all the sunlight outside.

This is indeed retribution.

Why did all the gods hate him?

“I don’t know about you, Ichiru, but I think this is the farthest thing from a horror café.”

Not at all… because I’m absolutely horrified right now…

Ichiru can’t even find the strength to voice his response to his lover’s teasing. Nope, he’s currently in the process of slowly dying of shame. He shall curse this day and erase it from his memories. He’ll go on a very long journey and forget about this encounter forever. Maybe he’ll go to a temple and be
monk or to Africa and be lion’s food. Which one would be good?

Ahh, what a short life it has been…

Hanabusa enjoyed his lover’s reaction but when Ichiru didn’t say or do anything for a while, he was compelled to do something. He wanted to hurry up and enjoy the festivities with the prefect, after all, “I really don’t mind but are you sure you don’t want to start? I pity all those who are waiting outside. The sooner they know that it’s game over, the better.” The noble spoke in an attempt to jar his lover from his shell-shocked state. How cute.

The prefect’s beautiful face crumpled as hopelessness, irritation, embarrassment and disappointment all filled him at the same time. Silver brows met and he didn’t know if it was more because of today’s overall humiliation or indignation at his lover’s belittlement of his shōgi prowess. Not like it was far from the truth. Oh no, he himself knew that he hit rock bottom the moment the noble appeared. Surely, with Hana as his opponent, the outcome was already determined, but fuck if he’ll go down without a fight!

Suddenly, the desire to defeat this one challenger overpowered all other feelings inside him. His eyebrows drew even closer than before but because of determination now. Conviction burned his lilac eyes as he focused on his little warriors on the board. He’ll have to make sure that Hana won’t get what he wants so easily. He’ll have to go through hell first!

The noble vampire smiled as he saw resolve in his lover’s teary eyes. Ah, that’s the Ichiru he knows. His beautiful and strong lover. Suddenly, he was torn between wanting to beat him fast so they can already proceed with the festival together and wanting to lengthen the game so he can have those fiery violet eyes directed to him even for just a bit longer. There was just this sudden thrill at the thought that he’s going against the strongest fire he’s ever known, the one that refused to go out even in the face of bigger adversaries. It made Hanabusa fall for Ichiru every single time. Ah, he has a feeling that this game will be his hardest one yet.

Tension filled the tiny space as the noble and the prefect refused to back down and both endeavored to triumph against one another. The silence between the couple was in great contrast against the loud and excited murmurs of the outside world where one female prefect cheerfully dared their class president’s wrath for the hundredth time and joined her boyfriend even before her shift ended to wait for the game’s conclusion.

“That was fast.” Yuki mumbled while looking at the cubicle where there was no doubt a silent war currently ensuing. The pureblood princess tried to pout but was betrayed by her evil side when a smirk appeared instead. She giggled, shaking her head. Really now, all these vampires with their impatience. It was only less than two hours ago when her nii-sama took Zero and now it’s Aido-senpai who has come to take away Ichiru. She knew they’ll come of course. How could those two keep away? She would sooner believe the world will end tomorrow rather than believe that Kaname-nii-sama and Aido-senpai would be able to keep away from her brothers when they’re dressed in a never before seen, and maybe never again, attire. She chortled. Oh, how she wished she could see Ichiru’s face right now! Hopefully she’ll be able to secure a copy from the recorder Haku-kun mentioned they planted inside. Oh well, she’s sure to see an awesome expression once they emerged from the cubicle anyway.

Then she suddenly thought of something that made her jolt, driving away all giddy happiness and excitement. She just realized the inevitable and their impending doom. Oh no! They’re going to lose their main attractions. What’s going to happen to them?! There’s no question of their success and immense profit but it’s still early… what if the other classes managed to catch up to them at the end of the day?
If their president didn’t manage to dance with Ruka in this ball, he’ll surely be breathing down her neck during midterm exams for a second chance. No! She… she really needs to think of something fast.

“Yuki-chan? What’s wrong?” Takuma asked when he saw his girlfriend expressed increasing apprehension in her sienna eyes.

“S-senpai.” She tearfully uttered. Help me… She was just about to say her big problem when the aura and voice of her niece disrupted her. She turned to the side to find an approaching Anne looking around.

“Good day, Yuki-bachan, Takuji.” Anne greeted the couple huddled in a corner while her gaze darted at every other guest’s faces, “I’m wondering if you have any idea where the little demons, also known as my little brothers, are. Have you seen them?”

“Eh? No, Anne-chan. Aren’t you with them?” Takuma answered carefully. He can’t help but notice that though they were pleasantly addressed by the little girl, there was a note in her aura that silently told him that she’s quite angry.

The older pureblood must have sensed the same thing because she cautiously inquired, “Is there anything wrong, Anne-chan?”

A small fisted hand, obviously clenched too tightly to be considered feminine, slightly covered a strained, unconvincing smile, “Oh no. Please don’t worry about me, it’s nothing.” she chuckled darkly. Her fake, slightly tensed, would-be happy tone sent cold shivers down the other two vampires’ spine as obvious bulging veins slowly became apparent on her balled fist and neck.

Those two little devils! After Anne’s earlier mortification, it dawned upon her the possible reason for its cause. It was all because she wasn’t able to feel Kaito-san’s approach and unlike their beloved chichiue who can naturally hide his presence if he so wishes, Kaito-san didn’t have such an ability. That would mean that her dear beloved little brother did something possibly moronic like giving her favorite hunter his blood pill for presence concealment without telling her! Argh! Just the thought of it makes her so mad! Because while the incident was not entirely insufferable, still, a great damage has been dealt. How will they be able to piece back her ruined honor?! Her reputation?! Ah, Kaito-san… what a child I must be in your eyes… she wanted to cry in frustration. She felt like she just went back even further than the original starting line. She even lost sight of her parents! It made the injury even more painful. What was the point of all her schemes? It brought nothing but tragedy today!

The two adult vampires watched as delicate shoulders slumped in dejection, her calm and happy façade slowly melted, earning the child a sympathetic look from them.

“Is there anything we can do for you, Anne-chan?” Takuma gently offered.

Anne let out a heavy sigh before shaking herself from her gloom. There’s no point! She’ll just worry about it later! Right. Once she captured those two. So after steeling her nerves, she finally turned towards her aunt and uncle to address the unease she noticed earlier, “Oh, please don’t worry about me. Really, I shall be fine after pulverizing those two.” She sweetly smiled as if she didn’t just say something threatening, “But I noticed Yuki-bachan being distressed about something earlier. Perhaps, there’s something I could help you with.”

At the reminder, Yuki once again remembered the precarious situation she tangled herself and her
class in. She paled once again as she looked at the two vampires now looking at her with mild apprehension, “Oh no. What are we going to do? Aido-senpai will take away Ichiru and then we’re doomed.”

“Oh.” Both vampires chorused in understanding.

Anne immediately plunged herself into her scheming thoughts while her uncle Takuma comforted his girlfriend. Her father’s much earlier execution of their plan indeed made a terrible impact on her aunt’s class activity. Oh well, nothing for it, they simply needed to think of something fast. Uncle Ichiru’s match against uncle Aido was already predetermined. Not that she’s belittling her uncle Ichiru, it was just that she knew the mighty prowess of her other uncle’s intelligence. He indeed was not called a genius for nothing. She herself has yet to beat their uncle in any kind of game that uses logic. So now, what should they do?

Lilac orbs found the enchanting picture hanging on the room’s furthest wall. She sighed. She didn’t want to cause her little angelic siblings any kind of torment as much as possible, of course, but perhaps, they could be persuaded somehow. It was not like it was the first time and after all, they did manage to miraculously don their little Nao with those beautiful robes with only minimal crying. Well, it’s no miracle really. They only mentioned their beloved otou-chan needing his participation and help and those two wonderfully rose to the occasion. Ah, how adorable.

“Well, aunty,” Anne finally turned to the two vampires and smiled, “would you like to come with me to the Moon dormitory? Nao and Sui-chan should be awake by now.”

“Eh?” Yuki frowned but after a minute, she finally understood, “Oh! Are you sure? Will they accept the job?” she asked as she stood up. She can still remember how those large reddish-lavender orbs looked up at her and Anne with confusion as they hovered over the two silverettes playing on the carpet the day they asked for a photo for the poster. A sense of foreboding must have come to them as Suiren immediately hugged her twin protectively while still nervously looking at the two older vampires. Will they be alright? It won’t be a normal photo shoot this time…

“We can try, aunty. Anyway, they’re sweethearts, but perhaps a wonderful compensation for them afterwards?”

“I can manage that!” the pureblood princess immediately agreed. She’ll pay any price! She’ll even give them the best Christmas presents ever, she internally promised. Just please, please help me!

Anne smiled, “Well then, shall we go?”

The moment he entered his study, he immediately slammed the silverette he was carrying against the closed door, unable to find the patience to take a few more steps towards his bed chamber as if it was a million miles away. He didn’t waste his time before seducing his lover with a kiss, arranging his trapped body in a comfortable position with his thigh grinding between Zero’s legs to feel just how affected he was with his loving ministrations.

The hunter growled softly as the itch he felt under his skin further spread within him. He knew it will come to this but what startled him was the feeling of ready reciprocation he secretly felt inside him all along. It was like he was waiting for it all this time. It was a feeling that greatly baffled him as he
wasn’t one to indulge in such pleasures. Well, not until Kaname anyway. It’s an intoxicating sensation that made him go numb. Good thing he has the pregnancy hormones to blame. He let himself be taken away knowing it’s futile to even think of resisting, embracing the warmth and letting it fill him to his deepest core, letting the raging fire consume him and surrendering to his body and heart’s command.

Zero mildly startled Kaname by eagerly requiting his actions and fiercely kissing him back. Long, thin fingers tightly wrapped around silken dark threads while another pale hand grasped his lover’s uniform over his back. He even angled his head to better explore the delectable mouth against his. Without breaking the kiss, heavy eyelids over ruby eyes slightly opened to gaze at the hunter’s pale skin. His heart sped even faster as he beheld silver brows meeting together in apparent need and desire. Kaname felt his control slipped completely away from him at the passionate display of his lover’s own lust and thirst that he can’t help the almost savage way he explored his lover’s supple cavern, extremely intoxicated by the knowledge of his power over the ravishing beauty. He was hypnotized by the sight of Zero’s flushed skin and the feel of his touch on him. His grip around Zero tightened as he felt hot tongues moved in an indecent dance around each other. A low rumble unconsciously escaped from him and when hazy lilac eyes also opened to meet his burgundy ones, he was all but composed.

You never knew, did you? You never knew how your tiniest movements provoked disorder in my heart, whispered his mind.

The pureblood’s hand travelled up underneath the silver wig on his lover’s head and effortlessly took it off. No matter how exquisite his silverette looked in his regalia, nothing will beat the appearance that unwittingly captured him entirely. Lean fingers basked in the addicting soft texture of his silver hair while his other hand previously snaked around his hunter’s waist, travelled southward. The vampire king didn’t even bother loosening the large obi and taking off the robes. Instead, his hand swam under the folds of the numerous fabrics in order to arrive to his goal and unceremoniously delved inside Zero’s boxers which made the silverette softly gasp. His hunter’s fully erect cock drew a dangerously seductive smile on sinfully soft lips.

He liberated his lover’s swollen lips just as his thumb slightly stroke the head of his shaft, “My, someone’s eager today.” He teased in between harsh pants as lust-filled wine eyes looked into half-masted silver-lavender orbs.

“S-shut up.” Zero stuttered in his answer as long, skilled fingers tightened their hold around him which in turn elicited such a lewd moan from the hunter that would have him crawling inside a hole had it not for his present intoxicated condition, “Bas-hah-tard.” What’s happening to him? Even he thinks he’s weird today. It struck Zero that he must be feeling horny since earlier. Well, damn it. Fucking hormones. He wanted to unreasonably blame the smiling bastard since he’s the one who knocked him up, but it was immediately forgotten the moment the vampire picked up the pace. Only Kaname’s movement registered in his mind. Nothing else did. Not the way he repeatedly called the bastard’s name, the trail of kisses on his jawline and neck, his ragged breaths, the sweat starting to cover their entire body or the way he scratched the back of Kaname’s neck and almost tore his lover’s uniform because of his grip. The irresistible sensation robbed him of all his strength that his knees collapsed beneath him and he dragged his pureblood to kneel with him on the floor.

Kaname only hummed against damp silver hair as he drank his lover’s delicious pants, welcoming the pain from the shallow cuts that already started to heal and breathe in the bewitching scent his hunter is producing in abundant quantity as usual whenever he’s in this enraptured state. Zero seems to be unaware of it and its strong effects that would have the brunette mindlessly thrusting into him had he been any less coherent than he presently is. Of course, the pureblood so badly wanted to but not yet, he wanted to drive his silverette mad with pleasure before making him ride him to his heart’s
The vampire’s other hand and lips travelled from his hunter’s silver hair down to his pale neck, leaving trails of kisses as his hand lowered the obstructing robes off a pale shoulder. He could feel his lover’s shiver under his lips and touch, unconsciously canting his hips and baring his neck to give him access as if to further derange his senses. He could feel himself hardening and his fangs lengthening in response to Zero’s unconscious seduction. What a torture. All of Kaname’s instincts demanded to pierce the flushed, tattooed skin before him but valiantly fought it by instead deeply sucking it until it bruised, further adding decoration to his silverette’s neck.

Searching lips soon found the now slightly distinct mating mark. The lovely seal and evidence of their everlasting connection fast-becoming apparent on their skin as they continuously strengthened their bond. Kaname never really thought that such a mark will ever be imprinted on his skin for he made up his mind to wed his beloved sister as per their family’s royal tradition. He didn’t care then as he never really thought that he’ll ever love anyone so strongly that a connection will be made and so he was confused when the half-completed bond with the silver hunter was born. That he’ll ever feel such raging emotions and desire strong enough to consume and burn him never crossed his mind. In fact, the Kaname before would have found the idea utterly preposterous but now, he can’t imagine feeling anything less or having his future with anyone else other than Zero. Everything that he is and will be is now for this person in his arms and he’s extremely pleased and satisfied about it, proud of it even. He kissed and licked the lovely proof of his claim on his mate, smiling as he felt the fast beat of his lover’s heart and the slight trembling of the pale Adonis in his embrace. He rejoiced the fact that it was only he that can produce such a reaction from the stoic hunter. Only he can make Zero put on such a captivating expression, produce those enticing sounds and only he can see him in this state. No one else but him.

“K-Kaname,” a breathless entreaty snatched back his attention as his lovely silverette called his name in such seductively husky voice. He only hummed in response as he quickened his strokes on his hardened member, leading him to a satisfying release. An almost wanton cry permeated the room while shaking pale white arms tightened around him as he felt his lover climaxed, his cum spilling all over his hand. Auburn orbs dazedly watched his lover catch his breath while leaning against him, imprinting the beautiful hunter’s unguarded expression as silver brows met in evident pleasure with his head weakly perched on Kaname’s shoulder that the pureblood can feel his every breath as he panted against his neck. He held his trembling body to anchor him through his orgasm, welcoming all his weight on him.

“Satisfied?” the brunette teased and chuckled when lilac orbs looked up to grace him with a glare, only demolished by the gorgeous after-glow on his skin and softened by the seductive haze in their lavender depths. He kissed his sweat-laden temple before fishing out a silk handkerchief inside his pocket to wipe his hand before taking Zero’s left hand and kissing the simple red ring around his pinky. “Well then, shall we continue this in a more comfortable place?”

The hunter weakly huffed, finally regaining enough of his breath to respond, “Who do you think was the impatient bastard who attacked me as soon as the door closed?” he castigated but was betrayed by his body when his blush deepened instead of abating completely. They really should practice patience and self-control.

The pureblood only chuckled as he stood, carrying his still weak-kneed lover with him, “I’ll admit that’s my error but I must say, it’s not entirely my fault. You should refrain from looking too adorable if you wish for my control,” he could only smile as he watch his lover blush even darker than before, his lips opening and closing as if wanting to say something to him in retaliation but can’t seem to form a coherent speech. He heard a growl instead.
Well, damn you, Zero thought lamely as he was effortlessly carried to the sofa. He can’t even bark at the embarrassingly sappy vampire for carrying him like a maiden anymore. He knew he’ll only humiliate himself if he were to insist on walking only to have his knees give up on him again.

Kaname was still wearing that highly contented smile as he leaned back on the sofa after stripping Zero of his undergarment and his *uchikake* to leave four remaining layers of kimonos to hang loosely over one pale shoulder, his hunter’s white chest and black mating mark visible to his selfish wine-red eyes, and arranging him on his lap with the silverette’s legs on either side of him.

“Wipe that look off your face, Kaname,” Zero snarled, chagrined as his body quickly responded to the look of utter desire and hunger in those blood pools as if he didn’t just cum minutes ago. Really, it’s as if he doesn’t have any command over his body anymore. The complete control might have already been handed over to this exasperating vampire in front of him.

“My, whatever could you mean?” Kaname smiled as he leaned forward to cover the sweet supple lips with his, prying them open for him to explore, robbing Zero the chance to retaliate. Tongues met again in a salacious battle for supremacy. His heart sped as he felt his buttons being quickly undone by slightly urgent hands which sent a delicious thrill down his spine, making his blood boil and reviving his arousal. A moan escaped from the pureblood when he felt Zero took a shockingly bold turn and stroked him over his uniform before unbuckling his belt to free him simultaneously deepening the kiss hard enough that Kaname could almost taste blood. A sensuous tongue forcefully intruded inside his mouth, seemingly desirous in exploring every part of him. Evidently, the demanding lips against his have every intention of swallowing him whole. A delightful thrill filled him to the core as he perceived his lover’s resolute actions that he can’t help the helpless groan which escaped from him as he let his mouth go slack to give his assertive hunter full control, relishing in his mate’s apparent desire for him. He could hear their heartbeats thudding fast within them as feverish excitement reawakened.

He kept on getting surprised today. In the first place, he didn’t think that his sister will actually succeed in convincing his lover to go through their class’ plan, then there was the bewitching sight of a stunning Venus which far surpassed his expectation and now, his hunter’s daring actions which is severely and dangerously testing the current weak reins he has over his inner beast. He must really warn his lover not to tempt him like this for then, there will be dire consequences which may result to several days of imprisonment in this room. He tamped down his eager beast, willing some degree of control as to not jeopardize their schooling. The chairman will not be pleased if he were to kidnap his charge for several days. Indeed, how unfortunate.

The brunette calmed himself by regrettably breaking the obscene kiss, favoring Zero’s slender tattooed neck instead, drinking in the sound of his lover’s quick and heavy breathing while desperately thinking of ways on how he can distract and calm himself, “Today was such a surprise, who would have thought that you’d agree to this idea?” he murmured against luminous white skin as he panted, struggling for composure before looking at his lover to see his silverette scowl at him as he was reminded of the day’s overall misfortune. He wasn’t that intimidating with his lips red and plump, flushed and sweaty skin, and dishabille state of his starlight hair. It beckoned him instead.

“Don’t even get me started with that,” a growl rumbled deep within Zero, even as he rasped and panted hard, as he recalled his class’ moronic scheme again. Maybe he wouldn’t have minded it half as much had it not been for this king of all devious means who just wouldn’t let him live this incident down. Why must he insist on becoming a part of Zero’s every humiliating experiences? Asshole. He has even forgotten about it already! Lilac eyes petulantly averted auburn scrutiny as he
unconsciously pouted. His glares didn’t seem to have any effect anyway. Damn it.

Amusement colored the pureblood’s voice at his sulking lover’s adorable reaction, successfully calming his beast but tempting his wicked side instead, “Why? When it suits you so beautifully?” when amethyst eyes narrowed in defiance only to be betrayed by an even brighter scarlet painting his pale skin, Kaname teasingly added, but not without honesty, “You’ll make a fine courtesan. Just look at you, seducing me as we speak,” he chuckled when his words were awarded with a glower. “Why don’t you tell me a lie,” he whispered as he eyed and gently traced Zero’s still swollen lips with his fingers, his other hand around his lover drawing them flushed together, that not even the large obi can prevent, as he slowly guided him over his arousal, “Aren’t courtesans known for their deceit?”

He could feel his silver eyebrow twitch in irritation. This bastard is really enjoying this, “I love you.”

Kaname arched an eyebrow, “My, is that the lie?”

“Yes.” He rasped, his breath getting heavier once more as he felt the familiar pressure around his entrance.

“How adorable.” Kaname seductively whispered as he showered him with kisses, much more controlled than before but no less ardent, knowing full well which statement was the lie. He awarded Zero by slowly and fully easing him down on him at last.

Pale hands found purchase on the vampire king’s shoulders as exquisite pain filled him. The pressure grew and pushed deeper within him, forcefully opening him further, eliciting a lascivious gasp from him. Darkened lavender eyes unconsciously closed tightly, anticipating the sweet torture’s commencement, unaware of the equally dark russet eyes intent on his every expression. He could feel Kaname’s hot breath on his sweaty skin before long, making him even more lightheaded and when velvety soft lips mouthed the mating mark on his chest the moment he was fully seated, he thought he has lost all sense of sanity.

The pureblood waited for his lover to be fully used to his size by trailing erotic kisses up his chest to his favorite tattoo. He breathed in Zero’s heavenly scent. It’s almost overpowering and it teased his utmost vampiric impulses once more that Kaname unconsciously tightened his arms around his lover to restrain himself. He knew he can’t bite down but he also can’t seem to detach himself from his seducer’s luminously fair skin. It’s a bittersweet torture he always welcomingly subjects himself to.

Even during his entranced state, the silverette still noticed the way his lover’s lips erotically traced the line of his neck. Kaname always do this, deeply taking in his scent but with restraint, as if wanting to fiercely take a bite but deliberately stopping himself. What an idiot, “Take it if you want,” Zero breathed huskily, his half-lidded eyes opened in time to see his lover look up at him in surprise so he assured him with a smirk, “I’ll just drink more from you later. It’s alright.” He further persuaded.

Kaname stared only for a minute, a part of him wanted to ask again but the larger and more selfish part of him that wanted to relish the most intoxicating and luscious blood he had ever tasted prevailed. When a pale hand gently tangled itself with his dark brown hair as it decidedly guided him to taste heaven, he didn’t waste another moment in licking the tattooed skin before sinking his fangs. He hummed in delight as the taste of Zero’s blood electrified him. It’s as delectable as he remembered. He can’t help but grind into his hunter more as he deepen his bite, eliciting another breathless gasp from his pale lover, pressing their bodies against each other, ruining the perfect knot of his obi, with his hands tightly gripping a handful of silver hair and fabric of the loose kimono around the silverette. A rumble down his throat escaped as ambrosial blood continued to flow into him and it’s all he could do to rein his inner demon.
He wanted more, more, *more*.

It’s so addicting that it easily awakens all his primal instincts as a vampire. His beast rejoiced at finally having that elixir he deprived himself of for a long time, roaring in triumph and pride, as it reasserted the ultimate fact of his possession.

*He’s mine.*

*Mine.*

The hunter jolted as the fire inside consumed his core with a ferocity that frightened even him. What is with this man that attracts him so? That holds him down so forcefully until there’s nothing left to do but to surrender? Zero more than once finds himself afraid of his own feelings. It’s overwhelming enough to leave him breathless and drowned that he sometimes surprises himself by doing something so completely unlike him just like now. The him before he fell for Kaname would surely scoff at the idea of freely offering his blood to a vampire but he can’t help the rush of pleasant exhilaration that flooded him at the thought of Kaname’s desire for everything that he is. An unacknowledged dark part of him honestly wanted to keep it that way.

Is there a restriction on how much affection one can feel? Is there a limit on how much love one’s heart can carry?

As the torrent of overpowering desire and affection washed over him, Kaname realized how the word ‘love’ perfectly describes what he felt but was utterly incapable of expressing its depths and weight. It’s not enough. A thousand ‘I love you’ were not enough to say how much he feels for Zero. A million ‘I want you’ were insufficient in conveying his overwhelming thirst. They could merge into one entity and yet they still wouldn’t be close enough.

He wants more.

He needs more.

He desires far more.

It drives him mad to just hold him. It tears him that there were milliseconds of separation. It breaks him whenever his pale form leaves his sight. It’s painful whenever he’s without him yet it also kills him in the sweetest way possible whenever they’re together. It’s a vicious cycle. Just like willingly suffering an illness only to eagerly take the cure.

How truly incomprehensible, this feeling, whatever it is called. For it is not *just* ‘love’. It’s something even stronger and frightening, even more powerful and destructive.

It took all his century earned self-discipline to command himself to stop and retract his fangs. He lapped the remaining blood away, unwilling to waste even a drop, before showering it with kisses until he felt Zero’s hand forcing his head up to forwardly claim his lips. His lover used his other hand on his shoulder to support himself as he pulled himself up only to immediately push back down. Kaname groaned at sudden rush of pleasure, marveling his hunter’s boldness but nevertheless, exciting him further. He assisted him in his eager undertaking once recovered, hands on his delicate hip and thigh to pull him up only slam him back down, the frenzied pace untamed as they only sought to arrive at the highest peak. Racing to provide the other ecstasy while driving each other mad with even wilder desire.

Zero drew his sweat-covered forehead closer to Kaname’s, his half-lidded dark amethyst orbs memorizing the intensity of passion and love he can see in his vampire’s blood red ones, hot breaths
mingling as harsh moans filled the room. They rocked into each other as Kaname briskly and repeatedly fill Zero while the hunter passionately welcomed each thrusts, allowing the pureblood to embed himself deep within him, to be entrenched in his core - in his soul.

Zero’s arms clung around Kaname’s neck as if to anchor them both as the onslaught of explosive fervor threatened to completely wipe away all notions of sanity. It’s irrational and mystifying. How can this feeling both be pleasure and pain, peace and chaos, protection and danger at the same time? Zero doesn’t understand, but he no longer cares.

The hunter was about to tell his mate that he’s very close to the end when Kaname pulled him down for a brief but scorching kiss that finally led him to spill his second release. He was still quivering in his orgasm when felt Kaname climax and fill him with his essence only seconds later. Only harsh breaths were heard for several minutes as they both tried to regain their normal breathing. The pureblood sunk back on the couch while supporting the silverette’s weight.

Zero was still panting hard on Kaname’s shoulder when he realized he actually came untouched. He froze. Has he become that sensitive? The after-glow he was sporting was instantly overpowered by the blush that covered him from head to toe. Oh, this is fucking great, he thought sullenly.

“What is it, Zero?” Kaname asked as he suddenly felt a slight gloom echo from their bond. He gently held his lover’s chin to coax him look at him when silver-lavender eyes eluded his gaze.

Zero sighed in surrender when he was met with questioning auburn orbs drowning in concern as Kaname very softly stroke his still damp silver hair. Well, whatever, “It’s nothing. You’ll take responsibility for making me like this anyway.” He breathed as he settled back against Kaname.

Dark brows met in confusion but still responded, “That goes without saying.” Slender fingers continued to caress his lover’s silver hair.

“Well, whatever, ” The hunter mumbled, closing his eyes as exhaustion took over his senses.

Kaname decided to let the matter go when he felt his lover slip into a peaceful slumber. He smiled as he felt his lover’s deep peaceful breathing. He must be very tired to have fallen asleep so soon. He planted a kiss on Zero’s light hair and the ring around his pinky before he proceeded to carry him to his bed chamber at last.

Is this real?

Ichiru can’t believe what he’s currently seeing with his own eyes. Is that really his piece about to check Hana’s king? Really? There’s only about three or more moves but he can already see the outcome. Is he really about to win this game? Somehow, he’s having a hard time believing but he checked again.

Lilac eyes slyly glanced at his lover and he was surprised to see a very serious Hana so deep in thought. He has yet to utter a single word to the noble since he came inside and he was so focused in the game that he even forgot to look at the vampire so seeing such a serious expression threw Ichiru off-guard. Suddenly, ridiculous happiness filled him. He was so sure that he’ll be taken lightly knowing the noble’s intellect but to see Hana taking him so seriously made him swell with pride. He was grinning to himself like an idiot after taking his move when his lover called his name.
“Ichiru.”

“Eh? Wha-,”

The prefect lost all notions of reality when a hand suddenly reached out around his nape and snatch him forward to have warm lips meet his. A hand unconsciously gripped his lover’s uniform to steady himself as Hanabusa blissfully invaded his personal space. He felt an insistent tongue pry his mouth open and his world immediately centered itself around the noble when he felt him deepen the kiss. He was startled only for a minute but immediately abandoned himself to kissing his lover back. He has almost forgotten where they were when Hana released his lips. He opened his eyes to find the color of the sky staring back to his lilac ones, the dazzling light dancing in cerulean gaze was so beautiful that he completely forgot what in the world was happening around him.

In his beguiled state, he almost missed his lover’s words.

“I win.”

It took Ichiru a full minute to register what he’s been told, “Wait, what?”

Hanabusa smiled at his flabbergasted silverette before he directed him to the board and took his final turn. He put his winning piece on his rightful place before declaring in a voice full of glee, “Check.”

The young prefect was slack-jawed while studying the shōgi pieces on the board. That’s indeed an epic loss on his part. Silver brows crumpled over confused and disbelieving lavender orbs. Why didn’t he see their game heading in that direction? Oh man, he clearly missed an angle. An almost indiscernible pout appeared on soft petulant lips. Damn it. Amethyst orbs glared at the chuckle his lover produced.

“It’s because you’re so focused on your rook that it made you quite open.” The blond explained to the frowning prefect, “Now, now, don’t look like that. I won fair and square.”

“I almost beat you.” Ichiru can’t help but mumble, turning his narrowed eyes back on the board, a flush of embarrassment, indignation and disappointment blooming beautifully on his cheeks.

The noble quietly stared, the exhilaration for his victory momentarily forgotten in the face of a stunning and sulking beauty, his golden eyebrows met to produce a conflicted look as the vampire fought between overpowering desire and sensible reason. This alluring idiot, he shook his head, if only he knew how he spectacularly defeated him every single time, how weak Hanabusa is against him that there’s no hope for any escape or victory, how he has an impressive hold on him that he can’t get up on his own, how he always won over him without fail. He inaudibly sighed. “Well, you gave it your best shot.” He said instead, a soft smile on his lips.

The silverette, who knew nothing of his power over the blond vampire, only returned his affectionate gaze with petulance, “Whatever, I still lost.” He sighed, finally admitting his defeat, “So? What do you want to do? Oh, wait,” he just remembered the bell he must ring in order to inform the remaining challengers that the game is over. Poor guys, he thought distractedly as he reached for the bell when his pale wrist was caught by a strong hand demanding his attention. He was forced to face his golden lover who was sporting a captivatingly intense fire in his azure orbs.

Hanabusa doesn’t regret giving his all in that game, after all, he fought really hard for the chance to enjoy the festival with his silverette nor did he wish he held back as he wouldn’t dream of insulting his lover by downplaying his capabilities. He knew how strong Ichiru is and he was honestly nervous as he was very close to losing though he tried to look cool and confident but no matter what, he didn’t want that disheartened look etched on his angel’s face. He can’t help but want to ease his
sullen look so even before he was robbed the chance to comfort him, he immediately prevented his victory’s announcement for a moment longer. He pulled a surprised Ichiru in his arms and whispered against starlight hair, “You should know that you were great.”

The silver prefect was only momentarily frozen before finally getting his bearings back and though he was still a bit disappointed at not being able to beat Hana, the apparent concern that his golden light was showing touched him. He scoffed in mock contempt but his blush betrayed the honest pleasure that coursed through him at those words. He knew Hanabusa is just indulging him but to be recognized by someone you love really just sprouts treacherous delight and pride in one’s heart. Oh, he’s a moron and half alright. He admits it.

“I’m not kidding.” The noble added with so much sincerity which surprised the silverette. Knowing his lover, he’ll think that he’s just saying it to pacify him. He drew them apart enough to look deep in stunned amethysts. Yeah, he knew it, “You’re a strong and intelligent person, Ichiru. I really had to struggle just to make sure I’ll win!”

Ichiru blinked at the insistent hard sapphires staring intensely back at him and he can’t help the shy smile that drew itself on his scarlet face as he was filled with joy and gratitude. He tried to tamper it by pursing his lips. He averted his eyes and casually said with a nonchalant shrug, “I wasn’t really that upset.” He must have been too late as he saw a gentle smile and indulgence lighting up aquamarine orbs when he chanced a glance towards Hanabusa. He sighed internally; nothing really escapes a genius’ notice, huh? Oh well, at least he tried. He allowed himself to smile a little as he wrapped his arms around the vampire and as if it was a force of nature, soft lips quietly met soft lips. The arms around his lean body tightened as if to draw him closer to which he complied. The sweet flavor of his ever so considerate lover bursting in conflagration on his taste buds, erasing all the unwanted memories and feelings so only the two of them remained. The bewitching feel of his lover’s tender assault inside his mouth generated a soundless moan from him. He was already breathless when the blond released his lips to grant an affectionate kiss on his forehead.

With the warm body pressed against him, he suddenly didn’t want to go just yet, the overwhelming desire to push Ichiru down warring inside his genius mind. Ah, he’s such a sinful little angel, his Ichiru is. Reason prevailed as he valiantly persuaded himself that enjoying the Cross Academy festival with the silverette is such a rare opportunity that he shouldn’t miss. Calm yourself, Hanabusa, he internally whispered and with heroic self-control and restraint, he freed Ichiru to take his hand. “Well then, shall we go?”

Yuki stretched out her upper body to let out all the stress that accumulated during that brief moment of panic. Ichiru was already being hauled by Aido-senpai by the time they made it back. She swore that the wild clamor that filled the whole corridor and their classroom was heard all throughout the academy when the second chime of the bell rang loud and clear. There was a tumultuous uproar as her classmates were thrown into a frantic fit for they all recognized the immense loss and great impact it had on their booth. There was also a burst of rage and complaints from the remaining participants who were patiently waiting in line. Yuki was so thankful that they made it on time for there would have been a scary bloodbath had they arrived even just a minute later. Apparently, her lucky stars are still with her!

She never thought she’d see the day that their annoying and obnoxious class president will burst into tears at the sight of her, though it’s really because of the reinforcement she had brought with her, and
even hug her because of extreme gratitude. She was even granted her free time even though there was about an hour more remaining in her shift! She giggled at the memory.

The incredible sight of another two gorgeous Aphrodite in the form of her silver niece and nephew more than pacified the frenzied crowd and silenced the overall hysteria. The moment the two walked into the scene, awe inspired sighs replaced the ruckus, creating a chance for his silverette brother and his boyfriend to get away from the mad crowd. Praise be!

Ah, as expected of her niece! She was able to convince little Nao-kun and Sui-chan to sacrifice themselves and even dress them up so fast! What took Yori-chan and her an hour was done in a blink of an eye. She must have done it a couple of times and that thought gave her a complex mix of joy and pity towards all her nephews. Now that she thinks about it, it didn’t seem like Nao’s first time wearing female clothing if his elegant way of carrying those clothes was anything to go by. He was even able to walk with those scary koma-geta unattended, closely followed by his sister who was also forced to take part in their activity to accompany her poor twin. They were both dressed in kimonos of varying shades of red and white which they carried with such confidence that Yuki was sure that they practiced for a long time since they also walked using the hachi… hachi… yeah, she forgot the name of that style of walking courtesans used that Anne mentioned. Anyhow, she’s sure her beautiful niece was the one who taught them. How detailed… Poor Nao… Sui-chan doesn’t seem to mind and though she really didn’t know what her silver nephew thought of the whole ordeal, she’s sympathetic all the same.

Oh well, it’s not like she can really blame Anne. They’re just so cute! And she was saved because of it. She sighed. She felt like she aged thirty years because of extreme nervousness. Good thing it’s over now.

“That was close, wasn’t it?”

She turned to her green-eyed companion who she immediately dragged to the rooftop as soon as she was relieved of her duties. She wanted to go around in the festival, but after the general excitement, she just wanted to spend a quiet time with her beloved senpai. She smiled beatifically, further calmed by the comforting light that has always been present in those emerald depths.

She went to him and took both his hands in hers, staring deep into his eyes. Light gold eyebrows frowned in question when she did nothing else but scrutinize his face. Yuki can’t help but sigh as something peaceful filled her heart.

She’s been running around, restless and unsure, since childhood before her completing memories were restored. Being traumatized because of the near death experience with that level-E vampire, being in pain because of her unrequited love with her savior, feeling frightened for her adopted-brother, wanting to protect her small and weird family, the everyday stress of being a hated prefect, the overbearing teachers and classmates, hard homework and examinations, encounters with rogue level-Es, then there was the unexpected happening in her life, her broken-heart, Rido, her nightmares, her painful memories, her pureblood lineage, her thorny path, and even now, she knew there’s still many struggles awaiting her. There’s even that abominable old aristocrat threatening her precious light and the darkness of the impending doom of her uncle but despite all the raging tempests trying to ruin her happiness, there’s a place she found comfort and safety. Looking at those serene crystal green eyes, she knew she found everything she’ll ever need to survive. Right here, there is happiness she never knew she would ever find.

She never thought such a feeling exists, that such a tender and delicate emotion is possible. She’s almost breathless with exhilaration and gratitude that her heart is almost in pain.

She’s just so glad that he was the one with her at this very moment. That he turned to her and that he
embraced her that night. She’s so relieved that she shouted and went after him. Every time she thinks of the possibility that she could never have him, her heart is crushed by violent fright. She tightened her hold on both his hands, “Promise me you’ll never let go of my hand for all eternity.”

Golden threads softly cupped the handsome face of the Moon dorm’s vice-president as he tilted his head a little. His emerald green eyes were quietly inquiring, “But what if there’s no eternity?” he teased, trying to lighten the mood by being playful.

“If I can have you in this lifetime then that would be enough. It shall be my ‘eternity’.” she answered seriously, with a sincere light burning in her eyes. The joke completely lost on her.

Takuma was momentarily taken off guard. He shook his head. His tone turning equally earnest at his girlfriend’s ardent declaration, “No, it won’t be enough. All the time in this world will not suffice.” He responded honestly. He stared as the beauty before him warmed his soul. He drank the sight of her long mahogany hair raging with the wind while the sunlight seemingly lit a determined fire in her sienna eyes.

“Then that’s all the more reason to hold on tightly to my hand.” She smiled up at him, tears burned the back of her throat. She’s so happy, so blessed and ecstatic, that her heart was about to burst. It filled and drowned her completely but she still fiercely wanted to keep all of it.

“As you wish.” He promised as he squeezed her hands and leaned to kiss her lips.

Lilac orbs stared unseeingly at the crowd of people he didn’t notice was ogling them for his mind got occupied by the memory of the exquisite visage of their gorgeous substitutes. Oh man, those two were Nao-kun and Sui-chan, right? He tried to imagine his brother’s expression the moment he learned what their dear adopted-sister had done to his beloved children but found the very idea terrifying. God, Yuki! Really, she seems to be getting braver ever since becoming a pureblood. Well then, he won’t worry about her. Surely, she can take care of herself. She’s a big girl now. He was only cut from his musings when he felt the movements of his lover besides him.

“Here wear this.”

Ichiru watched his lover squat to present him a pair of black-lacquered sandals with red fabric straps. It’s about five inches tall but infinitely shorter than those towers Yuki told them to wear. But still, what the hell is with the missing soles at the toe? How can anyone even use those? He’ll not be able to stand with that, let alone walk!

“These were only worn by new maikos in winter but we need to prevent your kimonos from touching the ground so wear this.” Hanabusa explained informatively as if he needed to know their origin to be able to miraculously use them properly.

Ichiru only sighed before trying them on. He wobbled and immediately clung to the wall beside him to steady himself. What the hell is this? “But it’s still hard to walk.” He understood the need to protect such expensive looking kimonos from being ruined but why can’t it be a zōri or geta? Or freaking straw slippers? Better yet, his own rubber shoes! That would be much easier to walk in. These are still too high for him. He frowned at his lover, now outmatching his height by an inch thanks to the torture devices he’s wearing. He wanted to change his clothes first but the damn playful
noble adamantly refuses. He even pleaded with him using the most adorable set of cerulean puppy eyes. He was thoroughly defeated that he was only able to say yes. Damn his mushy, recreant heart! He sighed once again. He was about to repetition the change of his clothes, preparing to beg for it, when the noble responded to his earlier statement.

“Ah, there’s a reason for that.” Hanabusa smiled as he took his lover’s pale hand, “It’s so you can hold on to me for the rest of the day.” And with that he energetically led the way to the school’s festivities.

“A-ah! W-wait, Hana.” The silverette stammered while being forcefully led into the gaping crowd. When he finally noticed the hundred pairs of eyes staring at them, amethyst orbs instantly flew to their intertwined hands. He was about to let go when the hand clutching his tightened its hold even more, “Ha-Hana.”

“Shhh,” confident and proud azure scrutiny met the distressed lavender orbs behind him, “It’s fine. Let them look.”

“B-but,” Ichiru started, his heart sped from frantic fear for his lover and the danger of their relationship being exposed as well from elation at the boldness and determination etched in those aquamarine orbs. It’s like he didn’t care even if their relationship get discovered. It made something in the prefect swell. Maybe, it’s his heart.

“Oh look, a target shooting booth,” Hanabusa pointed at the said booth under a red tent. He proceeded to lead the hesitant prefect over to, hopefully, win some prize and impress his silverette. He tamped down the sudden jealousy he felt when the male students tending the stall stupidly gaped at the ravishing beauty with him. He knew he mustn’t blame them, after all, it’s his angelic Ichiru whose innocence and seduction reincarnate in one package. But no reason seems to be enough to stop him from shooting the gaping bastards instead of the targets.

He could still feel the pressure of the multiple pairs of eyes that were following them but he determinedly placed his focus on his golden light which was amusingly sporting a twitching eyebrow as if he’s irritated. He deeply hoped he’s not regretting his decision of spending time with him. His hand unconsciously gripped the white-gold bracelet around his wrist as he stared at his lover’s face.

An unconscious frown appeared on his pale face. It could only be his nerves disturbing him but whispers all around him seem to be magnified tenfold so they became too loud even for him to hear. He flinched at the hushed voices around him.

“That’s Idol-senpai, right? Who’s that with him?”

“Ah, don’t worry, that’s a guy. You know, one of the Kiryūs.”

“That person in the costume, that’s a guy, right?”

“Whew, I was so nervous earlier. I thought Idol-senpai already has girlfriend. It’s just one of the prefects. But wow, he’s gorgeous. Too bad, he’s a guy.”

“I know, right?!”

“Why is Idol-sama with Kiryū-kun? I hope that’s not Zero.”

“I think not. That must be Ichiru-kun. Oh, did you see Zero earlier?”

“Don’t you think they’re so close? Idol-sama even held his hand. Hmph, it’s a good thing he’s a guy.”
“Don’t let your imagination run wild. Anyway, that’s just Ichiru-kun so stop being so jealous.”

“Aw, Ichiru-kun is so cute! If only he’s a girl then he can be with Idol-senpai.”

“What are you saying? Don’t spout nonsense. You’re giving me the scariest ideas. Eww.”

“They look weird together.”

“Yeah, there’s just no way -,”

“Oh poor Ichiru-kun, so Idol-sama defeated him in that game?”

“I’m sure this is just a dare. He must have defeated him. Idol-sama enjoys such distractions, you know.”

Amethyst eyes narrowed upon hearing their comments. Of course, they’ll never think a guy as their rival. They may come up with all sorts of ideas about why they’re together but they won’t ever think that they might be dating. Because he’s not a girl. He unknowingly gripped his bracelet tighter, bowing his head as if to escape judging eyes, silver eyebrows crumpling bitterly over wounded lilac orbs.

He knew that love between men is a fruitless one that’s why after he learned about his lineage, an unacknowledged part of him rejoiced as it demolished one of the high walls preventing him from freely loving the noble. When his love was reciprocated, he felt that he didn’t need to feel inferior to those women who also admired Hanabusa. He didn’t have a woman’s petite and soft body but as long as Hana accepted him, he can accept that part of him. At least, he’ll still be able to have a future with him. At least, he’ll still be able to face his family in the future. At least, with his blood, he has something that he can provide the vampire. But now, even that was still not possible with his fragile body. Unless he can achieve a strong body, he’ll still be as useless as ever. Why must he be so pathetic till the very end? He was only stopped with his internal suffering when his lover called out his name.

He immediately looked up, the hurt hidden behind the mask of innocent cluelessness, “Yes?”

“Look! I won!” Hanabusa excitedly exclaimed. Waving a fluffy white bunny stuffed toy proudly, ignorant of his lover’s internal conflict.

Ichiru smiled as genuinely as he can even though he’s feeling too heavy inside. Looking at those azure eyes displaying such lively and cheerful light, he can’t just weigh his lover down. He doesn’t wish for his vampire to worry. He doesn’t want those eyes to be filled with anxiety so swallowing his melancholy, he pushed his dismal thoughts away and praised his lover who’s been clearly waiting for his approval, “That’s great, Hana.”

“Well, it was actually too easy.” He said in a would-be cool voice while flipping his golden hair with a confident hand, his air easy and nonchalant even though his heart was singing at his lover’s acknowledgement.

The silver prefect indulgently accepted the white bunny from his sparkling companion before Hanabusa took his hand in his again as if it’s the most natural thing in the world. Ichiru resolutely ignored the loud whispers and focused on not burdening his lover with his somber mood. Hana would surely be worried about him if he gave even a hint of what’s afflicting him and he didn’t want him to see his pathetic side even more weakened. He fears of what will be reflected in those beautiful cerulean eyes. He doesn’t want to see pity and regret in them.

Pale fingers closed around the sure hand grasping his and looked towards the proud golden tresses of
his confident lover as if to gather strength through him, wishing more than ever that he’s as strong as the man holding onto his hand so fearlessly.

“Where would you like to go next?”

“Anywhere.” He breathed an answered. As long as you’re with me.

Hanabusa smiled brightly, “Alright, well then, shall we go to the horror booth?”

Ichiru raised an eyebrow, “I don’t think they’ll be able to scare you that much.”

“Yeah, but I hope they’ll be able to frighten you silly. Feel free to cling to me as much as you want.”

The noble replied very seriously, his ulterior motive clear as day.

“As if,” the prefect responded dryly. He shook his head, “Pervert.” He muttered under his breath knowing that his lover can hear him. Hanabusa only chuckled.

As the couple entered the dark room, bypassing a gawking female who’s distractedly holding their class sign while following the new visitors with envious eyes, another pair emerged from the exit. A trembling brunette clung desperately to her blond companion while the other tapped her hands for comfort.

“It’s alright, Yuki-chan. We’re out now.” Takuma assured his scared girlfriend. He smiled at her cute reaction to paranormal creatures. It seems that her fright towards fictional monsters didn’t disappear even after obtaining powers strong enough to demolish a whole building or wipe out hordes of more lethal level-Es. It was bad of him but he can’t help but be happy at the thought that she didn’t change even after becoming a pureblood.

“T-t-t-t-they look a-awfully r-real.” Yuki stuttered, traumatized at the genuine-like nightmarish creatures of the booth. She honestly thought that it won’t scare her anymore after becoming a vampire. Who would have thought normal high school students can create such a frightening display? She really thought that was a real head so she almost fainted when it fell clean off a body. She also screamed her lungs out when that woman took a hold of her ankle, unrelenting in her cold grip and she could have sworn her soul almost separated from her when a bloody woman struggled to be let out of a pitch black wall to reach her. She should have sensed and smelled the fake blood and inorganic materials they used for their props but the heavy smell of incense and sweat clogged her poor nose. Panic clouded her senses and she could only hear the fast beat of her fearful heart and the loud eerie background noise inside. She would have made a hole on the wall to escape that terrifying place if not for the arms that were protectively around her. Ah, the power of the seats among the Night class even for one night was a force to be reckoned indeed.

“Yes, I was impressed.” The blond aristocrat quietly commented. Not only did they look incredibly life-like, they also showered them, or his girlfriend really, with so much hatred. No doubt they saw the way they held each other’s hands. Takuma contemplated this as he worried for his lover. They’ve been holding hands since they descended from the rooftop which didn’t go unnoticed by everyone who saw them. He didn’t regret showcasing their relationship but he’s worried about the Day class students’ reaction to Yuki from here on. “Yuki-chan, will you be okay?”

“Hmmm?” the brunette looked up at her boyfriend’s serious tone to find concerned emerald regards on her. Her peripheral vision then caught the numerous deadly glares and disbelieving look from the Day class students around them. She didn’t notice the pressure of their venomous attention, especially towards their linked arms for she’s still clinging tightly to her boyfriend’s arm. The old her would have trembled in fear already and would have begun a mad dash that would surely be followed by a rabid mob, but deep chocolate orbs hardened instead and defiantly stared at one
narrowed pair of blue eyes on a seething Day class student tending a booth. There’s no way she’ll let go of this man, she decided. No amount of angry fan girls would make her relinquish her hold, “Yup! Don’t worry about me!” She confidently answered her boyfriend, her voice brave and her smile confident while her sienna eyes contained so much courage that wasn’t present while they’re inside the horror booth.

“That’s my girl.” Takuma whispered in a seductively low voice that made the prefect blush. He smiled at her endearingly which she returned with a smile, albeit shy, of her own.

A quiet sigh escaped from the little vampire perched on the fountain’s angel statue’s shoulder, her tiny body hidden by the great stone wings. A short hand clung around the stone maiden’s neck to support herself while the other held her faithful camera, the peephole pressed against one lilac eye that was full of jubilance. Such a breathtaking look! She mused while observing the tender way her uncle Taku looked at her aunt Yuki. Like a man to the woman he loves. She still hasn’t given up on finding her brothers but this is a most welcomed distraction from her hunt. Ah, how lovely. She’s rejoicing capturing many great scenes with her faithful camera but she thoughtlessly missed one thing (one of the many, chided her mind). The horror booth! Goodness, she forgot to implant hidden video cameras there. What an error! And she thought she heard the most adorable scream from her Ichiji just moments ago. How regrettable that she wasn’t able to capture their moment there. Dear me, I’ve missed many priceless materials here and there. He mournfully thought. Oh well, I’ll just capture the ball perfectly instead. She optimistically hummed at the thought, elated by the chance to redeem herself.

Some ways down the other row of stalls, quiet blue-gray eyes stared at the visible head of the small brunette holding a familiar device on her hand as she hide behind the stone angel. It’s a good thing that all the guests and students’ attention are elsewhere, she would have been spotted quite easily if everyone was not otherwise distracted. They must have some use then since their small group of four caught the attention of everyone around. It even silenced one frantic student who came running to her classmates to report the sightings of a certain prefect holding hands with a certain Night class senpai. Well, if they can serve as bait to let his beloved friend and their precious little princess go unnoticed, then he’ll willingly sacrifice himself and may even pose for the sly cameras currently taking his pictures even without his consent. He thought heroically.

“Senri.”

He turned around to the quiet voice of his faithful partner and girlfriend to find calm crystal blue regards on him. He looked at the pink cotton candy being handed to him then back to the pretty face before him. He did say he wanted to eat some sweets but long, thin strawberry coated biscuit sticks was what he had in mind.

“They don’t sell pocky here.” Rima answered the indiscernible question in his expressionless eyes, completely understanding him. Copper head slowly bobbed in acceptance before he finally took the candy floss from her. They stood side by side while waiting for their companions who came to challenge the Takoyaki stand out of pure curiosity. They never had the chance to eat something like that before. The wonder must be great to persuade even the proud Ruka-sama to wait for the amateur cooks, currently tripping amongst themselves to perfect her order, and suffer the obviously awed stares directed to her.

The ginger haired vampire stood tall like the model that she is as she shielded herself and her companion from the harsh afternoon rays with the open parasol she always carry with her. She observed that even though almost everyone whispered and excitedly pointed to their direction, no one dared come to them. Just as well. She doesn’t mind being ogled by her fans but she infinitely wanted a quiet time with Senri and their friends.
She watched with imperceptible amusement when one brave, or foolish, soul attempted to strike a conversation with the exquisite toffee haired Night class student. He wasn’t able to say anything, however, when Ruka gave him a look that made him shrunk several sizes smaller. The fire haired Kain was only able look at the poor guy with quiet pity. The unfortunate Day class student went away with a bowed head and gloomy air. It curbed anymore attempts to get close to the gorgeous group. Hmmm, her worry about being badgered was apparently uncalled for.

Up high, a jolly brunette let out an impressed whistle at his fierce aunt’s powerful glare. Well, he didn’t think that anyone could resist feeling like a cockroach when bestowed with that kind of look. Ah, poor, poor guy, whoever he is. He shook his head, further messing his dark brown hair that was already ruffled by the fierce wind raging at the rooftop. They took refuge there when they felt the aura of their older sister nearby. Whew, that was close. “Poor guy. I do hope he wasn’t traumatized.”

He heard his twin quietly voice his concern.

“Yeah. Same goes for Ichiji.” He nodded but instead of concern, an inappropriate mirth laced his boyish voice. He could feel Haku giving him a disapproving look. Oh hell, how can he not laugh when he heard their uncle’s scream full of terror coming from what appeared to be the horror booth. Oh Ichiji, still as gullible as ever.

“I do hope you would still be able to keep your mirth once nee-chan finds us.” Haku sternly reminded which made his twin stiffen. He’s feeling a sense of foreboding at the way their older sister darted her head sharply as if in furious search. He’s almost sure that she’s wearing her ultimate enraged expression, one that promised a world full of pain and torture. Oh dear God, what is it this time?

Quiet auburn orbs met worried auburn orbs. Judging by Akira’s petrified gaze, no doubt he also noticed the frenzied way their sister searched for them before her attention was stolen by the happy couple now trying the Kíngyo Sukui booth (judging by their aunt’s frustrated expression, Takuji’s laughter, and the number of torn scoops beside them, they’re not winning). There’s nothing they can do about it now. They could only steel themselves before the storm hits them with full force. Hopefully, they’ll be able to keep all their limbs and bones intact. Good thing luck is still with them. Surely, with their sister’s current state, she wouldn’t be able to do them much harm. Unless, of course, she remembers it by the time she recovered her full powers. Ah, he really should keep Akira in line to avoid that. “It’s alright, Akira. We’ve survived even after being thrown in the Savannah naked for a whole day before, we’ll survive it again.” He wanted to laugh at the grimace his mirror image produced at the reminder. Indeed, that wasn’t their proudest moment. Who would have thought that they’re allergic to some plants, even though they’re hybrids? Granted, it was poisonous. It certainly wasn’t the most comfortable choice of garment to cover their privates. They regretted angering their sister almost immediately. They didn’t touch her bloomers and petticoats since then.

“I’ll never let go of my earrings.” Akira vowed while holding his ear where their sister’s blood stone, the one containing clothes for all season and occasion, shone.

“Well, let’s hope that she won’t remember to confiscate them before throwing us into the void.” The young heir lightly said though he’s concerned at the level of irritation he can see on his sister’s pretty face. Hmmm, what could have happened?

In the more peaceful part of the academy, the headmaster questioned his companion, “Ara, Kaitokun, what are you smiling at?”

Kaien stopped upon entering his office with a tray full of tea and snacks from his beloved children’s class. He immediately noticed the small quiet smile of the tall hunter since it was rare to see such an expression from his handsome face. He would be seen wearing an irritating smirk or a mocking grin.
but it’s the first time that *that kind* of smile actually graced his lips. As if he can’t help it. He wondered what he might be thinking about or looking at outside the window.

“I wasn’t smiling, chairman.” The ash-brown hunter denied, tearing his eyes from the wavy dark brown hair of the royal pipsqueak princess who’s currently perched on the stone angel’s back. He was just amused since he can see the familiar video camera back on her hand. Really, what a funny brat.

The blond headmaster was torn between pressing the matter and calling on his filthy lie, and actually letting go for he can see the headstrong hunter’s expression switch back to the annoying Kaito he knew. No doubt, he won’t get an answer so with an internal sigh, he just proceeded with the unofficial meeting to discuss the most recent happenings. The mood in the room turned heavy and grave in contrast to the cheery and lively atmosphere outside. The ex-hunter was glad that they were able to celebrate the cultural festival without any imminent danger. At least, all his beloved children and students got to spend their time without any worry and trouble. Ignorant to the impending doom threatening their current peace, “Have you informed Zero-kun and Ichiru-kun?”

“Nah,” Kaito answered, looking out the window again. His thoughtful brown eyes trained on the innocent brat by the fountain, unconsciously wishing that the terrible darkness hovering over them wouldn’t reach her pure light. Looking at her, he was reminded of her silver parent and he had to smirk at the recollection of the look of his kohais earlier. He went there to give them the good and the bad news that they received but seeing them like that, he was reminded that they’re also too young to be thrust into the chaotic world. Them being from the Kiryū line made him forget that they’re still just sixteen years old. Teenagers their age worry about their crushes, examinations, school activities and what outfit to wear on their next date. Not how to kill a damned psychotic pureblood out to take their blood. He knew he can’t take them away from the darkness of their world - hell, Zero might even kill him for it - for no matter how young they are, the fact is that they’re hunters. He just thought he might delay giving them the unpleasant reminder at least until the cultural festival and examinations are over. At least, they can let them be normal high school students even for a little while more. Che, he must have finally been infected by the chairman’s disease. Obviously, he’s turning into mush. He looked resentfully at the blond headmaster staring at him. He’s definitely the reason why he softened when he would have normally shouted the news to the two silverettes. He clicked his tongue, “Nothing will really change telling them now. Just inform them after the term exams.”

Kaien blinked at the apprentice instructor, unable to believe that he’s hearing such words from him with concern barely hidden in his tone. When he received a call from the black haired hunter whom they’ve been trying to contact since days ago, Kaito immediately flew from the room to tell his silver children the news that Toga reported to them even before he could ask him to stop as he didn’t want to ruin this day for them, so hearing that he didn’t actually spill the beans just surprised him. He can’t help but smile. The crass hunter apparently learned what concern and kindness is, “Thank you, Kaito-kun.”

“Don’t smile at me like that, chairman. It’s creeping me out.”

He must have spoken too hastily, the headmaster thought with an inward sigh.

“Are you alright, Ichiru?”
The silverette heard his lover’s concerned voice but he can’t even find the strength to look at him while he buried his scarlet face on his hands, mortification filling him from his pale toes to the last strand of his silver hair. He can’t help the humiliation flooding him in waves whenever he remembers the embarrassing way he got frozen and yelled at that accursed horror booth.

Shit.

Damn it!

He already looked like a woman today, why must he act like one too? Fucking horror booth! It was his mistake, of course, thinking that there’s no way he’ll be scared of the scary props that the students of their school created. He was prepared to laugh at the no doubt poor designs and special effects of that booth, but he was greatly mistaken. **Hugely** mistaken. Like the colossal moron that he is, he cleanly forgot the prize for this year’s number one booth and what the Day class students are willing to do just to be able to have one night with the Night class students. They’ll do **anything**, even put up a horrifying display that would put *Sadako* to shame. He honestly didn’t think that a girl would be able to put a convincing act as she erratically struggled to get out of that black wall, that didn’t seem to have any opening, just to reach him. Imagine his horror when a bloody face depicting pure agony appeared in the middle of a deep black wall. He was numbed with fear when the woman proceeded to crawl out of the wall to reach for his feet. He would have thrown the fluffy bunny stuffed toy at her had he not stored it in his stone’s dimension the first chance he got. His only consolation was that he didn’t faint right then and there, though he did let out a rather desperate scream and clung to his golden haired vampire like a damsel in distress.

Argh! Oh, kill him now.

Like right now.

Seriously, right now.

“Hey,” Hanabusa whispered, coaxing his lover from his hiding place behind his hands, “It’s okay. That was honestly unexpected. Even I was impressed.” He crouched down in front of the silverette to rub his arms for comfort as Ichiru hunched on a school bench in self-degradation. He could see a telltale of a blush on his reddish ears and neck. He pursed his lips to stop a smile for he has no doubt that Ichiru is very close to taking out his katana and committing hara-kiri. Oh, dang it, Ichiru is just too adorable. He bit his lower lips to stop the persistent smile from showing and after a deep breath, he offered the canned tea he bought, “Here, drink this. It would make you feel better.”

After a few more coaxing and a lot of assurances, Ichiru managed to take the offered beverage. His large, moist lilac eyes evaded the searching aquamarine orbs of the elegant vampire squatting in front of him. That was just too humiliating. He didn’t think he’ll be able to face him or the students of that class ever again.

Shiiiiit.

The noble looked up at the pale prefect’s gorgeous face, staring hard as if willing his lover to return his gaze with the sheer power of his mind, while his elbows softly rested on his lover’s lap, his hands cradling his handsome face. He mutely and patiently waited for his lover to regain his bearings and glance back at him. While waiting, aquamarine orbs contentedly trailed the delicate lines of his lover’s profile, took in the almost fragile complexion marred by the splendid flush painting his skin, tender soft pink lips tightly closed in petulance, refined nose, and gorgeous amethyst orbs that goes perfectly with his starlight hair. His features would give anyone the impression that he’s dainty and weak but he knew the overwhelming strength that lies beneath the frail-looking exterior. He smiled.

Despite the despondent atmosphere, he was still happy that he was able to spend the day with Ichiru. He was glad to be able to imprint the memory of how he looked today, that he was able to hold his
hands through the gaping crowd, that he was the one he clung to when he was frightened, that he was able to see him serious and determined, even sad and disappointed, but most importantly, that he was able to see and make him smile. He knew that his silverette was still withholding something from him. He wanted to wait until he’s ready, but he can’t bear the thought that Ichiru has been beating himself over something that he would never blame him for. He was about to finally open up the conversation when he noticed the faraway look his lover was sporting, “What are you looking at?”

Ichiru flinched. He forgot about his immersion in self-condescension when a most beautiful sight caught his eyes; a blond child being held by a beautiful woman. Said child was looking at him with startling electric blue eyes, wide with curiosity and wonder. He was hypnotized. When a fairly handsome man with golden hair holding the hand of a cute little girl came to join the young woman, his mind automatically wandered to an alternative future where his beloved could have such an angel. Where such a happy and contented smile would grace his features as he gaze on his own golden haired child. Where he could actually create a family he can show the world.

A future he cannot provide.

Pain sliced him so viciously that he almost forgot how to breathe. He could barely hide the sorrow behind a careful mask of innocent inquiry when Hanabusa spoke to him. “Hmmm?” He was afraid that he would follow his gaze so he hurriedly directed him elsewhere to mislead him, “I thought that might be fun!” he pointed to a rather crowded booth situated at the auditorium.

The vampire followed where the pale finger pointed. He raised an eyebrow, “The drama and photography club’s photo booth?” Well, he wanted to try it but considering that Ichiru would surely want to forget all about cross-dressing, he forced himself to be contented and to merely memorize how bewitching his lover looked. He didn’t think he’ll have the chance to get a commemorative photo. He smirked evilly, a wonderful idea coming into mind.

“Oh?” Was that the photo booth? Where the hell is the sign? He barely stopped his grimace when a student moved to finally reveal the damnable sign that indeed read; Welcome to the drama and photography club’s photo booth and costume rental. Live a fantasy. Costume rentals. Commemorative photos. Purikura. Professional photographer. Then a list of the prices followed. Oh hell.

“Alright, let’s go!” Hanabusa immediately jumped to his feet and dragged the exasperated prefect, quite forgetting his initial plan at the thought of far cheerer ideas.

One damn thing after another. What a failure you are, stupid Ichiru. The silverette chided himself. He’s a moron. He knew it but he can’t help but repeat it. Why can’t he learn from all his mistakes so he won’t repeat it time and again. Argh!

“Uhm, the line is quite long so maybe we should go next time?” the prefect voiced hopefully, all the while trying to hide behind his lover’s broad back as to not divert anyone’s attention.

“Don’t worry about that,” Hanabusa waived the thought away and simply made a beeline towards the crowded booth. It quite escaped him the desperate look his lover was giving him as he confidently strode towards the head of the long line of waiting customers. He caught the regards of a second year student manning the small table which would be the reception area. Without even wasting a second, the vampire granted her a smile so dreamy that it made the poor girl unconsciously stand and openly gape. The waiting people promptly burst in excited exclamation when their idol graced them with his presence.

“Kyaa~! Idol senpai!”
“Idol-samaaaaa!!!”

“Aidou-senpaiiii!!!”

“Look at me, senpaiiii!!”

“Idol!!!! I love youuuuu!!!!”

Ichiru wondered if he must go all ‘prefect’ on them since they were really closed to breaking the neat line of barrier ropes to jump at the sparkling noble. Said noble granted them a charming smile as if he’s not in danger of being mugged or wrestled to the ground and raped. It fueled the ladies excitement, and half deafened the other waiting visitors, but mercifully, still stayed in line. Die, you idiot. He was still resentfully looking at the back of the radiant charmer, when the vampire returned his azure regard to the slack-jawed receptionist.

“You seem to be quite busy.” His statement was met with eager and enthusiastic nods, unable to even utter one word to her beloved Idol-sama, “Ah, I guess I have to wait as well?” he was answered by frantic shaking of her head before she gestured one stiff hand towards the entrance, a clear sign that he can already proceed inside, “Really?” he asked for assurance as if the hellion didn’t aim for it in the first place, “Thanks!” he smiled so brilliantly at the poor female when she again nodded in affirmation. Hanabusa gave his fans, who were still hurling hysterical declaration of their true love towards their dreamy senpai, a wave before proceeding inside the auditorium.

Ichiru ignored the childish jealousy he felt and would have smiled at the kind, albeit gullible, receptionist but found her distracted. He followed her gaze and his heart sped when he noticed that she’s been looking at his and Hanabusa’s intertwined hands. He couldn’t stop the reflexive blush that painted his pale cheeks scarlet. He consciously glanced back towards the rowdy crowd waiting in line and almost panicked when he saw questioning and suspicious frowns from those who also noticed. He averted his gaze even before they looked at him and hurried his steps.

“Should we get a professional photographer?” Hanabusa asked while looking around the spacious booth. Ignoring the gaping students and visitors currently inside as he made way towards the table acting as the ticket counter and cashier. “Ichiru?” he turned to his lover when he heard no answer and barely caught the silverette’s agitated look before it changed to a quietly startled expression. He frowned and noticed how they’re the center of attention.

“What?”

“Are you okay? Could it be… that you still want to change?” Hanabusa probed.

“A-ah, y-yeah, uhm,” Ichiru sputtered, not really knowing what to say. He did want to change but that wasn’t his main concern at the present. He didn’t know how he’ll be able to hide their intertwined hands or unobtrusively let go Hana’s hand without making him aware of it.

“Hmm, okay.” The blond conceded. Looking at how anxious his angel is, the noble came to the conclusion that Ichiru must be feeling embarrassed at the thought of someone else taking his picture while in his courtesan costume. He knew that the silverette was already itching to get out of those robes but he really just can’t let go of the chance to prolong the moment. He sighed. He didn’t want to admit defeat but he also didn’t want his Ichiru to show such an expression. “Let’s just take a commemorative photo then I’ll let you change.” He didn’t wait for an answer before continuing on to the cashier. He instantly recovered his smile when something caught his attention.

Hanabusa talked to the fawning students while Ichiru tried to make himself and their hands less noticeable. Hanabusa kept on holding on to his hand no matter what they did, even while walking or
buying the tickets. Somehow, Ichiru felt really sad and happy at the same time. He’s so lucky to have someone willing to hold his hand against all odds, but he honestly didn’t know if he still has any right to hold this hand that firmly and courageously held his.

“Here, I got the tickets and your next attire.” Hanabusa cheerfully announced but stopped when he saw Ichiru’s expression, “Ichiru, are you okay?”

“Huh?” the silverette didn’t notice that his wretched thoughts already produced a heartbroken expression. He tried to hide it, “Yup, I’m… I’m fine. J-just hungry.”

The vampire stared at the young prefect, unconvinced for it was the same expression as earlier - Pained and fragile. It finally dawned upon him what the silverette might be thinking. Really, he just can’t leave him alone, “Listen, Ichiru -,” his words where only stopped by an underclassman handing him a black garment bag.

“I-Idol-senpai! H-here’s your… uhm… costume.” Stuttered one blushing Day class student.

“Oh, thanks.”

“P-please follow me to the studio.”

The noble internally sighed as his second attempt to open up the delicate conversation was once again interrupted. He tightened his grip on his lover’s pale hands, “I’ll tell you later.” He whispered to Ichiru before following the nervous Day class student.

Ichiru frowned, but didn’t ask any question while he was dragged by the noble to a room with several partitions. Each partition was covered by a thick white curtain which served as one of the studios. They were led into one where one male student, which Ichiru recognized as a member of the photography club, waited with his equipment. The prefect was surprised that the small chamber contained its own backdrop stand with a green background sheet and a huge light modifier. Where the hell did they procure these? They’re willing to invest that much?

Those banquet seats are simply amazing.

Golden eyebrows twitched when he caught the awestruck gaze of the male student directed to his wondering lover. He had to clear his throat just to get him out of his trance.

“Oh, ah, s-senpai. W-what p-pose would you like?” the blushing male stammered, willing his heart to slow down, forcibly tearing his gaze away from the stunning sight of the silverette to look at the order sheet his female club member provided.

Hanabusa swallowed his jealousy and irritation. He wanted to scoop those impertinent eyes still stealing glances at his angel out of their sockets. Calm down, Aido Hanabusa. He chanted to himself. It was his fault anyway, since he didn’t want Ichiru to change out of those kimonos. Not to mention that his lovely angel is a real natural temptress. So instead of punching the male student, he just led Ichiru to the seat in front of the background and stood a little behind him, arranging a rather normal pose.

Ichiru was quite stunned that the noble picked a modest arrangement. He was expecting to be subjected to a rather embarrassing pose and was internally worried for there are other students with them, so he was relieved when it was over after a few more shots.

After picking the shot that he wanted to be printed and the background to be used, Hanabusa immediately towed his lover along to follow the waiting, and spellbound, female attendant to the other photo booth.
The silverette was already breathing an internal sigh of relief, thinking that this challenge was all over, when he saw a row of purikura booths. He was once again so astonished by the power of those prized seats that he was still gaping even while being led to one of the empty booths. Just what the hell?

“It’s okay, we’ll manage from here.” Hanabusa turned to the lady that was about to come in with them.

“Eh? B-but-,”

“It’s alright. I know you’re busy. We’ll see ourselves out afterwards. Thank you very much for your assistance.” He assured with an enchanting smile that immediately mesmerized the female student into agreeing before he drew the curtains close.

“This is beyond ridiculous,” Ichiru muttered while taking off the high lacquered torture devices, sandals to let his feet rest. He can now better respect those girls who wear high heels and though he’s sure he’ll never date a woman again, at least he can be kinder to Yuki whenever she’s slowing them down because of aching feet caused by high heels. “I wonder how much they paid for this machine.”

“Quite a lot, I imagine.” Hanabusa responded half-heartedly while scrutinizing the monitor and reading the step by step procedure on how to use the machine. He never had the chance to use such a device but he’s always been curious about it.

The silver prefect merely sighed before directing his lover, “You first need to pay here then select the backgrounds and other layouts here.”

“I see. How did you know how to use this?”

Ichiru flinched unnoticeably, “Yuki.” He explained shortly. He can’t very well say that he used to do this with his dates in the past. Good thing his lover was so immersed in tapping the screen to note his unnatural tone. He was still trying to fix his expression into a guiltless one while wiping his mental sweat when Hanabusa suddenly grabbed him close and only then did he hear the machine’s countdown. He was sure that he’s wearing a startled expression by the time the first flash came. He struggled with the arms wrapped around his waist and was in mid-speech when the second flash came. “Hana, let go.”

“No,” Hanabusa answered and smiled at the lens with his chin on Ichiru’s shoulder, just in time for the third flash. His smile grew wider when he saw his blushing lover look away just before the fourth flash happened. He was sure that he’s deep scarlet by the time the final flash happened. He can’t believe this vampire.

“Well, let’s see how we did.” Hanabusa energetically inspected the images on the screen and had to laugh at some of them. He’s smiling in most of the photos but his lover proved quite stubborn for he had varying expressions from surprise, mid-rant to petulance, but his favorite one had to be the stunned expression Ichiru made when he unexpectedly kissed him. Needless to say, it was one of the images he picked to be printed and had the rest sent to his phone.

He was still admiring the finish product after it printed. It turned out quite lovely even though it looked like he’s harassing the silverette which was... well, not far from the truth. His eyes hurt a bit but it was worth enduring the harsh flashes of the camera. He also didn’t bother with any decorations
since Ichiru’s colorful expressions were all he wanted to see. “So, shall we have another one?” he suggested to the silverette slumped on the photo booth’s floor.

“What?!”

“And try to smile this time.” Hanabusa advised while gathering his lover to stand up, disregarding the protest in his lover’s voice. A big grin plastered on his face, his mien even brighter than ever.

Ichiru sighed. “Make it the last one.” he mumbled, defeated by Hanabusa’s cheerful smile and apparent enjoyment. God, he’s such a pushover. Not that he didn’t know it already. Obviously, his lover was well aware of it as well as he was able to force Ichiru to have several go at the little machine that the silverette was fairly exhausted by the time the vampire was satisfied. Damn those blue puppy eyes.

Hanabusa was wearing a highly pleased smile, very much like a cat’s, while scrutinizing the several photo sheets he’s holding. He decided he liked the machine even though he didn’t use any of the decorations and he generally disliked having his photo taken because of what the flash does to his vampire eyes. “Are you alright?” he crouched to rub the silverette’s back as Ichiru slumped on all fours.

“What do you think?” the silverette gave him a look. He’s tired since he didn’t get much sleep, forced to play a game of shōgi, dragged around the festival, scared out of his wits and was forced to take several shots with this walking vanity. Not to mention the kimonos and wig are weighing him down together with stress and depression. And for all his pains, Hanabusa only gave him a chuckle. He glared. What a total jerk.

“Now, now, don’t look at me like that. Here, as promised.” The noble appeased his sullen lover by handling him the black garment bag that he was given earlier, black school shoes and his lover’s bell hair tie which he took from the dimensional ring Anne-sama gave him. “Change to this. You’ll be more comfortable.”

Ichiru immediately forgot his fatigue and vendetta upon seeing the offerings. Finally! Real, acceptable clothes! He didn’t waste a moment in snatching the bag and shoes and running out of the booth to go to one of the fitting rooms, not even to slip the lacquered sandals on, ignoring all the students and visitors staring at him when he passed by them. He only stopped when he finally unzipped the black bag and saw what clothes were waiting for him.

Hanabusa waited for his lover to finish changing by claiming the developed photo from earlier. He was amazed at how well produced the photograph was considering that it was taken by a student. That or they’re really just too good-looking. He smiled as he inspected the image. The background was an old mansion’s lounge which made the photo looked like an aristocrat and his mistress’ photo from the Edo era. Ichiru will surely kill him, but this is really worth it.

Now, he finally has some photos of Ichiru smiling, albeit shy and small, at the camera and he didn’t have to content himself with the stolen shots he slyly took. With this, his cousin wouldn’t look at him as if he’s some perverted stalker. Really, he’s not, just an ardent admirer. He nodded to himself.

While he waited for the silverette, he wondered if Ichiru will let him have another go at the photo machine since he also wanted the take commemorative photos of Ichiru wearing that. He’s sure that he’ll look breathtaking.

“Hana.”

The shameless vampire’s attention was snatched by his lover’s voice and he was stunned speechless
at the perfect sight that greeted his cerulean orbs. He was right. This is even better than the
courtesan’s regalia as Ichiru now wore the immaculate garments that he’s also wearing. The Night
class’ uniform. He can’t help the admiring sigh that escaped him. Ichiru looked so ethereal in that
white uniform. Like a true angel.

“Why did you have to rent this? Is this okay?”

“Of course, it was for those who wished to experience being a Cross Academy student. They had the
Day class’ uniform too but… I wanted to see how you’d look in this.” The vampire explained, a bit
distracted, aquamarine eyes drinking the exquisite vision in front of him, “It suits you.”

“Thanks.” Ichiru mumbled in a quiet voice, a dark conflicting feeling warring inside him. What does
this mean? Was it a hint that Hana wanted him to be turned? He didn’t know what to feel regarding
the idea.

What will he say if Hana asked him if he wanted to be a vampire?

“Ichiru?” the noble worriedly called out after he spotted the somber expression in those beautiful lilac
orbs, “What’s wrong?”

“Hana, I-,”

A loud cry interrupted the silver prefect and both students looked down to find a crying child
clutching one of the noble’s legs. The little blond looked up to reveal a cherubic face smeared by
overflowing tears coming from frightened blue eyes. The silverette started when he remembered the
blond child. It was the same kid he saw before going to the photo booth. Before he can even react,
his lover already moved to pick up the child.

“Hey, are you lost?” Hanabusa cooed while rocking the child softly in an attempt to stop the bawling
cherub from crying, “There, there, stop crying. Aren’t you a man?” he coaxed while wiping the
innocent tears away. When the cries were reduced to mere sniffs, Hanabusa smiled, “Good boy.”

Ichiru wasn’t able to make a move as he watched his lover with the golden haired child. He wasn’t
even able to help his lover while Hanabusa called out for any parent who was missing a child or to
say anything when the beautiful woman frantically came near them to take her kid and give the
vampire profuse words of apologies and gratitude. No, he stood motionless while pain sliced his
heart and realization hit him like a runaway truck. The image of Hanabusa with a child in his arms
was even more beautiful than his imagination. It struck him so hard to know what he’ll be depriving
his lover. He was breathless with pain and self-disappointment that he didn’t know a tear has already
betrayed his feelings and escaped from him.

“Ichiru!” Hanabusa exclaimed in surprise upon finding his lover crying. “What’s wrong?”

The silverette quietly drew a hand on his cheek when he felt something cold on his skin. When he
realized that a humiliating tear already showed itself, he crossed his arms in front of his face to shield
his pathetic expression. What the hell is he doing?

“Ichiru, hey, look at m-,”

The young Kiryū didn’t let his lover finish and bolted out of the auditorium. He ran like mad,
unaware of the numerous eyes on him as he sought out an escape to his misery. Why is he like this?
Why is he so weak? So fragile and pathetic?

How can he ever deserve Hanabusa?
“Ichiru!” The noble ran after his lover and felt frantic when he glimpsed his lover’s heartbroken expression even though a pale hand covered half of his face. He reached out and caught his arm but even after stopping the marathon, his lover didn’t turn to him. The silver prefect remained motionless as he slumped dejectedly even while standing.

“Ichi-,”

“Hana,”

When the noble heard his lover’s next words, he thought the world stopped for a moment while the heaven came crumbling down on him. The world became soundless. Not even the chattering crowd around them or the gawking students watching the commotion they created were able to penetrate his shock. He felt numb and cold. Even with his genius mind, he had a hard time comprehending what his lover just said. Not even in his most horrid nightmares did he imagine that his Ichiru will ever say such words.

“Please, break up with me.”
Zero felt like he had just closed his eyes and barely rested at all, but there are already showers of kisses raining down his nape to his shoulders and a silky voice calling his name that adamantly wishes to deprive him of his sleep. He groaned as a protest and to provide a quiet request for a few more minutes of peace.

Kaname chuckled, watching Zero bury his face further on his pillow, "Zero, we'll be late. Wake up now." He urged before planting another kiss on his lover's jaw.

"Fuck, Kaname. I want to sleep!" the hunter rasped and tightly closed his eyes, fiercely willing his unconsciousness back.

"Well, I wouldn't mind not attending the banquet altogether but are you sure you wanted everyone who saw us leave together wonder where we went?…Or what we did?" Kaname honestly wouldn't mind. Let those hopeful fools know to whom this beautiful prefect belongs to. It might not be a direct admission but it will still sow seeds of wonder in their minds for sure, especially in those highly imaginative women. Ah, but alas, he can't let it be for then his hunter will probably pack his bags after shooting him for not preventing it.

Wine orbs watched his lover's shoulder tensed, clearly understanding what their absence in the ball may cause. Not to mention, he'll be hearing the chairman wail about it for weeks. He sighed, still too tired, before sitting straight. The comfortable blanket cascaded down his lean, pale upper body where the grayish mark of their bond proudly rest. He scowled at the slightly smiling brunette. "Asshole." He mumbled to which Kaname merely chuckled.

He swung his feet off the bed, only then noticing that he's completely naked. He blushed but said nothing and reached down to the articles of clothing that littered the floor. He stopped when he realized that he's reaching out for one of the kimonos that he previously wore and promptly redirected his hand to Kaname's white blazer just beside it. Damn if he'll ever wear those again. No force on Heaven or Earth will make him repeat such a humiliation.

Auburn eyes watched as his lover draped his white school blazer over his pale shoulders before standing up and trudging towards the bathroom. The Night class uniform does suit Zero beautifully. He already tried convincing his silverette to transfer to the Night class but Zero adamantly refuses. He knew that it's still too early for him to fully accept being part of the vampire world but Kaname knew that other than that, he didn't want to leave his brother alone. If he were to transfer classes now, he'll have to resign from prefect duties. Yuki will also need to follow since she's already a vampire and that will leave Ichiru-kun alone. He sighed. Kaname understood his lover and wished to respect his decision but he so wanted to keep him close at all times.

The pureblood looked out the window before sighing once more. He didn't want to press the subject for it will only lead to a disagreement and he didn't want to cause his lover any more distress what with his present condition. Perhaps, he could endure it a bit more but he won't give up. He'll even talk to Ichiru if he needed to but that's once everything simmered down.

"Ichiru-kun, huh," Kaname whispered distractedly as he thought of his hunter's twin. He's a bit worried, knowing that there are some conflicts that the younger silverette is experiencing. Speaking of which, there was quite a violent commotion moments ago which woke him up. He wondered if there was an attack but since he felt no hostile presence and because of the knowledge of the newly erected barrier, he didn't think much of it.
He closed his eyes and let his senses comb the whole of the academy until he found what he's searching for. He listened to the Day class students' lively chatter, their topic drawing a small, quiet smile on his lips.

"Hmmmm."

It seems something interesting did happen.

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He didn't know how he was able to do it but when he finally came to, he's already inside his room at the chairman's residence with the quiet sunset outside his window. The announcement of the Cross Academy's cultural festival's end was broadcasted loudly to guide all the visitors out and thank them for coming as well as to remind the students to clean up and ready themselves for the evening banquet but instead of joining his class to help them clean up or head for the shower to prepare for the evening ball, Ichiru stayed motionless in the middle of the room, still contemplating what happened earlier.

His mind was still racing to verify if everything really did happen as he remembered. Oh god, did he…? Fuck, it's the end… He can't… anymore… He might as well pack his bags already before they came for him…

He was seriously about to step towards his drawers to start packing when a strong force hit him on his back and sent him stumbling on his bed. He frantically looked behind him to see who attacked him and honestly thought that they have finally caught up with him only to see the determined look of his adopted-sister.

"Y-Yuki!" he breathed in surprise, relief flooding him in waves. His heart almost jumped out of his mouth at the thought that the violent mob has already come to strike him. "Don't scare me like that!"

"Why? You thought I was one of them? Scared you there, didn't I?" the pureblood princess smirked while straightening herself from her head-buttting stance. It wasn't her fault. She's been calling after the silverette but Ichiru seemed so distracted that only a physical attack will shake him. "Don't worry, this place is secured. You're safe here. Well then, care to tell me what that was all about?"

What that was all about, huh? Well, that's an interesting question indeed. How was he supposed to answer that when he didn't even know himself? What the hell just happened there? He can only remember the unbearable pain that consumed him, that moment of weakness and defeat which made him say words that he didn't even mean. He was already regretting it as he uttered the words which made him want to throw up. He wanted to say that he didn't want that but the heavy weight of his heart seemed to have clouded whatever feelings and intelligence he had left. He only knew that he must save Hanabusa from being with such a failure. From being with him. Because he's a weak creature who can't even bear the thought of disappointing his brother who protected him all those years, a coward who can't voice his desire to do anything for the sake of his beloved even if it means throwing away his pride, lineage and family, a selfish being who only wished for his own happiness and greedy person who desire to own everything that is Hanabusa.

Hana once called him an angel… but that's because he didn't know just how greedy he is. How selfish and spoiled, cowardly and pathetic, how weak and ugly he truly is. He doesn't deserve it one bit; Zero's protection, Yuki's kindness, the chairman's affection and Hana's love. He only takes
advantage of everyone around him. He cannot even find the strength to hold on to that hand which was extended to him. If he can't even pick between his brother's wish and Hanabusa, how can he say he truly deserves him?

Even letting go. He had to ask Hanabusa to do it even when he knew how hurt his lover would be and the pain and regret he himself would feel. Just how indecisive and weak could he be?

When he didn't hear a response from Hanabusa, he honestly thought that the vampire already got fed up with him so he was startled when the hand holding on to his wrist tightened its grip. The noble pulled to make him forcefully face him. He was preparing to face a livid vampire so he was caught off guard when he saw golden eyebrows crumpling over pain-filled cerulean orbs instead. The agony he saw crushed him further. He sank deeper into confusion and didn't know what was best for the both of them anymore. He only wanted for Hanabusa to be happy… To get what he deserves…

Hana deserves someone truly beautiful, someone kind and selfless, someone who'll undoubtedly pick him, someone who'll decisively face any evil and hate. Someone quite unlike him.

"Why?" the noble whispered in the most heartbreaking voice he has ever heard, "Why would you ask me to do that?"

"H-Hana, I-,

Hanabusa drew him close and embraced him, his golden head on his shoulder, "I told you, didn't I? I said that I can't breathe without you…so how can you ask me to break up with you?"

"I…I…" Ichiru wasn't able to find the words to express himself. He didn't know what to do or say anymore and he hated himself at his indecision in doing even the right thing.

"I love you."

The silverette stilled upon hearing his lover's sincere words. He knew it, of course, but this fact just continuously shakes his already wavering resolve. He wants to hold on to it. To those sweet words that always give the silent promise of accepting everything that he is, even his weakness and frailty, but he can't allow it. Considering Hana's future, he's doing the right thing. The pale arms that were about to wrap itself around the vampire froze as Ichiru resolutely came to his painful conclusion.

He's doing the right thing.

"H-Hana, it can't be me. S-someday, you'll realize that it…that we…we weren't meant to be… I…I want you to be ha-happy, Hana." He finished. He wanted to say more but the words felt like hard gravel in his mouth. He felt like throwing up while his heart hollowed. He can't feel anything anymore. He felt so numb that he belatedly registered that the hard arms around him has already imprisoned him in such a tight embrace that's already painful.

"Ha-Hana, it-,

"Don't lie!" the noble's restrained shout halted the silver prefect's words, "If you're really thinking about me, if you really wish me to be happy, then you wouldn't ask this of me!"

Ichiru wasn't able to say anything. His words stabbed like spears in his heart. It's true, he was being selfish. He knew that but he didn't want to be Hana's burden any more. He really wanted Hana to be happy. He wanted him to be with someone better than him. He wanted him to have a future.

"I don't care," Hanabusa's words cut off the silverette's train of thought. He continued on and hugged him even tighter than before, unaware of the bruises he's creating on the pale body he's holding,
"You should know that I don't care that you're physically fragile or sickly, I'll take care of you my whole life. Even if you stay as a mortal, I'll be there by your side until the end. Even if you can't bear me a child, I'll be satisfied with having just you in my life."

The silverette went very rigid at his words. How? He wanted to ask but he must have swallowed his tongue in shock for he can't seem to form the questions he wanted to say. He can only feel that his lone tear was silently followed by another one... and another... and another... He knew he didn't deserve those words, yet he still felt happy hearing them. It's like he's being saved. _Ne Hana, why is it that you know exactly what I want to hear?_

He knew he wasn't able to voice out a word in his question so he was surprised when he received an answer, "I told I've been watching you. My eyes have always followed you. My heart has always been with you. That's why, don't hold back. Don't hide from me. Don't carry your troubles alone. I'm here. I've always been here." Hanabusa whispered. He let go of him but only to cup his tearstained face with both his hands. There was a pained and earnest light in his sapphire eyes. They looked like deep oceans what with the emotions swimming in their depths that Ichiru can't help but drown. "I'm happy just being with you like this, aren't you the same?"

"I am," he finally answered. His hands on his lover's as he tried to feel their warmth, "but is it alright? Being with me? Is it fine to pick me? I can't give you what you need... Hana, I-"

"Shhh," the noble cut him off, wiping his lover's tears away with his thumbs, "You're everything I need, Ichiru, so just stay with me."

Ichiru's tears fell even harder without his permission. It's really pathetic to cry like this but his tear glands seemed to have a mind of their own cause the affronting waterworks kept on spilling from his eyes. Despite being the one with tears smearing his face, Ichiru still can't help but say, "You're so sappy, Hana."

"Only when I'm around you." Hanabusa chuckled at his lover's response, even though he was still sporting a pained expression. It was the perfect opportunity so tilted the handsome face he's holding and swept in to claim a kiss. He was so close to his goal, Ichiru even closed his eyes, but was interrupted by the sudden deafening roar of the forgotten people around them.

"Kyaaaaaaaaa!"

"Nooooooooo!"

Both males immediately moved from each other and quickly looked around them. Ichiru paled when he saw the numerous students and visitors watching them with varying expressions of awe, surprise, disbelief and excitement. His eyes weren't able to register the smug and amused expressions of the Night class who were out and about, Yuki's excitement, Takuma's understanding and Anne-chan's delight. The only thing he was able to comprehend was the fact that they have shown all the people present the spectacle of the year and without doubt, exposed their relationship to the whole Cross Academy and neighborhood.

His pale skin was quickly enveloped with a hot flush from head to toe that he unthinkingly took a step back from a distracted Hanabusa before completely taking off in a mad dash towards the chairman's abode. His bell rang noisily as he run away.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

He can't believe that we was so immersed in his own world that he actually forgot where he was! The thought of the time and place were completely forgotten while drowned in his own drama and
despair. And now, they shall be the next hot topic of the whole school. He was so embarrassed that he could die!

The conversation they had immediately filled his head. Shit. Did everyone hear them? Oh damn. Did they expose their true nature as hunter and vampire to all who were present? Did he say anything weird? Then realization struck him. Fuck! Hana! He forgot to take his lover with him when he ran out! Oh shit! What if he was run over by the, no doubt, angry mob of fan girls?!

"Ha-Hana,"

"Ichiru!

He was so flustered that he has forgotten where he was and who he was with once again. He looked at the midget vampire who was looking at him with pity and amusement in her large sienna eyes. When did Yuki got here again?

"Uh…You're here?" he voiced out distractedly.

Yuki frowned at him, exasperated, before shaking her head. Goodness, he has lost it. "Ichiru, calm down, okay? You're going through shock. Take a deep breath and sit down."

The silverette can only stare at her for a while before he was able to comprehend her words. "O-okay." He nodded, distracted, not really knowing what to do.

He has barely seated himself when the door to his room suddenly opened to reveal a panting Hanabusa. Ichiru immediately stood and run to him.

"Ha-Hana! I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" the silverette repeated again and again. The guilt of unconsciously leaving his lover flooded him in waves at the sight of the exhausted vampire. To think he was reduced to this…He must have been harassed by his fan girls. Oh fuck, what will they do?

He was so worried. He honestly didn't know how they can rectify the situation so he was baffled when he heard his lover chuckle. He looked at the vampire in confusion as the restrained laughter grew louder and louder. "Ha-Hana?"

Surprised lilac orbs met the surprised sienna eyes of his other companion. They both looked at the laughing vampire, who straightened himself only to hug him, in confusion. "Are you alright, Hana?" Ichiru asked carefully while rubbing his lover's back that's slightly trembling in euphoria.

"Yeah," the noble answered in mid-laugh, "I'm… I'm just relieved, I guess." He finished while smiling, finally spending the last of his laughter. It was just that he felt so scared earlier at the thought of losing his Ichiru that the sight of him comically running away from his fan girls like the devil himself is after him kind of tickled his funny bone. It made him feel that the thought of separating from him was just a horrible nightmare. Compared to the dismal idea of breaking up, it seems that the thought of being exposed and hunted by a group of angry Day class students are nothing. Nothing at all. Ah, he didn't want to hear those abominable words ever again, not even as a joke. The vampire's laughter completely died in his throat as he hugged the lean body against him, welcoming the warmth he was in danger of losing just moments ago.

"Are you really alright, Hana?" Ichiru repeated when the noble fell in silence and only embraced him tighter for a few minutes.

The blonde's response, whatever it would have been, was prevented by a loud clearing of throat from the forgotten prefect in the room. Both male turned to find the blushing midget pureblood who was desperately trying to be noticed.
"Ah, Yuki-sama, I didn't know you're here." Hanabusa declared with surprise, loosening his embrace but still didn't let go of the silver prefect.

"Ah, Yuki, you're still here?" Ichiru also said in surprise. A fresh blush formed at the thought of his adopted-sister seeing him so vulnerable in the arms of his lover.

An elegant brow twitched in irritation at the two's rudeness. She can't believe she cut her own date short out of concern for this ingrate of a brother who immediately forgot about her the moment his boyfriend appeared. Hah, so much for brotherly affections. She decided to tease them in return, "Geez, you guys are turning bolder and bolder. I can't believe you had the courage to make out in front of the whole academy." She smirked as she crossed her arms. She inwardly snickered when she heard her adopted-brother's heartbeat going faster.

"Tsk. Tsk. Tsk." She continued on while shaking her head and sighing exaggeratedly, "What will Zero say once he heard that you've broadcasted your relationship just like that? Oh my gosh, he'll be furious! Ah, should I help you pack your bags, Ichiru?" she finished with a wide grin on her lovely face but when she saw how fast the silverette's face turned from bright red to deathly white, she was instantly filled with compassion, guilt and pity instead. "Err…Ichiru?"

"Hey, are you alright, Ichiru?" Hanabusa asked when he also noticed the way the silver prefect paled and heard his thundering heartbeat.

"W-what are we going to do, Hana? T-they heard us just now, didn't they? W-what if someone figured the Night class' secret? W-what's going to happen now?" he wondered in a breathlessly panicked tone, his silver-lavender eyes wild with worry.

"It's okay, Ichiru!" Yuki immediately blurted, feeling extremely worried at how ashen her brother was, like he's about to disintegrate into thin air. "Honestly, we were all just watching but I'm sure no one aside from the Night class can really hear a thing since you're still in a bit of a distance from everyone else. Well… uh… many wanted to come closer but there was like an invisible barrier around that's why no one was able to get close to you. I'm sure no one heard a word!" the pureblood hurriedly explained, her hands gesturing to make a dome shape in the air for effects.

"Oh? Then no one knows that we're going out?"

The brunette froze, "Err, I wouldn't dream of that…that attempted kiss was a dead giveaway… at least no one knows about the…Night class?" she tried to add positively but hesitated in the end.

Ichiru didn't know if he'll rejoice or not. No one knew about the Night class but their relationship was still exposed. But more importantly, he cried in front of all those people… How embarrassing… He was still in a daze when a hand lightly guided his face to look up and meet his lover's cerulean orbs.

"It's alright, isn't it? This way, everyone knows and there's no need to hide or are you ashamed to let everyone know that you're dating me?" the aristocrat asked in a severe tone.

"What? No! Isn't that supposed to be my question?"

Narrowed aquamarine eyes softened at his lover's answer. It's just like Ichiru. "As if I'll ever think like that." He smiled before kissing his lover's temple, tickling the silverette in the process.

"H-Hana!"

Yuki looked at them with half amusement and irritation. Really, she didn't know whether to be happy for them because of their strong and good relationship or annoyed at them for continuously...
forgetting her existence even though she's been with them the whole time. Oh well, "The third wheel is now leaving. I'm going to the dorm to change for the party. Don't be late, you two!" she coolly reminded them, even through her own blush, before going out of the room and closing the door behind her.

Ichiru wasn't able to say anything in response to his adopted-sister's words for Hanabusa's lips occupied his the moment they were completely left alone. He instantly forgot about his earlier worries and all the dark feelings that infested his heart for days as he immersed himself with the hot sensation that the noble's lips produced inside him. He felt a firm hand guide his head so it was angled in a way that let his lover deepened the kiss and another arm around his waist that pressed his body closer to Hanabusa's. His own arms instinctively wrapped themselves around the vampire's neck with his hands tightly grasping the white fabric over his broad shoulders.

Insistent tongues collided in a salacious meeting, unrelenting in their wish to feel and drown in each other. The earlier danger of being separated from one another further fanned the desire to confirm that they're still together. Hanabusa pressed harder while Ichiru welcomed the pressure, half consumed by the fire building up inside him. He was such an idiot to think that he'll actually be able to let go of this man. He must be deluded. It was insane that he just proposed a break up not an hour ago yet now, unable to imagine the thought of ever letting go. He can't. Not in this lifetime.

The startled sound he would have uttered when he felt strong arms carry him towards the bed was smothered by the lips still attached to his. He could feel his face heat up for he knew where this would all lead and was no longer surprise to feel the shift in position and the comfortable plane of his bed on his back. He opened his eyes the moment Hana broke their kiss and he had to smile at the loving look the blond vampire hovering above was giving him. Hanabusa is simply breathtaking and he had to wonder when did he get to be this lucky. To have someone so wonderful love him and look and touch him the way Hana does. With so much affection, with so much care, with so much tenderness, like he's the most important piece of treasure there is. Like he's all Hana could see. Like he's everything he dreamt a lover would be.

Ichiru caught his breath. He wanted to say so many things to Hana, words of love and apologies, but he can't quite make his tongue work. He could only gaze at that beauty above him and reach out to slightly touch his lips. He watched as his lover pressed his fingers closer to his lips and felt frustrated because he wanted to make his feelings known but when Hanabusa smiled down at him, with his cerulean orbs saying the exact same words of affection he wishes to express, he knew that he understood and there's no more need to speak. The silverette drew himself up, placing his elbow for support while his free hand grasped the back of his lover's neck to pull him and meet his lips. And as if they share one mind, Hanabusa readily complied, gliding down and fitting his mouth perfectly on his.

The silverette felt so hot. He could feel the heat burning so strongly, it feels as if he'll melt at any second. It doesn't help that he could clearly feel the soft tongue exploring his mouth, feeling it's every movement as it trace the roof of his mouth and slam on his own tongue. The pressure was like a drug, coaxing him to want and need more. As if rising to the challenge, he can't help but mirror his lover's actions and boldly start his own exploration. He sensed surprised from the noble and he felt an overwhelming sense of power when the reign was given to him so despite the heat burning down his skin because of embarrassment and self-consciousness, as if it's the most natural thing to do, he rose to the occasion and continued his own erotic inspection of his lover's sweet mouth. Both pale arms clung to the vampire's white uniform while he crossed his feet around his waist, locking Hanabusa in place which suited the noble just fine as he also drew the prefect closer.

Hanabusa could hear his silverette's delicious moan and could almost hear his own when he felt their erections rub against each other. He felt his impatience rising as their clothes got in the way. His
hand was about to move to detached the infernal belt around his lover when he felt his own belt being undone by a pale, insistent hand. Sapphire eyes opened to look at the startlingly bold prefect who broke their kiss only to bury his face on his neck. The blond can't help but smile for he can clearly see the blush that covered all the skin available to his perusal and felt the slightly trembling body against him.

'Adorable', the vampire can't help but think when he heard his name uttered in quiet and breathless whispers by the silverette whose nerves seem to have caught up with him given by how his hand seem to have stopped moving and the body that continued to shake slightly. "Ichiru," he whispered huskily directly by the prefect's ear, that's now completely red, before finishing his lover's endeavor and undoing his own belt, "touch me." He couldn't help the evil smirk that selfishly drew itself when he heard his lover swallow and felt him flinch for a moment. He was surprised, however, when instead of a shaking Ichiru who he expected to look at him with bright, embarrassed eyes and plead him to stop teasing him, he felt the silverette's frozen hand move again and lean fingers bravely take a hold of him. He didn't expect it nor the guttural sound that he wasn't able to stop from releasing at the sudden pleasure of the action. He was only frozen for a moment before finally finding enough of his wits, which was a feat at the moment, and continued to unbuckle Ichiru's belt to provide him the same ecstasy. Tightening his embrace around the pale body, he drew him even closer in order to hold on to both their members. Twin moans escaped from them at the maddeningly enticing sensation of velvet skin against velvet skin.

The noble could sense his lover's rising tension and did his best to soothe him, "Ichiru, look at me." Hanabusa breathlessly asked him. It was minute or two before the silverette finally emerged from his hiding place to face the aristocrat. A smile carved into the noble's handsome face at the sight of Ichiru's adorably flushed face, watery eyes and parted pink lips. Placing his forehead on his, he looked straight into his lust-filled lilac eyes and instructed him on what to do and how to move. Slippery because of pre-cum, both hands rapidly stroke their hardened shafts, putting pressure at the base from time to time and while the thrill has great impact, it's Ichiru's lewd expression and hot pants that sent Hanabusa on edge more than anything. Two rapid heartbeats and loud, breathless pants resounded inside the room as their hands' movements became even faster and rougher, the desire to see unimaginable heights rose deep inside them. He was able to tell that the prefect was close to coming when he attempted to turn from him, felt his body tense and toes curl. Using his free hand, he gently but resolutely grasped a handful of silver hair, damp because of sweat, to keep Ichiru in place which simultaneously ruined his neat hair arrangement.

"H-Ha-na," Ichiru whispered almost desperately, the need to hide away increasing as he felt his release demand its freedom.

"No, show me." Hanabusa ordered in a hoarse voice, cerulean orbs unconsciously turning red, the craving to see Ichiru's every expression dominated his whole being - over-taking his senses.

When silver-lavender saw dark blue eyes turn into dangerous, fiery red and a hint of lengthened fangs became visible through parted lips together with the delightful squeeze at the base of his shaft, the tight spring of Ichiru's self-control loosened to release the evidence of his desire on his and his lover's hands. There was a loud moan he wouldn't recognize as his own, that loudly ripped through the air while beads of sweat cascaded down his pale figure. His world was filled with white and he felt weak as his orgasm surge throughout his whole body. For a moment, his surrounding was lost to him except for that presence he knew he'll never live without. He vaguely felt when his lover gently pushed him down against the sheets and by the time he was sensible again, what met his view was the devastatingly sensual sight of his lover licking his release on his hand while watching him. Amethyst eyes marginally widen and his heart, that has just started to calm down, seems to have received a jump start and wildly raced again. Some would have screamed at the sight of ruby red eyes and deadly fangs currently possessed by his lover. Their instincts would tell them that he's a
fatal adversary but his heart can only recognize that sight as his own. It's his, his mind called and he was already reaching out to the noble even before he realized what he was doing.

Hanabusa knew it's risky. He meant to take a break before he completely lost to his urges. He could feel his senses leaving him and his instincts and desire overtaking him but like the most potent drug, he can't help but take those hands extended to him. It's like gravity itself that pulls him closer to his silver angel and before he could stop himself, his lips once again found home in Ichiru's kiss. He candied and sucked the luscious lips against him, careful not to prick him with the fangs he knew had already shown themselves, until all he could think about is the desire for more. An urgent hand soon worked on removing Ichiru's pants and undergarment while the other slipped under the folds of crumpled uniform, not bothering to unbutton the black school shirt, white blazer and vest, impatient to feel the soft skin under his palms. He soon found one pebbled nipple and lost no time in squeezing it, eliciting a soft whine from his alluring lover.

Once the obstructions were removed, the noble's other hand started to work on preparing his lover for his intrusion. Truthfully, the need to ram into him was almost unstoppable. He has yet to come and with his natural impulses already at its peak, it's hard to keep his control but the still sane part of him kept on echoing the discomfort and pain Ichiru would feel. No, he can't do that to his delicate lover. And so with heroic self-control, what's left of it anyway, he was able to manage inserting his middle finger inside the tight aperture. The body under him evidently shuddered at the invasion and the hands tightly grasping his uniform further clung to him. The prefect broke their kiss to let out a lascivious cry when he slowly withdrew his finger only to thrust it completely in, the remaining cum easing his way as he repeated the action until he can feel the tense muscle slightly relax. He softly bit into the silverette's ear to occupy him when he added his index finger, still careful not to let his foremost instinct as a vampire completely overtake him.

Soft pants slowly filled the darkening room once again while he continued to work on opening Ichiru further, alternating to kissing and nibbling on his ear and neck to comfort him. Unconsciously leaving more marks and passion bites than he intended. His fingers went in and out, scissoring inside to further expedite the preparation, before adding a third one. He strived to be gentle but the maddening sensation of his erection rubbing against Ichiru, the lewd pants just against his ear, the flushed, tempting skin directly in view, Ichiru's burning heat and sweet, hot vanilla scent are making it hard to do so. It's like his very own heaven and hell combined. Building desperation caused his movements to be rough and resulted to harsh breaths. His sane consciousness is slowly slipping away. He sorely wished to bite down but knew he shouldn't so before he's overwhelmed by the destructive thirst poisoning him, after taking out his fingers, he wordlessly took the pale arms embracing him, coaxing them to let go, so he can pin down Ichiru.

"Ichiru." That breathless call was the only warning he provided the surprised silver prefect before taking hold of his shoulder and waist, and forcefully thrusting deep inside the hot and tight hole. He knew he's throwing all his efforts in carefully opening Ichiru down the drain by vigorously impaling him but he felt like he'll succumb to the thirst for his lover's blood if he didn't assuage even one of his needs. He planned to take his lover gently but the incident earlier only made it difficult. He knew it's also the reason why his senses are wreaking havoc inside him. The need to mark and form a bond with his silver mate is screaming at his vampiric intuition, erasing all notions of calm and ease from his core. All his mind could echo was 'he's mine'.

The hasty action as well as the pain that accompanied the forceful penetration caught Ichiru off guard. A pain-filled cry resounded inside the room as the pressure of the hardened member inside him filled his very being, generating a tear from him. His hands blindly grasped at the arm pinning his shoulder against the mattress and the pillow underneath his head, where his silver hairs wildly fanned out, in an attempt to calm himself. When he heard an almost inaudible apology, he looked up and met a pair of remorseful flaming garnets on the face of the frowning vampire. Hanabusa leaned
in but not closed enough as if he's afraid to hurt him further. It's odd that despite the blood-red eyes and fangs that can only be perceived as predatory, he still felt treasured and loved. It's quite obvious that the noble didn't intend to be so harsh and he's doing his best to restrain and not move even though the effort is causing him to shake a bit.

A quiet smile graced the silverette's lips despite the pain still throbbing at the core of their union. He cupped his lover's face, absentmindedly thumbing one of the fangs slightly protruding from parted lips, just then realizing the possible reasons behind the aristocrat's brash movement. His heartbeat sped even faster in elation at the thought that Hana wanted to drink his blood. As someone from a hunter family, he knew the strong desire vampires have towards their beloved's blood. He didn't see any sign of it from the cool blond before but he didn't want to think too much of it lest he bury himself with further self-consciousness and insecurity. Now though, he can only feel the thrill at the thought that his lover wants his everything just like what Ichiru feels towards him. He knew he'll die of embarrassment later but still, with newfound courage, he resolutely pulled his lover even closer and in a husky voice, whispered, "Bite me."

The argument Hanabusa would have uttered got trapped in his throat when Ichiru boldly kissed him, as if sensing what he wish to do, and the sweet suction that followed only seduced him into capitulation. Aside from his overpowering craving, he can't help but be ensnared as his personal temptress beguile him further in doing his bidding by whispering, "I want you to." Any other reason to resist got destroyed by those words alone. After loosening the red tie and shoving the black and white fabrics away from Ichiru's slender neck, with a pale hand on his golden threads encouraging and guiding him, the noble eagerly, but with all the gentleness he could muster, bit into the pale pliant flesh. He groaned, feeling his eyes' heat as they turn a shade darker and redder than before. The taste that hit him was so heavenly and ambrosial that he didn't know if he'd ever truly tasted blood before. Everything else seems like poor imitation compared to this intoxicating elixir. He could feel his arousal getting even harder and larger, if that's possible given his current state, and he began to shallowly thrust into Ichiru unconsciously, eliciting soft moans from the silverette.

He didn't know if the feeling that hit him the moment Hana's fangs tore into him was pain or pleasure. Perhaps, it's both as even though there was a sense of being devoured, he could still claim that the experience was not unpleasant. On the contrary, he could tell that overall, dare he say, it's thrilling and electrifying, like for the first time, he's feeling the joy of being alive. He wondered it's the conditioned response that a vampire's bite provides to their prey but maybe, it's simply because he's happy being able to offer something to the person most important to him. Any more thoughts regarding the matter were soon forgotten when Hana started moving into him. Having been given enough time to be used to the inserted digit inside him, the shallow and slow movements wasn't enough to provide him the satisfaction he seeks. It only managed to reawaken the desire that has momentarily flown out of his mind because of the sudden ache. While he honestly didn't mind even if Hana drank from him for much longer, he was still relieved when he felt the vampire slowly, albeit seemingly reluctant, detached his fangs from him before dutifully licking the twin punctures until they stopped bleeding. There was a delightful shudder that ripped throughout his entire body at the tender gesture for it was still accompanied by unhurried, almost lazy, thrusts.

He opened his eyes, unaware that he had actually closed them, when he heard his lover call his name. Lilac eyes met the alluring vision of his lover who was still sporting garnet orbs though his fangs seemed to have shrunk to their normal size. He had to smile at the concerned look on the young Adonis' face. Really, this darling vampire. He didn't ask Hana to bite him just so he'd look like that. He reached out to caress his face, as if to erase away his frown, and assured him, "I'm fine."

"I'm sorry, I couldn't control myself." Hanabusa quietly said, leaning onto the warmth of his lover's hands. "I-,"
Ichiru drowned his next words by pulling him close and sealing his lips with his. It seems that it's a day for surprises. He thought that his lover has already exhausted his daringness but it seems that there's still a lot remaining. He didn't think when will be the next time his dearest, modest lover will initiate anything like this so he allowed himself to be carried away to his personal haven, in Ichiru's warmth and embrace. As the euphoria he had when he tasted the sweetness of his lover's honeyed lips spread throughout his entire body, like poison coursing through his veins until it's too late, he realized that even if the day comes when Ichiru inevitably left his side, he's sure that he'll not be able to go anywhere else. Like a curse, he'll forever seek only his voice, his gaze, his body and his heartbeat. Only the way he speaks his name so lovingly is his melody. Only this body that that fit perfectly in his embrace is his warmth. No one else. Even if the day comes when Ichiru is no more, he'll forever stay as his one and only.

I won't go anywhere from here, no, I don't want to go anywhere else.

When he broke their kiss to look at his vampire, he was met by blissful sapphire orbs and a smile that greatly betrays just how satisfied he was by Ichiru's gifts. When his lover took his hand and kissed it almost reverently, he knew that he'll never regret committing the actions he did nor for choosing to love a vampire despite the animosity between their races. No, being with Hana was one of the few miracles that happened in his life and he's determined not to let go from there on. Never again. His hand, that's now cupping the face pressed against his palm, managed to drew his lover to him for another kiss and the vampire, who's seems to have already gotten back some of his sanity, eagerly complied.

The delightful plunder, which almost completely stopped after his luscious drink, started once again. Slowly, he began to rock into Ichiru as their tame kiss turned from gentle and tender to savage and demanding. He could tell by how his silverette sucked and licked the inside of his mouth, how his hand tightened almost painfully on his hand and shoulder, how the pale feet around his eagerly assisted his every thrust as if commanding him to move faster and the sweat that continuously slid down their bodies that his silver lover has been quite impatient. He rewarded him by ramming hard against him, hitting him square on the prostate, which elicited quite an adorable cry from Ichiru, decidedly breaking their kiss again.

The hot walls surrounding his shaft tightened around him which sent devastating pleasure straight to Hanabusa's core. Together with this, the heat of his lover's body and the erotic moans filling his ears left him lost in ecstasy and he can't help but plunge into him repeatedly, over and over again, faster and faster still, unable to stop. When he felt somehow dissatisfied, the rising need still getting higher and higher, he held the silverette under his kneecaps and spread them further apart to delve even deeper.

If Ichiru's cries were not heard on the outside before, it surely would be now so much so that later, he'd pray to all the gods he know that no one walked around the chairman's abode or indeed, that none of his family members ever came close to his room for he's sure that he won't be able to face any of them from there on. It didn't occur to him to smother his moans. His whole focus was centered on his golden lover and his sensual ministrations.

He lewdly keened even more when he felt the vampire's strong hand took hold of his dripping arousal to time each libidinous stroke with his every powerful thrust. Ichiru attempted to restrain the hand holding him as he can feel his second release rapidly knocking his senses. The pleasure was too overwhelming. Even without the loving attention to his erection, the incessant lunges, the pulsing member inside him, the intense gaze of those aquamarine orbs, the husky voice repeatedly calling his name and declaring his love, the kisses administered every now and then, and the hand on his hip which guides his body to meet Hana's are enough to send him over the edge. Even the warm air of the room, the loud pants permeating the air and the beads of sweat rolling down their bodies are like
steps to one indecent dance. He know he won't last much longer and while half of him wishes to finally grasp the peak and let go, another part of him wishes to prolong the moment even just a second longer for being one with Hana is a delight like no other.

Hanabusa knew that Ichiru is about ready to cum just like him given the way his pale hands grasped his arm and shoulder almost painfully, and how desperate he moaned his name. And while his lover's tight cavern seduces him to extend the amorous moment of their union, his first release is already savagely tearing him apart. When his silver lover surrendered to the pleasure, punctuated by a lascivious cry of his name, Hanabusa let himself go as well, the silverette's sexy voice and expression further paving the way, and spilled forth inside his lover while calling Ichiru's name. The hot white sensation of reaching the peak as he shuddered into release almost knocked him senseless but he still didn't forget to hold on to his silverette and be his anchor through his orgasm.

The noble administered another kiss before pulling out completely and rolling off to Ichiru's side and gathering the still panting silverette in his arms so his back is on his chest. Hana promptly buried his nose on Ichiru's nape, content in basking in his sweet scent while his hand is comfortably situated over the prefect's chest to feel his rapid heartbeat starting to calm down.

They were enjoying a companionable silence while lying quietly, taking their time in regaining their breaths, and were already in danger of falling asleep when the noble was reminded of the evening banquet because of the excited murmurs of the Day class students currently busy preparing themselves. All he really wanted was to spend the rest of the night with his own silver beauty in his arms but the voice of their pureblood princess telling them not to be late came swimming back to him and so, with a disgruntled expression, was force to shake his sleepy lover into attention.

"Ichiru, we need to prepare for the banquet. Can you stand?" Hanabusa inquired, his voice full of gentle concern.

The silverette stilled at the question. He can't help the way his cheeks got covered by cherry scores at the reminder of the intense exercise and though he wanted to coolly inform his lover that he's alright as usual, his heavy body and aching hips screamed in agony.

When shy lilac eyes avoided probing azure regard, the blond aristocrat chuckled in understanding. Perhaps he should have known since he's fully aware of his lapse in control in their love-making this time. Though it's completely understandable, still, it's wishful thinking to hope that Ichiru will be able to recover soon.

"Sorry, I was a bit forceful." He apologized while stroking his lover's moonlit hair, "Do you want to stay here?"

"Hmmm," Ichiru considered the notion for a moment. He certainly would rather confine himself inside his small room with Hana but his twin would certainly ask his whereabouts. There's also the fact that he must inform Zero of his blunder regarding exposing their relationship to the whole student body so as to not shock his poor brother which may result to several bullets on his lover's body. Not to mention the chairman would weep all dramatically should he find that one of his 'children' missed the most awaited event with Yuki leering at him knowingly. He sighed, resigned to torture his body and attend the tedious activity, "I think we need to go. I'll shower first."

After a painful moment where the silver prefect struggled to sit down, pale feet finally found the cold floor. He was already bracing himself for the agony that each step will caused him when his lover suddenly appeared beside him and scooped him up and carried him like a damsel.

"Hey! Hana, put me-,"
"Shhh, it's painful, isn't it?" the noble interrupted while carrying his lover to the bathroom, "Just let me help you prepare. I also need a bath anyway."

Ichiru could feel the heat on his cheeks spread all throughout his entire body at his embarrassment and though he would like to argue more, his exhausted body seems to greatly appreciate the action so much so that he can only wrap his arms around the noble's slender neck and rested his head on his shoulder. Well, at least, he's given more time to recuperate. Hopefully, the warm water will be able to soothe him enough to allow him to walk straighter later on.

Ichiru wanted to sigh in contentment when the warm water eased his sore spots while he leisurely sat on the tub, between Hana's thighs, with his back on the blonde’s chest, an arm around his waist and his silver head comfortably rested on the other's shoulder. Lilac eyes were again half-masted as the relaxing heat of the water and the body behind him coaxed his exhausted mind and body to sleep, like the most pleasant lullaby in the world. He can't believe how many things happened in the course of the day. Surprisingly, even though he still don't know how the Day class students shall take him on tomorrow, he can't make himself worry about it any longer for his ultimate fears have completely melted away. He was so relieved that despite everything, he's still with Hana now. If he were to have used all his luck in this lifetime, he would still feel that it's all worth it.

He's so fortunate that in spite of his weaknesses, Hanabusa still loves him. He's so glad that the noble didn't accept his proposal to break up with him. He was such a moron to have thought of such a notion. Still, he has to wonder why Hana didn't ask him to be a vampire. Everything would have been solved that way and though he would be conflicted as it would mean throwing his brother's effort to protect him that day down the drain, he can't help but wonder if it's really alright for things to stay the way they are.

He surprised both himself and his blond companion by mumbling unconsciously, "Why won't you ask if I want to be a vampire?" Wondering aquamarine orbs met slightly daze lavender ones, Ichiru was forced to clarify, "I mean… won't it be better? So I won't be as pathetic as I am right now? So maybe, we can have children in the future?"

The noble paused in his current task of scrubbing his lover clean to look at the handsome pale face slightly turned to him, "I will not ask you to be anything but yourself, Ichiru." Hanabusa answered as he drew the arm around the silver prefect closer, tightening his embrace, "Indeed, it would be wonderful if you're a vampire but only because you'll at least be less susceptible to any danger and more importantly, that I'll be able to have you in all those years that will come but even if it's just you and I together in this lifetime, I'll already be very satisfied.” He kissed the delicate shoulder in front of him so his expression is briefly hidden from lilac regard. He bit his lips as he wanted to add how much he wished for it to happen but held back, instead he continued, "If I could have all the time available to be by your side, then I'll already be content." He leaned back to smile at his lover, whose earlier sleepy eyes now fully awakened because of his response, before shortly covering his reddish lips with his.

Hanabusa knew that there was a bit of lie in his words but he couldn't possibly hint it. There's no way he'll voice out the desperate wish he have for he knew how troubled Ichiru will be.

After Ichiru got sick because of exhaustion caused by their first time together, when he was searching for ways to help his lover gain a stronger constitution, his faithful cousin asked him the very same question. Indeed, why not just ask him to be turned?

"I can't." The blond noble took a deep breath, eyes intent on the medicine book he was reading, before continuing, "How can I? I know he'll do it in the end if it's for my sake but how can you expect me to ask him to abandon everything just for me? To betray his kin in exchange for hundreds
of years with me, to betray his brother who's been looking out for him and their parents who died for them just for my own relief. I can't. Don't ask me to be so selfish when I'm trying not to be for once."

He sensed a slight surprise from his companion and felt strong fire-orange regard on him, "You know you'll regret it." He heard after a while.

"I know."

How could he not?

He's always been afraid. Even just the thought that there'll be a time, in the near future, when he'll be without him, when he'll watch as he drift away to his last breath, when he'll ever stand before a grave, when all will come to an end someday, when he'll feel the pain of missing him in every single second of every hour, always frightens him like nothing else did. He was so scared that many times, he would almost let his utmost wishes leave his lips and betray him.

He wanted Ichiru to be a vampire. So he can live a hundred years by his side, so he'll be stronger to protect himself, so he won't suffer because of his sickness anymore, so he can be happy by his side.

But this selfishness comes with a price.

He'll surely be treated like a traitor and for someone who came from a prestigious line of hunters, it will be like throwing his pride and family. He can't ask Ichiru to throw everything that he is.

He's been in love with him exactly because of who he was. He loves the Ichiru who's been doing his best despite his shortcomings. He loves the Ichiru aiming to be able to prove himself as a proud hunter from the Kiryū line. Ultimately, he's fallen for that light born from the same frailty that he wanted to get rid of just because he feared that his love will someday succumb to it. It's ironic, but he can't help it.

He's afraid of losing him.

But he still can't ask him.

And he never will.

Even when he wanted so much more than the time Ichiru possesses in his entire life.

Even when he wanted him in this lifetime and in the next.

He was shaken out of his internal remunerations when he felt deep, steady breaths from the beauty leaning against him. When he turned to his lover, he found the peaceful sight of a slumbering Ichiru. He smiled, willing away unpleasant thoughts in the meantime. Well, it seems that they'll miss the whole banquet together after all. He kissed the wet starlight tresses of his gorgeous lover.

Not that he mind, he thought as he carried his treasure out of the bath.

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There was an energetic buzz among the Day class students while all prepared for the evening banquet which will start in less than a few hours. All fuss as they quickly took care of all the immediate cleaning needed and set aside those than can wait until tomorrow. They all chatted
animatedly as they worked. Most of the conversation were about the sightings of the few members of the Night class during the festival, the beautiful oirans from a certain traditional Japanese café, their equally gorgeous replacements who managed to end the game undefeated, a certain female prefect and her unconfirmed relationship with a most beloved Night class senpai and a certain male prefect and his confirmed relationship with a most beloved Night class senpai. Out of all the topics coloring every conversation, the one about their lovely Ichiru-kun almost being kissed by their idol inspired the most squeal and shriek from the Day class students.

While the male Day class students remained quiet for they all tried not to think about how the silverette twins looked earlier that day and simultaneously awaken the same dismay some of the female Day class students were feeling, all the female in the Sun dorm chattered about the news incessantly. Some were expressing vehement disapproval while, amusingly, a lot more were expressing excitement at the match. Claims of having seen heated looks between the silver prefect and the famous blond charmer and declarations that they knew they would eventually date each other suddenly kept popping out of nowhere. Speculations of when and how it started were soon formulated. Before the start of the ball, there were about 30 different scenarios ranging from accidentally bumping to each other during one morning while on their way to school to being promised to each other since their infancy were made.

Yuki can't thank the makers of locks and security door chains enough for their genius invention. She's quite surprised that the door to her and Yori-chan's room was not yet off its hinges even after all the fuss and knocks the other students made. Sienna eyes shot another apologetic look to her roommate after another group of persistent students demanding some explanation came to disrupt their preparation. She really admires her best friend's patience and kindness as Sayori merely quietly continued tying Yuki's hair in a casual but elegant fashion.

"There, it's finished." Yori smiled approvingly after examining her work. She pinned the upper half of the brunette's hair in a lose bun with flower decorated bobby pins after braiding it before curling the lower half and setting it over one shoulder. It looked perfect with Yuki's strapless, high-waist pink tea-length chiffon dress.

"Thank you, Yori-chan." Yuki gratefully smiled up her best friend who chose to go with a modest short-sleeved empire silk cocktail dress in baby blue.

"Shall we go?" The light haired brunette asked after making sure that their most recent visitors already left. "They're gone."

"Oh thank goodness!" Yuki heaved a relieved sigh. She really didn't like the idea of jumping out of the window in order to escape the persistent pests and risk ruining her dress. Even for a pureblood like her, it will be a feat to jump down several floors in high heels since she's still clumsy. After a quick peek outside, they immediately closed the door and walked fast straight to the ground floor. They miraculously made it to the front entrance without any unwanted interruptions. Perhaps, since the girls spent a good deal of their time making a fuss outside their room, they're still not finished with their own preparation.

They were able to leisurely thread their way towards the recreational building where the largest assembly room was once they were a bit far away from the dorm.

"I wonder if it's going to be like this from now on." Yuki wondered aloud. "I'm sorry for dragging you in this, Yori-chan."

"Don't worry about it. I'm sure they'll get over it. I just hope that Ichiru-kun will be alright."

Yuki beamed at her lovely roommate. She knew she's been very lucky to be roomed with such an
amiable person.

They soon made it in the ballroom where there's a neat arrangement of round tables and chairs around the hall. It was only broken at the middle where a stage was set up at the head of the room and several instruments were set up for a chamber orchestra.

At the entrance, they were greeted by a young man in a tuxedo who asked for their name in order to give them their table number. Since they were part of the winning class, they get to seat with the Night class. The arrangement was already fixed beforehand, just after the awarding ceremony. Yuki knew that Ruka was the overall event organizer and she privately wondered if she was able to arrange for her to seat with Ichijou-senpai. She fervently hope she did. Yuki was directed to table number 11 while Sayori was given table number 10. Though she's sorry that they won't be together, she's comforted that at least she's near.

She observed while looking for her table at the head of the room where most of the Night class is already at while there's only a handful of Day class students that have arrived. To her utter delight, she found table number 11 already occupied by her brother, Zero and Ichijou-senpai.

"Senpai!" She smiled and happily seated herself besides her boyfriend. She froze, however, when she was hit by an overpowering scent that came from the mated couple. She must have made a weird sound since the three vampires looked at her.

"Is something wrong, Yuki-chan?" Takuma immediately inquired when he noticed his girlfriend's wide eyes directed at the silver hunter and the blush that instantly covered every inch of her visible skin.

"What's wrong with you?" Zero frowned at Yuki's weird expression while looking at him. Like she can't quite decide whether to feel amused, horrified, embarrassed or excited and ended up doing all at the same time.

Only Kaname, being a pureblood, realized what must be going on inside his fairly innocent sister's head. He glanced at his lover. Well, this is going to be awkward. He thought with some slight amusement.

The vampire king then launched a private explanation to the hunter, leaving Takuma to content himself with his sister's answer that it was nothing. 'I understand you know about purebloods' superior senses,' he started, successfully getting Zero's attention. 'Since Yuki has yet to control her senses, she can easily pick up on things that not even an old pureblood will notice.'

Zero, who's still waiting for the point of his explanation, only looked at Kaname expectantly.

'That means she can easily note the change in our scents especially after love-making.' Kaname finished, his inner voice still sounding unperturbed.

"Eh?" Silver-lavender orbs widen momentarily before the silver prefect abruptly stood up, much to the blond noble's surprise. Amethyst eyes avoided everyone's scrutiny and announced, "I'm going to get a drink." He finished shortly before leaving without hearing anyone's response.

Takuma can only look at the hunter's retreating figure with confusion for he also saw a telltale of red tinge painting the silverette's normally pale ears. Emerald regards looked suspiciously around the table to find his girlfriend holding her face in an embarrassed manner, her blush not quite abating entirely, and their president sporting a look of quiet fondness which he can easily discerned only because he grew accustomed to his king's expressions after being with him all the time. What on Earth happened to Zero-kun, I wonder?
Meanwhile, Zero was seriously contemplating running away from the ball. If Yuki was able to smell the change in his and Kaname’s scent, surely his children will too and he’s horrified to let them know of their parent’s intimate and private affairs. No children should ever be made to suffer such a nightmare.

‘There’s no need to worry about that.’ He heard Kaname spoke through their bond. Damn it. He still can’t control this bond thing so his thoughts are often left vulnerable and exposed to his lover’s perusal. He felt Kaname’s amusement at his thoughts so he let his disgruntlement be felt in return. ‘I understand. I shall teach you how to control it.’

‘You better.’ That bastard. He has a strong suspicion that Kaname really didn’t want him to control the bond so he’ll be able to hear his every thoughts and feel his emotions. Like the greedy and possessive king that he is.

“You tend to conceal things that afflict you so you hardly left me with any other choice.’ Kaname responded, no doubt sensing his feelings and thoughts.

Zero was then shown the memories of his recent trip to the Hunter Association through their bond as a reminder. He let out a growl. Seriously, every damn time. Kaname loves to keep rubbing that accident on his face. He admits that was his fault and he did feel guilty about it but the bastard seems to take advantage of it at every turn. ‘Yeah, yeah, whatever.’ He answered shortly. He’s tired and he didn’t feel like arguing so instead, he diverted their conversation to his earlier dilemma. ‘What did you mean I didn’t need to be worried about it?’

“Our children came from the future. Being mated for a long time, for sure, this is the scent that they grew up to. They’ll simply think this is normal.’

Zero stopped in his tracks and mulled over that certain piece of logic. That makes sense. His remaining doubts whether it’s indeed true were silenced when he felt the aura of his four children and saw as their innocent faces lit up with every step they took to reach him as if being presented with something that pleases them.

He saw as Suiren promptly hurried, almost running and simultaneously ruffling the chiffon material of her long Grecian empire dress, just to get to him faster. The young hunter quietly smiled when the silver goddess in soft lilac wrapped her dainty arms around him.

"Otou-chan," Suiren whispered on her father’s chest. She didn’t see him almost the whole day and after being distressed into helping their aunt Yuki, she sorely missed her father’s warm arms. "Ah, you smell so lovely, otou-chan." She mumbled offhandedly. It’s like being back at home, she silently thought, basking in the comforting scent.

"Err, thank you, Suiren. You smell good too." Zero said after clearing his throat. His eyes travelled to his three sons and were amused to see Kohaku, who’s wearing a black suit identical to Akira’s, hold on to Naoto’s arm as if to stop him from mirroring his twin’s actions. He caught the words 'not in that form' escaping the older brunette’s lips which was received by an almost indiscernible sulking pout by his younger brother while Akira only nodded, looking uncharacteristically subdued for some reason. He was about to ask if there's anything the matter with the younger brunette when he realized that they're missing a certain female brunette.

"Where's Anne?"
Hazel orbs closely observed each and every proceeding inside the large hall and roamed its gaze around with an intimidating air when it was arrested by a vision.

Kaito didn't mean to stare but something in him just stopped producing oxygen altogether when he caught sight of a certain irritatingly good-looking vampire in all her teenage glory unknowingly coming closer to where he stood in a corner. It's not like that beautiful and no doubt expensive chiffon sheath dress that hugged her body so gorgeously and wonderfully showed the line of her slender form whenever she moves distracted him. No. He's not even bothered by how the sheer red color of her gown made her skin glow or how her delicate collar bones were visible because of that off shoulder neckline. Definitely not. Not even when her profile and heart shape face was highlighted given how her long mahogany hair were pinned up in an elegant style leaving only her long fringe to dangle freely. Hah! How could that even cause him distraction?

He's not going to trouble himself with a bloodsucker even if the said vampire gave out a stunning smile, her lavender eyes crinkling cutely, when she spotted him. Bah! Like he'll allow himse-.

The light haired hunter irritatingly snapped when something heavy hit his head, "What the fuck?!" he irately turned at the source to find an equally pissed off silverette in a distance who was definitely the annoying culprit that threw what looked like a silver spoon at him. The sudden awareness of his parched mouth and throat only fueled his anger at his former kohai. "What's your damn problem?"

"Why don't you try answering when someone freaking calls your name?" Zero barked.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Kaito snapped back, "I didn't hear anything."

Zero gave him a look, "Yeah, I can tell." He scoffed as he looked at his senpai's reason of preoccupation to find his blushing daughter who's torn between going to him or the hunter. *Stupid Kaito.*

"Hey, you annoying git, did you realize you just hit your great respectable teacher?"

The younger hunter only stared at the apprentice teacher like he's an idiot, "Sorry no, since I just hit you."

This annoying asshole. "What did you say?" Kaito irritably challenged. He would have said more and perhaps added some profanities that would instantly have the authorities revoking his teaching license when the animated voice of the chairman resounded as the bouncing odd ball started the introduction for the evening banquet. He forcefully held his tongue only to be provoked once again when his shitty kohai whispered to him.

"Remember your post, sensei."

This fucking brat.

The teacher apprentice wasn't able to snap back his retort since his rude student has already walked away, towing his future daughter with him whose reddish-lavender scrutiny didn't leave his for a while even as she wound her arms around the prefect's and walked away. He eventually averted his hazel orbs from the pair and circled around the ballroom, feeling incredibly annoyed for some reason. Grr! It's fucking irritating! He grouchily made a beeline towards the towering fountain of fruit juice to get a drink. He didn't know why and when his mouth went drier than Sahara and somehow, it only made him even more riled up. Everything's pissing him off. Seriously, what is this feeling?
The father and daughter pair walked in silence towards their table where her brothers and sister are already seated. Kaname is still comfortably seated with Takuma and Yuki whose blush has now thankfully subsided. He noticed that the seat dedicated to his twin is still empty. He wondered if he's still preparing. He wanted to know how that nightmarish game ended. It must be why he was late, he thought pityingly.

"Oh, that's right, otou-chan." Anne said when she spotted her silver haired sister currently drawing their aunt Yuki and uncle Taku who are engaged in a conversation with their chichiue, "I promised Suiren that you'll dance with her for the first two songs later." And promptly added when her father sent her a questioning look, "It's her reward for… err… being so behaved. Is it alright if you indulge her?" she asked pleadingly.

"I normally don't dance but it won't be a problem." He answered much to the beautiful brunette's delight.

"Thank you, otou-chan." She smiled while internally sighing in relief. She didn't even want to think what Suiren will do if ever she wasn't able to get what she was promised. She knew her otou-chal will not deny her or her sister anything they sorely want but she also knew how much he hates balls and dances in general so she's extremely grateful to her beloved silver parent. With this, she'll be able to uphold her reputation of not breaking her promises and continue to exploit, ehem, call favors on her beloved siblings.

Zero answered his eldest child's seraphic smile with a quiet one. It was only broken when he noticed the subdued atmosphere of the youngest brunette child. He can see Kaname glancing now and then towards the quiet pair of brunettes at the far side of the table, no doubt noticing the same thing though seemingly patient enough to wait until they come to him on their own. Zero, however, was not one to wait. "Is something wrong, Akira?" he asked as soon as he was seated between Anne and Kaname.

Akira made a face as he apparently moved his feet. Everyone, except the two pair of twins and Anne, looked at each other in question when a strange sound was heard, like metal chains clinking together with a hard clang on the marble floor. Ichijou inconspicuously raised the tablecloth to glance under the table. Emerald orbs blinked at the long metal shackles around one foot of each male brunette that bound them to a large metal sphere.

"Err, Akira-kun, Kohaku-kun? Why are you both wearing a ball and chain?"

"Eh?!" Yuki gasped before also slyly looking under the table to ascertain the truth while Kaname glanced around his children's faces to find two unaffected silverettes with an expression that suggested that it wasn't the first time it happened, a calm and resigned Kohaku drinking from his glass, a petulant and sulky Akira who looked affronted and wronged, and a defiant Anne whose pretty face was turned to the side as if avoiding impending scolding looks. The pureblood king instantly knew who the perpetrator was.

The silverette hunter must have also observed the same thing since he called her to it, "Anne?" his voice full of light castigation and gentle persuasion.

The little princess huffed and faced her parents, "But otou-chan, this is their punishment for tormenting me." She pouted with stubbornness in her hard amethysts.

"Akira? Kohaku?" Zero then turned to the twins who were both deep in thought as if considering the accusation. Their expression clearly told everyone that they may have indeed caused their sister some grievances. The older silverette could only shake his head.
Well, they did deliberately and determinedly hide from their sister but they didn't imagine her to be this hurt. Guilt flooded them at the thought. But it wasn't exactly the first time they did that, though it rarely happened because of such consequences. Still, she wasn't this angry at them then so something else must have angered her. Both brunettes suddenly remembered what happened when their sister cornered them.

After Akira innocently answered her strange question if he happened to give their Kaito-jiichan some presence concealing pills, she suddenly went ballistic. She immediately took out a blood stone to make sure these infernal chains would latch themselves around their feet the moment they sat down. Why?! Why was she so angry? Wasn't it kind of him to give her crush an incredibly useful and wonderful gift? Where did he go wrong with that? The younger twin lamented. Was it because it was a hush gift?

Meanwhile, Kohaku rightfully guessed what happened. She might have caught in the middle of a disgraceful act or something akin to that, he mused. Well, if that was the case then that would certainly explain everything. He has no doubt that it had been quite hilarious but he pushed those thoughts aside lest he let out the mirth that he suddenly felt and simultaneously aggravate his and Akira's situation. Instead, he looked at his sulking sister and apologized, "I'm afraid she's quite right, otou-chan. We might have unknowingly done something to wound our sister. Please accept our sincerest apologies, nee-chan. Please believe me, it was most unconsciously done. Rest assured that Akira and I will do everything in our power to salvage the situation."

Akira straightened his back at his brother's words. It must mean that Haku already found out what they did wrong. As expected of his twin! Yes! He only vigorously nodded in full agreement with Kohaku's promise and watched as their older sister briefly narrowed her eyes before sighing in resignation.

"I will hold on to that, my dearest brothers." Anne relented and willed the lock of the chains to come undone before opening a small space to put the metallic binds from whence they came. Well, if they really didn't plan that then it's fine. She wouldn't have easily forgiven them had it been deliberate. Perhaps, she was just truly unlucky. How unfortunate, "Now come relate your adventures after you abandoned me to my terrible fate." Kohaku gave her a small smile while Akira frowned in confusion but nevertheless obliged and animatedly related what they did earlier that day.

The mated pair smiled when they silently observed how their children easily mended their conflicts. They must be really close to be able to forgive and trust each other's claim so easily. Kaname reached out to his lover's hand under the table to give it a light squeeze to make his happiness and pride of having raised their children well known to his hunter.

Zero turned to him, silver brows crumpling in amusement, with a half-smile, completely understanding the message. It seems they weren't half-bad. "Care to tell us what all of that was about?" Zero turned back to the brunettes.

Anne turned back to him, giving him a dainty sniff as if the question and reminder was enough to bring tears to her eyes, before suddenly slumping all dramatically on the table with her forehead on her folded arms.

"…That bad, huh?"

"Oh, otou-chan! It was-," she started but suddenly straightened herself when she heard the music played, amethysts orbs no longer holding any hint of earlier lamentation or distress as bright hope filled her eyes. Her expression made a hundred-eighty degrees turn. They didn't notice the awarding ceremony was already over which signaled the start of the much awaited moment of this evening. The dance! She must definitely score a dance with Kaito-san! By hook or by crook!
Determined lavender eyes met two pairs of encouraging wine filled ones. Both brothers nodded at her in silent support for tonight's obvious goal.

One by one, noisy sounds of chairs being dragged against the marble floor resounded inside the whole venue as gentlemen stood up to ask their ladies for a dance while the female student body held their breath while waiting, internally wishing their desired partners to ask them.

Several eyes belonging to hopeful individuals followed the handsome Night class men and the silver prefect, wishing with all their might that their allure and bright dresses have made the right impression to entice any of them. They sucked their breaths when the Night class president, one who was known for his rare participation in dancing, suddenly stood up with the equally dreamy and seemingly reluctant silverette prefect beside him but they all slumped dejectedly when the two said Adonis went towards the newest members of the Night class.

Kaname took his hesitant lover with him, a hand on his back so all the eyes which are undoubtedly closely watching their every action won't see, to ask their two beautiful princesses to a dance. Kaname asked Anne which was graciously accepted while Zero went to fulfill his promise to the expectant silverette whose face reflected complete joy at his approach. He watched as the Night class men around followed and ask for the Night class ladies for a dance, much to the female Day class students' dismay.

A stifled commotion erupted when Takuma asked for Yuki's hand, her becoming the first Day class student to be asked by a Night class student, which was blushingly received while Ruka accepted Kain's invitation, ignoring the desperate and disappointed look from a certain brown haired male Day class student. Shiki, of course, went to stand by his obvious partner, Rima, who silently took his offer.

Silent sighs escaped from the remaining three royals while they debated asking anyone for a dance for they were repeatedly told by their sister that not asking any ladies without a partner to dance when they're free is terribly ungentlemanly which was something she vehemently hammered in their young heads never to attempt. Well, at least not in her presence. This is why being in their true forms was the best, especially in occasions like this, for then they'll have an excuse for not participating. Still, opting to torture their feet rather than upset their eldest sister, all three hesitantly stood up, feeling the pressure of several eyes from the Day and Night class female students following their every move.

Kohaku's eyes roamed around the room, careful not to meet anyone's scrutiny lest he awakened some hope in them, when they fell on the silent and genteel light haired girl who they only met as an old woman in the future. He smiled and was about to step towards aunt Sayori when he was mystified by the silver strands that suddenly obscured his view and found his youngest brother already inviting her to a dance. Oh well, there's nothing for it. He would have asked aunt Seiren instead but she appeared to be nowhere inside the academy. He caught his twin brother's regard, unwillingness displaying in his auburn orbs before sighing again and went away to wherever in search of a partner.

After the wonderful dance with her dearest chichiue, Anne quickly set her plan in motion. Reddish-amethyst orbs scanned the crowd of people in colorful dresses and expensive suits for the sight of a certain tall hunter, pointedly not meeting anyone's regard so as to lessen the danger of getting interrupted from her important hunt. She felt troubled that not even her superior senses made the search any easier. It reawakened the idea of punishing her little brother even just for another minute. Really, Akira! She sighed in resignation while taking fast but graceful steps, darting her eyes here and there though still trying to appear nonchalant as to not give her present feelings away.
"And who are you looking for, brat?"

The cool husky voice of the hunter she's been trying to ambush startled her. Anne immediately turned around to find Kaito looking at her as if she's acting suspicious, his hands in his pockets.

"Kaito-san," She breathed in relief at finally finding him. Really, why is Akira's blood pills' effect spanned to 24 hours? It's quite vexing not being able to feel that welcomed presence. Kaito-san must be forever banned from ever using Akira's abilities! "I was looking for you."

Kaito frowned even more at the girl's answer. Taking a deep breath as he watch her come near where he stood, determined not to be swayed by her smile. Not that he was ever swayed by that smile, of course. It's only a precautionary measure.

"I… only wish to apologize for the unsightly behavior on my part earlier, Kaito-san." Anne started, her heart in her throat as she gathered all her courage to ask him to just one dance. Social etiquette and lady's graceful patience be damned. This is true love and it superseded all rules and codes of conduct in the universe. "I wonder if-,

"Kuran-san? Dance with me, please."

Both brunettes turned to look at the voice filled with certainty to find a rather good-looking Day class student with a gallant hand outstretched in eagerness.

Severe hazel orbs narrowed at the screaming pompousness in those dark grey orbs of the young man and haughty way he carried his obviously expensive suit. Kaito had to wonder where the little twerp got his overwhelming self-confidence when his mug resembles a butthole.

Delicate dark eyebrows slightly met at the untimely interruption and ungentlemanly invitation directed to her. Part of her admires his courage and confidence for asking her, another pities his unlikable lack of tack and smugness that might have caused him no small degree of dislike, though a bigger portion of her just wanted to violently kick him out of the room and resume to where she left off. But her intentions would be too obvious if she were to decline then ask the hunter for a dance instead. It's like announcing that she only wanted him as her partner and regardless of the truth, that level of vulgarity in a lady is unsightly. She damaged her own image quite enough already. Her desires didn't make her desperate yet. Well, not that desperate. She'll just try again later. She inaudibly sighed before swallowing a merciless rejection and readied a smile she didn't feel like providing. A courteous hand rose to resignedly accept the offer when the two teenagers got startled by another hand that snatched hers.

"Kaito-san?"

"S-sensei?"

"Sorry kid but this chick owes me."

Stunned amethyst orbs followed the light brown mane and perfect profile of the hunter before it fell on the hand around her own which dragged her in the middle of the dance floor, farther away from the poor man whose hand was still raised uselessly. Anne gaped in disbelief, her heart already starting its own party inside her chest, unable to believe that her favorite hunter did what she dreamed of many times in the past. To sweep her off her feet with that charming audacity and daring personality that was just like him. She instantly felt extremely giddy and ridiculously happy for someone who was just forcibly dragged away. She can't help the smile that plastered itself on her face.
"You're that happy to get away from him?" Kaito asked once he finally faced his detainee after finding a less crowded spot on the floor, far, far away from the stink of that man's strong perfume.

The seraphic smile turned even more brilliant while answering, "Indeed, Kaito-san." They adjusted their intertwined hands and put her other hand on his shoulder to begin her first waltz with someone outside her family members. She reveled at the scorching sensation of his hand on her back, their hands together and the fabric underneath her palm.

"If you didn't like him then don't accept his offer, moron." The hunter didn't understand why she would even consider going with that jerk. Really, even just the thought of it was already too annoying.

"I figured it would be too rude."

"That's a stupid reason."

His words were only replied with a chuckle from the princess in his arms. She must be wearing high heels because her face was even closer to his than when he accidentally hugged her. And Kaito was not really observing, it was just noticeable how her eyes seemed to have a red tinge mixed with lavender making them quite alluring, how her lips was almost shaped like a bow and how she was not wearing any jewelry unlike many students from the Day class and some of the noble Night class making her the most curious spoiled brat he has ever met. There's also that familiar scent he can smell on her that he somehow can't remember, not that he's distracted or anything.

Kaito stared at her as she did to him, because of course they're dancing and definitely not because they're in a trance, and found that he preferred her child form. At least it's easy to remind himself that she's just a brat. Not that he needed to be reminded for any reason other than…so…he won't tease her too much. Yeah, whatever. Why must he even explain his own thoughts? And to himself? It's not like he needed to convince his own mind of anything. Really, he's being ridiculous.

"I'm surprised that you know how to dance, Kaito-san."

"Don't freaking insult me, brat. Just don't twirl or you'll have to say goodbye to your feet."

Quiet laughter filled their detached space and the world vanished around them. No sly glances, change of music, slight bumps with the other couples or even a venomous glare from a certain silverette hunter managed to break that remarkable moment in the princess' evening.

"He's leaning too close." Zero hissed under his breath. His eyes narrowed while watching his eldest daughter and the apprentice instructor from his position in the dark, wide veranda of the ballroom, his back leaning on the stone railings. His words were answered with a smile from his only companion. He turned to surprisingly find a rather soft expression on the vampire king's face. Zero thought Kaname would be the first to voice out his disapproval on his daughter's obvious feelings but so far, he heard not one word of opposition regarding the matter. His thoughts must have travelled through their bond as russet orbs shortly met his regard.

"I trust her choice. Our daughter is a smart girl; I know she thought about this very carefully." Kaname offered very quietly. There is still some concerns left for he well knew the thorny path ahead of her but he also knew that if her feelings are true, nothing can make her feel otherwise. He'll only make a move to stop it should there be evidences of the hunter's disinterest. So far though, there doesn't seem to be any danger of that if the way those hazel eyes looked at her lavender ones intently was any indication. Despite the lack of disapproval, it's needless to say that he won't let him make any step until the right time has come. Kaname had to wonder about the future of the tall hunter. It could only mean one thing and he can't help but worry about how that will come to be. He looked at
his silver hunter and the tattoo decorating his neck. A thorny path indeed.

The pureblood forced the dismal thoughts away and instead focused on lighter subjects. He chuckled when he heard an annoyed huff from his lover and found a fierce scowl, which still failed to mar his handsome features despite its intensity, at his response to his earlier words. He was about to say something to somewhat mollify his lover when he felt the presence of his old friend coming closer to them. Only after a minute, the overly cheerful headmaster came flitting in.

"Oh my, Kaname-kun, son, what are you doing here outside?" he asked once he joined the couple.

"I was just standing guard here so no one will try and escape by jumping off this balcony." Kaname answered amiably before glancing towards the silver prefect who in turn avoided the chairman's look. He fought a smile when he saw a pale ear fast turning red. After dancing with Anne, he quickly positioned himself at the balcony for he well knew that was where his hunter will head as soon as he finished dancing with their youngest daughter. He was proven right for not even a minute after the second song ended and the hunter was replaced by their oldest son, Zero came barreling out of the room and into the veranda only to stop when he saw him there.

"Really now, son! Why would you even try to do that? It's not good for my granddaughter!" the ex-hunter passionately admonished, having no trouble understanding what happened. After all, Zero successfully escaped all the other events he forced him to attend before, already satisfied in circling the building and avoiding the overall occasion. "It's even your class that won! Isn't it because of you and Ichiru?"

"Shut up, chairman." Zero growled, irritated now that he remembered how his attempt to desert the ball was curbed by the pureblood bastard. He wanted to point out that he wasn't about to jump and that he's sensible enough to use the stairs but he didn't think that would make much difference and he's sure that he'll still be hearing about this from the chairman for at least a week. It's really troublesome. He just wanted to make an appearance to keep the irksome blond off his back but apparently, it's all for naught because Kaname just have to tell on him like the asshole that he is. He was only further annoyed when his glare was answered by an indulgent smile from the said bastard. He knew it's useless to even try to spook Kaname so he just addressed his adoptive-father who was still bemoaning his son's hard-heartedness instead. "Did you come here for a reason?"

"I was just looking for my beautiful daughter and granddaughters so I can dance with them." Kaien animatedly answered while putting on a dreamy expression.

Zero frowned as his eyes promptly returned to the lively assembly inside. Those three should be easy enough to spot since they have beauty and aura that seems to hold gravity that all eyes can't help but find. True enough, he was able to easily locate Yuki who's still merrily dancing with Ichijou-senpai, Suiren who's now partnered with her twin brother and, he grunted, Anne who's still dancing with a certain infuriating hunter. The chairman must be losing his touch to have missed them.

Kaien sent a meaningful look towards the vampire king while his son was distractedly looking inside the room. Kaname's expression hardened for he had no trouble understanding the headmaster's message. He nodded after carefully schooling his expression.

"Yuki's over there." Zero pointed, completely missing the brief exchange. He contemplated whether pointing out Anne's position instead but thought better of it. Seeing her smile like that, guess he can cut them some slack. But only for tonight.

The blond broke into a squeal before marching away towards the female brunette. Zero felt only a tiny bit guilty at that but surely, it's nothing she can't handle. Better her than Suiren. Lavender eyes once again found the silver pair slowly dancing among the crowd and had to wonder where his own
silver twin was at.

"Where's Ichiru?"

"All the elders have arrived, my lord."

The cold and severe eyes of one Ichijou Asato met the bowing form of his servant who just made the announcement. "So they have." He muttered to himself and ignoring his attendant, and he promptly made his way to the large assembly room where the council of ancient awaits.

About 20 heads belonging to some of the most influential and oldest noble families turned to him the moment he entered the room. The air was strained and heavy as the intimidating aura of the aristocrats filled the room. Some showing discontent at being summoned so hastily when they're about half a world away.

"Why did you ask for an assembly of the council, Ichiou?" One of the noble asked as soon as he was seated.

"Indeed, what is so important that you'd ask for our attendance in such short notice?" Inquired another.

"It's fortunate that I was already preparing my trip here for the Winter Solstice, though this is much too early than my scheduled arrival."

It was all the council head could do not to show his irritation at the loud inquiry. If he didn't have any use for these old fools, he wouldn't have bothered contacting them. "I have important news for all of you, my friends." He started, putting his chin on top of his intertwined hands while wearing an expression that suggested that the nature of their discussion is indeed of an extremely important nature.

When all the elders' eyes and focus are on him, he announced, "The true king has been revived. The time for the vampires' reign has come."

A rare, quiet smile from the stern old aristocrat appeared as the plan to overthrow the weakened monarchy was discussed and preparations were arranged.

A war is coming.
Wise men said that half of one’s life will be full of sadness while the other half will be abundant with happiness. That in every miserable happening, there would be some miracles and bliss, and that the sun will shine even after the darkest night. Very positive and uplifting but it cannot be forgotten that it could be reversed as well. That after every bright day will come the dawn of the blackest night. That if there’s an up, there’s a down and after the fun of the cultural festival, there’s the nightmare of the term exams.

Yuki groaned. She didn’t know how many times she did it that evening but she can’t help but repeat it, hoping the world will find pity in her circumstances. Chocolate orbs resentfully stared at the several reference materials and notes spread in front of her. Ah, it’s dizzying. No matter what she does, she cannot, for the life of her, burn the symbols, numbers and incomprehensible words in her mind.

What did she do to deserve this torture? She thought miserably as she closed her eyes to deny the horrifying view before her and tiredly held her head between her hands.

“Argh…”

Russet orbs wearily opened to find her faithful silver companion doing the same thing. Ichiru seemed to have ruffled his hair one too many times if his messy hair was any indication. She heard him groan again and she felt somehow relieved to know that she’s not the only one miserable in this particular situation.

“Aren’t we in the middle of a war? Why do we still have to take tests?” Yuki groaned, totally disregarding the fact that such a question didn’t grace her lips when she was busy fussing about her love life and having fun at the school festival.

The silverette mirrored her groan before answering, “It’s the chairman… He wants everything to appear normal…” He moaned pitifully again before continuing, “He said it will appear weird to the students if things didn’t proceed as it should… He said to hold off until the winter break… winter break… shit… the winter break is still so fucking far away…” They should just close off the academy immediately. Though there hasn’t been any attack as of late nor was there a successful one before, it’s kind of risky to keep the students here. He understood the trouble it will have in their normal life especially when they have no idea what’s going on and when the academy could possibly open again, but it still wasn’t enough to motivate him regarding their present concern.

“True…” the brunette faithfully answered back in a voice full of death.

“We’re home!” the headmaster’s jovial voice resounded from the main entrance. It seems that they’re finally back from Zero’s bi-weekly check-up.

Yuki frowned when she saw Ichiru visibly stiffen and heard his steadily raising heartbeat. She asked him, “Hey, Ichiru, are you-,” but her worried inquiry was cut by the older silverette who just entered the living room where the two decided to bully their brains.

“Ichiru, you’re here.”

“Ah! Ichiru-kun!” the chairman immediately cried passionately when he saw the younger silverette, “Where were you last night? How could you ditch your papa’s most important event?!”

Ichiru steadily paled as his very own silver bullet and golden canon fired at him while a hand
unconsciously covered the base of his throat where a large band aid is plastered over Hana’s bite marks. Shit, he still hasn’t thought of a logical excuse.

“Did anything happen to you?”

“N-nothing.”

“Spill it.”

He took a deep breath, “Really, nothing happened.” He repeated more resolutely, fear making him more convincing much to his own surprise.

“Tell me the truth.”

“Oh?” Incredulous lilac eyes met suspicious lilac eyes. How can he even tell? *That’s my best performance ever!* His question must be plastered on his pale forehead since Zero answered him.

“You have your ‘lying’ face on.”

“Ugh.” Ichiru groaned, averting his gaze once again while the chairman and his brother continued to interrogate him.

Yuki smirked when the other two crowded around the poor prefect. *Oh, so that’s what it is.* The brunette mused, already having an inkling regarding the reason for his absence. She was still contemplating whether to help her dearest brother or snatch this chance to tease him mercilessly when a series of fast actions easily made the decision for her.

Just when he’s about to burst because of nerves, Ichiru’s instincts must have kicked off and in response to his fight or flight dilemma, panic gave his long legs enough power to suddenly jump out of his seat and run. Unfortunately, his battered brain cells have also completely forgotten that he’s facing two well-known hunters whose abilities far surpassed his own.

Both Kaien and Zero reacted fast to Ichiru’s sudden action and they seem to share the same thought of grinding the silverette for answers as both reached out at the same time. Each hand landed on Ichiru’s either shoulder which they yanked at to prevent his leaving. Their action damaged the youngest’s shirt and ripped most of the poor shirt’s button, leaving Ichiru almost half-naked.

“What-,” the younger silverette sputtered, stumbling a bit. A surge of irritation filled him and he whirled back to the two once recovered only to find them quite frozen. Ichiru frowned, “What?”

They blinked before turning away with Zero sighing and the headmaster covering his face. The mystery was only solved when Yuki, who’s wearing a smug look even while blushing, openly leered at him and pointed at something on his back, “Those,” she said not as a question, “are not insect bites.”

Ichiru instantly knew what they could have seen since he also caught sight of them in the mirror just that morning. Hot flush instantly covered his pale skin as he fearfully looked back to this brother and guardian but instead of the frightening explosion he was expecting, lilac orbs was only greeted by the sight of the two hunters covering their faces as if embarrassed. Before any words were said, the blond ex-hunter run out of the room but not before shouting at the top of his lungs that “P-papa will always support you, Ichiru-kun!”

Zero, on the other hand, removed his hand and simply sighed as if exhausted and said in a resigned tone, “Make good life choices, Ichiru.”
That was all and he trudged out of the room and perhaps, towards the kitchen in search for his stress-reliever; strawberries with cream, cheese and peanut butter. The angry litany and threats to his lover which he was expecting never came and he wondered if it’s only the calm before the storm. It didn’t look like it though.

“Wow, you got off unexpectedly easy, huh?” Yuki finally broke the silence, blinking large chocolate orbs in wonder, before turning to her only companion who’s still frowning at the door. To be sure, the headmaster would probably go back sometime to say something moronic but that’s not a problem, she was expecting Zero to immediately launch an attack at the blond vampire but seeing him deflated like that, she doubted it. *Ah, must be the hormones.* She decided finally after finding no other logical explanation to the underwhelming development. “Well, aren’t you glad, Ichiru-kun?” she let out in a sing-song voice while clapping a hand on the male prefect’s back.

The silverette scowled in return and hissed, “You’re enjoying this, aren’t you?!”

“Eh? Of course not. You know I’m on your side.”

“Say that again once you’ve wiped off that smirked from your face.”

“Eh? I don’t know what you’re talking about. This is my default expression.”

The silverette only heaved a huge sigh before fixing his shirt and flopping back on his seat. Argh, he’s tired. Lilac eyes looked back at the pureblood when he heard a chuckle and found her smiling genuinely. “What?”

“Nothing. I’m just glad. You seem better.” Yuki sincerely offered. The gloom surrounding her adoptive-brother’s aura in the past few days didn’t escape her notice but seeing him now, she knew that was taken care of and that something good happened to him.

Ichiru averted his gaze to look down on his study materials. “Y-yeah.” He nodded, slightly coloring, “Thanks, Yuki.”

The pureblood princess was still nodding happily when thoughts of likely antagonists in the form of the Day class students intruded in her mind. She, herself, was ambushed by a rabid mob of Ichijou-senpai’s fans but even though she was quite overwhelmed at first, she was able to stand her ground even with all the loud shouting torturing her hyper-sensitive ears and proudly declared that yes, she’s going out with Ichijou-senpai and no, she doesn’t have any intention of breaking up with him no matter how much they threaten her or how shameless they claimed her to be. She daresay that she did a very good job of facing them all that even Yori-chan, who was with her the first time, was impressed. But really, she cannot let herself be overwhelmed by the Day class students anymore for she has a bigger fish to fry in the name of that old coot, Asato, who’s trying to poison her boyfriend’s mind and attach strings to him like a puppet. So yes, not losing out now.

However, while Ichijou-senpai’s fan-base is large considering that he’s the perfect prince charming, it’s surely nothing compared to the sheer number of fans Aido-senpai must have. The pureblood her, no matter how brief, was already overwhelmed just by that number, how much more for Ichiru who may be facing half the female student body as his enemy? Seeing no visible scratches and wounds on him didn’t snuff the unease building up inside her. “Hey, how are you this morning?! Are you okay?! Were you ambushed by Aido-senpai’s fans?! Did anyone threaten you?!” Yuki interrogated, internally berating herself for remembering that important piece of fact just then.

Curiously, Ichiru’s reaction was unexpectedly lame and without distress. “Hmmm? Oh, that.” He stated in a voice that also seems to wonder, “Err, I’m okay… I guess?”
“What do you mean?” Yuki incredulously asked. It can’t be that the incident yesterday went unnoticed. More than a dozen groups barraged her for answers just last night!

“Huh… I wonder…” the silverette only murmured as light lilac eyes got fogged by the memories of the incident that happened that morning.

He knew that though everything between him and Hana are at least pretty much settled, an incoming storm in the name of Hana’s fan girls are still at bay. Even with the fact that his school life has most definitely been thrown into disarray, the knowledge of Hana’s love and acceptance gave him far more courage than he thought possible for him to possess in his lifetime. And so, with just a bit of trepidation for he’s sure to find his locker glued shut or packed with mud, his shoes missing or filled with insects and his desk vandalized or squarely chucked out of the window, he still went to face the inevitable chaos. However, instead of finding himself the target of horrifying bullying like in mangas and anime, he found his locker closely guarded by a dozen or so female students wearing headbands and carrying pink banners that read something that resembled ‘Hanaichi for Life’. What the hell? The silverette was instantly immobilized by shock and confusion. He could have sworn that he recognized some of them belonging to the large anime club and the infamous drama club that are known for their queerness.

To say that the silver prefect was surprised was an understatement. He was so stunned that he’s numb and speechless and not even their high-pitched exclamations at spotting him could shake him from his trance. He didn’t even notice when his bag was snatched from him and his leather shoes were replaced by his clean indoor school shoes and was promptly dragged, almost carried, by the happy mob while a few appeared to have stayed behind to still guard his locker and leather shoes.

The scene they happened upon inside their classroom was even more astounding. He was almost able to make out the background from wild, wild west with pistols and cowboy hats on the two opposing sides who were having a glaring contest around his desk which, he numbly noted, is still clean and scribbled-free.

“I said do not interfere.”

“And I said stop these childish pranks.”

“This has nothing to do with all of you!”

“Yes, and you all have nothing to do with Aido-senpai and Ichiru-kun’s relationship as well!”

“W-what did you say? We’re Aido-senpai’s most loyal fans!”

“So? That doesn’t give you any right to bully his boyfriend!”

“Wha-! H-hey, i-it’s not confirmed!”

“Oh please, we both know that you’re all here because you know it to be true.”

The group of girls who’re clearly against his and Hana’s relationship flinched and fell into a defeated silence. Silver lavender orbs cast their gaze down, unable to face the torment he has brought upon the creatures whose seemingly questionable actions were surely only caused by broken hearts. While he knew that it’s not his fault, he can at least sympathized with them, having felt the same strong feelings towards the blond noble and maybe, would have expressed the same bitterness at the knowledge of his loving another person besides himself. Yes, he can sympathize with them. He’s the lucky one but in a sick twist of fate, he could have been one of them.

“I’m sorry.” He found himself saying.
His voice, in the midst of tense silence, carried through all the occupants of the room despite its softness. All eyes were upon the silver prefect in an instant. The angry female horde quickly made a move towards him but his seeming allies beat them to it and were around him as if to shield him from any in-coming attack.

“You didn’t need to apologize, Ichiru-kun. You’re not at fault here.” said the young woman who was speaking opposite the angry girls earlier.

“No, I…” Ichiru begun and with the same conviction in having enough of running away, continued, “I’m not sorry that I’m going out with Hana but… I am sorry for hurting you all.”

Complicated expressions replaced the earlier angry glares as if unable to decide what to feel any longer. Only a brief and tense silence followed before a quiet voice belonging to one Wakaba Sayori, who’s standing quietly by Yuki’s empty desk, put a stop to the drama.

“I think this is enough from all of you.” She voiced in an even tone that is neither mocking nor scolding, “You shouldn’t take it out on Ichiru-kun that Aido-senpai chose him above anyone else. You also cannot forget that it may be Aido-senpai who fell in love first and as such, you may be ruining his chance to happiness by trying to force them apart. I don’t think senpai will be pleased with you cornering Ichiru-kun like this.”

Several lips tightened into a grimace and without any more words, the early angry mob of girls filed out of the room. The sea of people outside watching the commotion parted to give them way.

Wakaba Sayori only sighed, hazel orbs quietly following the retreating students. When the last of the anti-party disappeared into the crowd in the hall, she turned to the silver prefect who’s also following the group with somber gaze. “I know there’s no need to say it since it’s Ichiru-kun but I hope you won’t take it against them.”

“Wakaba-san…” Ichiru uttered gratefully, lilac eyes finding the girl who can always be trusted to be a voice of reason and a much better source of sensible advice than his guardian or Yuki.

“Ichiru-kun!”

His attention was then snatched by the swarm of girls he didn’t notice were still surrounding him. The girl earlier, Tachibana, faced him with an odd sparkle in her eyes.

“Don’t mind! No matter what anyone says, know that we’re here to support you.”

Ichiru colored a bit. Oh yeah, everyone knows now and though it’s not unwelcomed, he didn’t know how to react to such strong support for it’s the least thing he expected especially from the female Day class students. He could only dumbly nod once and raise a hand in gratitude, “Ah, domo.”

Another girl, a short-haired blond named Suzuki from the class next door and a part of the literature club, snatched his raised hand and directed her also sparkling gaze at him and exclaimed, “I think it’s really cute, Ichiru-kun. I’ve been waiting for this kind of development! Can I write a story about you two?”

“Eh?”

“Ichiru-kun!” cried another while softly elbowing Suzuki out of the way and clasping both her hands in front of her as if in prayer, asked, “Can I take a picture of you two?”

“I want one too!” he heard another voice from behind him.
“Me too!”

“Hey, can I do an interview with you two for the school newspaper?!” requested the girl somewhere in his left.

The silverette’s head spun at the continuous flow of questions and requests from the enthusiastic girls. Surprisingly, the one who saved him and broke the happy bubble was a boy from his class, Nishimura.

“So you’re going out with Aido-senpai, Ichiru? Why didn’t you tell us? Aren’t we best buddies?” he smiled good-naturedly while grabbing him by the neck in a friendly way, simultaneously whisking him away from the girls near him.

The girls’ violent disapproval at the untimely interruption was left unheard when another boy belonging to another class and was in Ichiru’s class during middle school came up to them and also nudge the silver prefect, “Ichiru! I heard you’ve confirmed your relationship with that blond senpai? That’s brave, man! Congratulations!”

From then, the female students were steadily replaced by the male ones offering their congratulations and commending his courage in declaring his relationship with the Night class senpai. While Ichiru was relieved for being saved from the girls’ incessant requests and inquiries about his relationship, he cannot fathom the easy acceptance from his male schoolmates. To be sure, he expected the hatred from the female student body to be something like never was seen before but while he didn’t know exactly how the male students will take it, expected at least some mockery and/or overall evasion from them. After all, he’s a dude going out with another dude and the idea is not the norm. Yet, here he is, being bombarded not with insults but good-natured comments and encouragement.

He wasn’t left in suspense for too long, however, for one male student’s question easily answered the untold question of why.

“This means that you and Aido-senpai are no longer in the market, right?”

“Eh?”

“What are you talking about, Tadashi? Of course! Since they’re going out with each other!” answered Nishimura for him.

“That’s right, isn’t it, Ichiru?” asked another classmate rhetorically.

“I’m so glad! I mean…for you two!” voiced someone from his right. “Maybe, I can ask Maya-chan to go out with me instead of squealing for senpai.” He added in a murmur that Ichiru still managed to catch clearly.

To Ichiru’s surprise, sentiments of the same kind kept on being mumbled around him and he can’t help feeling guilty when he heard several pitiful sobs saying something to the effect of “maybe my girlfriend will actually have a date with me instead of waiting to be Ichiru-kun’s date.”

The words of apologies he would have uttered to these men didn’t quite escape his lips for the ladies then pushed the boys away.

“You’re bothering Ichiru-kun!”

“Hey, we’re not! In fact, we’re going to support him and protect him from senpai’s angry fan-girls!”

“No need! We’re the ones who’ll do that!”
“Hey Tachibana! Why don’t we do it together?”

“Shut up!”

“Maya-chan, why don’t we take Ichiru and Aido-senpai’s pictures together?”

“Let’s ask Aido-senpai for that interview, Sakura-san!”

“Should I lend you my laptop to write your stories, Suzuki-san?”

The myriad of offers from the male students and refusal from the female were only broken when their homeroom teacher, who sent the students from other class away and reminded them of the duties for the morning and the upcoming term exams, finally entered the room. After finishing their duty of cleaning after the festival in which his was made easy by everyone trying to help him out, they were let out very early for the day.

Ichiru recounted the eventful morning to Yuki who can’t seem to stop laughing at the unexpected turn of the much feared episode. She deeply regretted not being able to witness that with her own eyes since she was trapped by a different group of fan-girls for questioning at the girl’s bathroom, empty classroom, garden and later, on the rooftop. Really, how funny but she’s greatly relieved to hear that this incident was closed, at least for now, in a relatively peaceful manner.

“What about you?”

“Huh?”

“Did you experience any bullying?” the silverette asked quite seriously. He heard this morning that someone saw Ichijou-senpai and Yuki walk around the festival and dance at the banquet. Many wondered about their relationship as well. Seeing that Yuki didn’t attend the whole homeroom, he worried that she was caught by trouble and was waiting for her to open up but decided to simply ask directly since they’re in the topic anyway.

Yuki smiled, completely understanding the obvious reason for his worry. “Of course!” she gleefully confirmed while raising a peace sign with her hand. How could she not be when she has a best friend in Yori-chan who thoughtfully stood by her locker in order to guard it and later her desk when she was called out the second time by the girls from another class. She even offered to go with her again but she assured her that she’ll be fine like the first time. Ah, she didn’t know what she did in her past life to deserve such a great friend but she’s thankful all the same. Hopefully, the earlier encounters with Ichijou-senpai’s fans are enough to end that farce since she’ll feel bad for always troubling Yori-chan.

“That’s good to hear.” Ichiru sighed but seemingly not out of relief.

“What’s wrong, Ichiru?” Yuki frowned at her adoptive brother’s odd expression given the happy news.

“It’s just that I have a bad feeling.”

“Why?”

“You see…”

He begun to relate certain questions that came from a hopeful looking female and male student just before they were all chased out of the room.
“Ichiru-kun, is Kiryū-san still single?”

“Ichiru, is there any possibility that Kiryū-kun swing the same way?”

Both questions were left unanswered as both were immediately kicked out by his homeroom teacher but the creeping feeling that his brother is only going to experience annoyance and trouble from here on kept nagging at the back of his mind.

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Quiet but purposeful footsteps resounded in the hall leading to the Cross Academy’s headmaster’s room where the lone creature in white uniform is intending to go to. The pureblood made his way slowly and despite the trepidation about the news the chairman seems to have gotten his hands on, his expression still displayed that same indifference, not betraying an ounce of his present feeling. While the news is yet to be determined as bad, he doubted anything could be good considering the present circumstances.

Kaname heard two heartbeats from inside the headmaster’s office. One, he noted, was beating erratically, signifying distress. It was soon accompanied by abrupt movements and some violent stirrings then followed by the quick and heavy footsteps of the other occupant of the room. Kaname was then greeted by a terribly flushed Ichiru who looked positively harassed. He would have inquired about the young silverette’s well-being but the poor blushing prefect merely run passed him as if unable to bear being near that office and his guardian any longer.

The pureblood was not left in suspense of the possible reason for Ichiru’s quick departure for upon entering the room, after a short signal knock, he found the chairman quietly hunched on the floor, seemingly picking up small sachets he immediately recognized as condoms. Kaname didn’t know if he should feel pity or amusement towards the poor silverette who was obviously given, or attempted to, the talk. By the look of quiet fondness and slight amusement on the ex-hunter’s face, he at least enjoyed the little badgering he did.

When smiling hazel eyes met quiet auburn ones, Kaien immediately took on a look of utter lamentation and sniffed unconvincingly, “Ne, listen to this, Kaname-kun. That Ichiru-chan threw this at me!” he cried passionately to the apathetic pureblood, “Even though I was merely concerned.” Kaien continued to sob while placing the box of condom on his desk, “You know, I don’t blame you or Zero-kun for what you did, but I just thought it will be better for my children to know about such important matters early on.” The blond then gasped as if an important thought just crossed his brilliant mind, “How should I talk to Yuki-chan about this? Ah! How about we arrange it in a classroom? Even though it’s late, you can still join my children, Ichijou-kun and Aido-kun in this class! This way, it won’t be awkward!” he merrily offered before sitting down on one of the couches in the middle of the room.

All the while, detached sienna eyes merely followed the headmaster’s movements, not showing any inclination of joining for the sake of amusement or agreement. He sat down opposite the blond and continued to stare impassively, as if waiting for the arrival of the sane acquaintance he came there to meet.

“Why is everyone being so un-cute?” Kaien sob after a minute when his passionate idea was only met by ice cold burgundy stare.
“…………”

“I understand, Kaname-kun. I’ll stop so please don’t look at me that way. That stare of yours hurt.” Kaien finally said after a full minute under the distant stare of the vampire king. He cleared his throat awkwardly before seriously regarding the pureblood. “Well, Kaname-kun, thank you for coming. I understand that it’s too early but I thought you must know this as soon as possible.” he said in a serious voice that was very far from his earlier tone while minding the tablet in his hands.

The chairman then handed him the device that shows an image of an ostentatious foreign car. Based on the angle and color of the photo, it obviously was taken stealthily in the middle of the night. He swiped to the next image and found a face that he still recognized despite the darkness of the photo.

“Michaela Xerces, a member of the Council of Ancient.” Kaname whispered more to himself. Kaien nodded in affirmation. Surely his friend is still familiar with the members of the Vampire council despite his retirement.

The next images showed all the council members arriving and then a photo of the building where all the elder vampires went to. He instantly recognized the mansion as one of the old, almost forgotten, properties of the Ichijous.

These images alone were no reason for any concern since the council always convene in the head’s, Asato’s, mansion. However, the fact that they chose not to announce their presence to their king is troubling. Before this, the council members would always and without fail let their king know that they’re in the country in hope that he’ll grace them with a courtesy call.

Burgundy eyes narrowed at the next image of an androgynous beauty alighting from a black vehicle. The color of his eyes and his light hair that was partly tied up was completely indistinguishable in the darkness of the moonless night. He only saw him once or twice but he can still remember him and he has no intention of soon forgetting the face who just recently made Kaname’s ‘to kill’ list for what he has done to his mate.

The Hunter Association’s president.

“I take it there was no news of an official meeting on your side either.” Kaname uttered, his voice cold.

“None.”

Despite the treaty and promise of peace, both the vampire and the hunter societies do not meet to have tea parties together. They still look at each other with mistrustful eyes. All meetings between their races were announced and prepared for so in case that the other group did anything untoward, like say annihilating the other party, the opposition could retaliate immediately. Announcements were made to protect them and to make sure that both parties will not act in a way that will taint their race’s reputation and dignity.

There’s no need to think too deeply on how suspicious a secret meeting between these two powerful factions in the dead of the night is, especially one that is hidden from the Vampire King himself.

“They seem to have forgotten to send me an invitation as well.” He smiled mirthlessly.

Kaname had hoped to address the issue against the Hunter’s Association president after crushing the corrupted Vampire Council. It seems that he got his work cut out for him. Still, it’s much better than being struck at when he least expect it from an unforeseen direction.

He already had suspicion of who is aiding his uncle. After all, he long knew that the head of the
council never had and never will be working for his sake. His position never blinded him of who his enemies are. This discovery only strengthened his decision to do what he knew he should have done a long time ago. Nay, it only gave him concrete reason that will be accepted even by the most hypocritical vampire. While he knew that he can do whatever he wants and no one save for his uncle and his pawns will really challenge his authority and actions as the vampire king for his renowned strength, he never wanted to be an unreasonable and tyrannical ruler. His kind parents certainly weren’t like that and he didn’t want to do anything that would make them roll in their graves.

“Toga-chan sent me these photos after he called. It’s clear that they were having a negotiation.”

Hazel eyes intently gazed at the silent pureblood. His face didn’t crumple in rage and remained ethereal but the retired hunter knew the smoldering anger permeating the brunette’s very core as the increasingly dark, seething aura of power was slowly being imbued to the very air inside the room. His hackles rose at the threat that is the vampire king but forced himself to calm down and instead, continued, “Kaname-kun, Toga-chan was able to intercept an order meant for another hunter. Apparently, the association president ordered the hunters to organize for a possible attack in the latter part of December this year.”

“December 22nd, the Winter Solstice.” Kaname supplied the information that they both already know. Somber burgundy orbs tangled with equally somber hazel ones, “I understand. Thank you for letting me know such crucial information. I’ll make a plan with the Night class. I shall let you know of any plans we will come up to.”

“Please do, Kaname-kun. Toga-chan was sent on another hard assignment but we’ll make sure that both of us will be there during the Winter Solstice. We aren’t many but there are some hunters that I trust who will surely join us.” He imparted with determination, his expression turning lighter with hope.

The brunette nodded, finally allowing his heavy aura to recede. He stood up, sure that the conversation is over but just to make sure, still asked, “Is there any other thing that needed to be discussed?”

Kaien turned serious once more. “Yes.” He answered while intertwining his fingers together, “What time and date should we have that class about sex education?”

Before he even finished his question, the door closed with a quiet thud. Kaname had already left his old friend in delusion in the company of cold air.

“What are you doing here, nii-san?!”

Ichiru questioned his brother currently donning his own PE uniform. To normal students, this incredulous inquiry must be odd considering that the older Kiryū excels in all athletic activities and is a favorite when it comes to forming teams. Ichiru, however, knew that his brother, despite the lack of apparent roundness, is in lesser state than him to jump and run among their classmates.

“Shut up. I know.”

“No, you don’t!” the younger silverette all but shriek lest the other male students still in the locker room overhear their conversation. Already, some students kept on looking at their direction but he
suspects that a large part of it is due to the exposed upper body of his older brother. Oh man, he grimaced as the nagging feeling steadfastly form unwelcomed thoughts. “If Kaname-senpai even heard of your being here, inside this locker room and changing among the other male classmates, even more so, participate in the activities, sweating and clashing bodies with the other students, there’ll be hell to pay. Do you want our classmates to die?!” he hissed.

Instead of dignifying his actions with an answer, Zero only look at his younger twin with exasperated silver-lavender gaze. Why the hell mention Kaname every damn time? Is he everyone’s lord and master? The silverette internally snorted to himself. He, of course, knew the answer even while he asked himself but he really didn’t need to be reminded. He perfectly understood why he shouldn’t do any strenuous exercises. It’s for this very reason that he kept on ditching this subject when it comes to outdoor activities. It’s just that damn muscle-ly baldy, who’s currently filling up for their sick PE teacher and apparently noticed his frequent absences, caught him this morning. He’s still thinking up an excuse because it seems that not all teachers were informed and only Hinata knew that he won’t be participating in any outdoor activities for the rest of the school year. It’s the only reason he’s here and given the chance, he would have bolted right out if only that idiot Tanaka is not standing guard outside. He seems to have a personal vendetta against him if his actions were any indication.

Also, no matter how dense Ichiru and Yuki claimed him to be, even he can’t not notice the odd atmosphere of the whole student body as of late. Really, what a joke. Still, since the prank is just starting, he still has the patience to endure everything and ignore even the sticky stares he can currently feel. They should get bored soon. He just wished he can wriggle his way out of the incoming activity.

Zero straightened his back when he felt the aura of the most useful person nearby; the chairman. He quickly snatched his PE shirt and wore it fast, all the while ignoring Ichiru who’s still passionately enumerating the possible cataclysmic events that will befall them should the pureblood bastard found out about his current situation. He went out hurriedly; his twin, who thought he’s avoiding his scolding, was on his heels but he was only able to snatch a glimpse of the retreating blond. He would have followed him to ask his help in keeping the annoying teacher off his back when the voice of the said pest called out his name.

“Are you sick, Kiryū?”

“Huh?” Zero turned back. Ichiru mirrored his actions, a light brow arched in question.

“The chairman said not to let you participate in any strenuous activities for the rest of the year.”

For the first time in a long while, he suddenly felt respect towards their guardian who probably perceived his dilemma arising with the change of the current personnel. “Ah…” he mumbled in answer, “Yeah.” Nice thinking, chairman.

Midnight eyes narrowed suspiciously at him, “Are you really sick?” He repeated, even crossing his arms in an intimidating posture as if to scare the truth out of him, but it didn’t have any effect on the silverette.

“Eh?” he didn’t know if he should or should not be surprise that someone actually doubt Kaien’s words. Never mind that said someone is a teacher in the academy and the words came from the headmaster.

“Because the illness he mentioned was…a love bite.” he explained while arching a bushy eyebrow.

Cold south wind blew towards the twins but Zero can’t even feel the cold while dead fish eyes stared
unseeingly, unable to believe that he felt even a glimmer of respect towards someone who’d come up
with a reason like that.

Chairman, how embarrassing can you get?

Ichiru valiantly fought a burst of laughter that visibly shook his shoulders. He pursed his lips and
even pressed his blunt fingernails onto delicate skin to calm himself enough to say, “Ignore the
headmaster, sensei. I’m sure he’s just joking with you but nii-san is really in a very delicate condition
right now.” Zero threw an amethyst glare at him but Ichiru just ignored it and continued, “He was
diagnosed with weak lungs like me, so well, just as a precaution, you know. So it doesn’t escalate,
his’s not allowed to participate in strenuous exercises.”

“Hmmm...” Tanaka briefly stared at the silver prefects before putting a hand on Zero’s head as if
he’s a child and said, “I get it. You can just observe for now but don’t go out and play hooky.”

“Yeah, I know.” Scowled Zero, lightly slapping the teacher’s hand away.

“Yes, sir.” Ichiru answered more playfully and even saluted before following his brother to the gym.
This is not good. The younger silverette whispered to himself, the dreaded thoughts came back to
him. He knew that Tanaka teacher was an enemy amongst all the male students since he tends to
pick on all guys and is known to be disgusted by them, especially bishounen. He, himself, became
the target of his light power tripping back when he was still flirting with girls but he even patted
Zero’s hair. Lilac eyes surreptitiously glanced back only to see the confused look on the instructor’s
face as if completely baffled by his own actions. His eyes travelled to their surrounding and didn’t
even miss the way all the other students’ stopped on their way and follow them with their ardent
gaze. He doubt that was because of him for he knew that while he’s not as hated as he initially
thought he’d be, the knowledge of him dating another man, a student no other Day class student can
measure against, drastically lowered his value in the market. And together with the knowledge of his
brother’s natural beauty, his increasing charm because of his pregnancy and his overall effect on all
human and vampires alike, he can already tell that all the admiration is directed towards his brother. It
seriously wouldn’t bother him if it stopped at that but the heat in these star-filled gazes grew heavier
by the day and he’s afraid that they’ll start to act upon it.

Seems like a talk with his future brother-in-law is needed.

“Is Kaname-senpai already back at the Moon dorm?” Ichiru absentmindedly asked.

“Huh? Of course he’s at the Moon dorm. He should still be sleeping.” Zero answered without
stopping his brisk pace.

“Eh? But I saw him go to the chairman’s office this morning.”

“What?” long feet finally stopped walking in order to turn to the other silverette. “What was he doing
there?”

“Hmmm? I don’t know.” Ichiru answered honestly while barely containing his grimace at the
reminder of the content of his own tête-à-tête with their idiot guardian.

Zero frowned. Kaname didn’t mention any talk with the headmaster. While it could be about
anything, considering the brewing war, it surely wouldn’t be about the good old times. Could it be
that he’s hiding something?

Any grim ideas and suspicion screeched to a halt, however, when the shrilly voice of the pureblood
princess called out his name, demanded the reason for his attendance for that class and asked whether
he already lost his marbles or if he’s simply being an idiot. Like a rehearsed screen play, without
giving him a moment to explain, she also enumerated the chaos her dear onii-sama will lay on them
should he found out his participation in the gym activities.

Ten minutes later, after which Yuki berated them for not informing her immediately that her fears
were unfounded, amethyst orbs watched the game of volleyball their class is having unseeingly. All
that was reflected in his light eyes was his lover’s beautiful visage and the suspicion that he was
again stupidly keeping an important thing from him together with that even more moronic ex-hunter.

His gaze fell on the grey skies outside peeking through the small windows of the large gym hall from
his seat at the bench with Ichiru and idly wondered if a big storm is coming once again.

-Glowing blood red eyes stared unseeingly at the lavish flower arrangement of roses placed on a side
table in his study. Despite the cheery sunshine of the autumn morning, there was a dismal and
suffocating air inside the vampire king’s office.

It’s still quite early for their kind so the Moon dorm is still asleep save for him who’s contemplating
the demise of a loathsome relation and the repulsive ancient council members. It’s extremely
fortunate that he’s alone for he wouldn’t want his children to witness him in his murderous mood.

His solitude was impeded, however, when his loyal subject finally returned. He felt her presence
approach from behind him and stopped at the veranda just beside his room.

“Kaname-sama, I’ve returned.” She announced though she knew that her liege already sensed her
and despite the fact that Kaname’s back was on her, she still went on one knee in a respectful bow.

“Welcome back, Seiren.” The pureblood greeted back, fire red eyes still on the red petals of the
roses, “How was it?” he asked despite knowing the answer.

“I watched them, my lord. It is as you said.” Seiren confirmed.

“I see.” Kaname uttered, his voice cold and even. He already knew who’s behind those odious
coots’ movements. Though he knew that they’ll never be loyal to him, they still would not have
made a move without the assurance of a powerful pureblood who’ll give them what they’re all so
desperate to achieve, “It would have been nice if he had slept on forever.” He whispered. Blazing
ruby orbs watched while the previous grand flowers rapidly rotted. All former glory disintegrated to
ashes.

“There’s another matter, my lord. There have been some movements from the other vampire clans
not connected to Rido-sama… It seems that many clans have been amassing weapons and are
creating private armies.” Seiren informed grimly.

There was only silence for a moment before cracking sounds reverberated inside the darkening room
as fissures on the window panes and walls appeared.

How irritating.

‘Flies do love to play with the lion’s tail.’
While no big storm came to lay waste on their path, an even bigger pain in the ass disrupted his relatively peaceful days.

*This is extremely stupid.*

Something’s not right and Zero hated not fucking knowing what it is. There’s this nagging feeling at the back of his head that countless eyes were upon him for a few days already. But that was something he can still live with since he had spent a long time starting from their junior high up till now that they’re high school freshmen being glared by the whole freaking student body though these gazes seemed to be of different kind of heat. It doesn’t matter, he can still ignore it. What he can’t ignore was the humongous joke that has been playing on him since that nightmarish cultural festival. He can’t believe he’s already been called out numerous times by other Day class students for sudden confessions.

“Kiryū-san, please go out with me!”

“K-Kiryū-kun, I really l-like you, p-please go o-out with me!”

“I promise to behave from now on so please be my boyfriend!”

“Zero-sama, I love you!”

Grr! What’s wrong with them? And what’s even more disturbing was that it was from both girls and boys! What the fuck? Imagine his horror when a tall second year ambushed him on his way to the stables for his only haven left. He never thought that any normal human will ever cause him so much distress but when he suddenly grabbed his hands and said, “Zero-san, I’ve loved you since I saw you tame White Lily”, he thought he would have committed the first non-vampire murder that would send him to prison. He growled a vehement, “I’m gonna send you flying, you bastard” as an answer and walked away but perhaps that distaste was nothing compared to the revulsion he felt towards that deranged student who attacked him in the men’s restroom. To think that he would try to rape him, Kiryū Zero, of all people. Of course it was easily dealt with by a sharp knee in the nuts and an extra powerful punch on the face that left the poor bloke unconscious on the tiled floor.

But seriously, are they shitting him? Is the whole academy in on this joke? Because that was not the end of it. Students telling him lies and secret admirations kept popping out of nowhere like poison mushrooms everywhere. Zero’s patience steadily thinned at each freaking moment. Aren’t they fucking tired of this already? It’s not even funny. What the hell?

To Zero’s dismay another student, a blushing female this time, came out from behind a tree. He glared at her but though the young girl flinched a bit, it was not enough to scare her in to running and still said those damnable words.

They didn’t realize an anxious pair of blue eyes belonging to a meek girl with braided light brown hair watched them with nervousness from up the second floor, wishing with all her might that no one would yet win her savior’s heart.
Soft rustles of silent steps woke up the slumbering silver hunter. He made no move even when the silent movements can be easily mistaken as something made by burglar for he knew the heavenly scent that accompanied the sneak. Somnolent lilac eyes that can still clearly see despite the darkness and his sleepiness immediately zeroed to the door where the vampire king is watching him with that fond and quiet smile he always sees him wearing every time Kaname finds him sleeping in his room. If Zero wasn’t so sleepy, he would have rolled his eyes at him. Why would he look at him like that when the bastard should have expected it given the fuss he made to make him stay there every night? Geez, he’ll melt from all the sappiness.

“I’m sorry I woke you up.” Kaname apologized after kissing Zero’s hair. He simply chuckled when the hunter finally rolled his eyes at his action.

The silverette only grunted in response and would have dived right back to sleep to leave his vampire to dress up by himself when he remembered what his brother told him just that morning. He has yet to corner his mate and interrogate him about what he talked about with his idiot guardian because of the countless unwelcomed attention and intervention from the Day Class. He was only able to see Kaname during the cross-over.

The pale form on the bed sluggishly moved to sit down. Silver brows crumpled ever so slightly when he touched his middle only to be met by his ever so flat stomach. Damn it, the contradiction between what he can feel, see, and felt he should see is constantly giving him stress. It’s also been giving him a hard time finding his core of gravity. With his back on the headboard, he leisurely caressed his stomach and finally felt that spark of power, an evidence of the life inside him. He breathed a sigh of relief even though he knew he could trust his daughter to know what she’s doing. Still, since it was such a tricky thing to do, he can’t help but reassure himself that his unborn daughter is still safe inside him.

“Ichiru said he saw you go to the chairman’s office this morning.” Zero began without preamble the moment the pureblood got back from his bath.

Kaname was silent for a while and simply patted his hair dry with a towel but Zero is determined to hear his excuse and simply glared sleepy eyes at him. Finally, Kaname let out a quiet, fond chuckle at his suspicious mate, “There’s no need to be so suspicious. We merely talked about the Winter Solstice. We need to arrange the date to let the students go back and when will be the safe time to end the winter vacation. In the end, we decided to announce a renovation of the Sun Dorm as an excuse.” He disclosed smoothly. Good thing that he and chairman had this talk already.

“Renovation? You know you’ll have to really do that. The students will look for that once they come back.” Zero muttered, scowling when he thought of the waste and unneeded expenses just because of that bastard, Rido.

“Certainly. Since it’s my family’s fault that the students are put in danger, I’ve promised to fund it. It seems to be just perfect since the headmaster also claimed needing more rooms for the coming semester.” The vampire king finished, nonchalant about the whole business.

“That’s all?” Zero asked, still not convinced.

“That is all.” Kaname confirmed.

The silver hunter glared at the vampire while weighing the merit of what Kaname just said. It’s true that it’s important. To avoid exposure, they needed a good excuse to keep the students away for as long as possible and an unexplained extended vacation will simply cause many suspicions. If the
students are kept away for too long, parents will begin to ask questions. Surely, the chairman will cry buckets should he lose all his little “darlings” and the idea of co-existence will go up in smokes. Damn it, all because of that bastard Rido.

“Since we’re on the topic, I’d like to inform you that we’ll be leaving for the Kuran Castle as soon as the examinations are over.” The brunette added as if to give his earlier words credibility.

“What? Kuran Castle?” The hunter sputtered. Does he really need to attend?

“Of course.” Kaname answered the question that Zero unknowingly let slip through the bond, “I won’t leave you especially now that there’s threat lurking around.” From all sides, he grimly added internally.

Zero must have a very put off expression on his face since Kaname smiled ever so amused. It’s just that he can’t think of any excuse that may save him from the troublesome affair altogether.

“I can’t wait for you to see the Kuran castle.” The brunette said offhandedly, putting his still-damp forehead on his lover’s, before whispering in an almost too soft tone, “I wish you could have met chichiue and hahaue as well.”

Zero was unable to say anything in response. He’s never been good in comforting others any way. He put a hand on the arm of the vampire before him. After hesitating for a bit, setting aside the fact that they were vampires and focusing on the part that they took care of the brunette, he whispered back finally, “It would have been nice to meet them.”

And when Kaname graced him with that smile that he seems to love giving him, one that seems to contain untold amounts of affection for him, the hunter knew that he’ll stick around him in that freaking ball even though he’s only a few seconds away from insanity. Ah, damn it. He’ll swear until his dying day that such sappy thoughts are only caused by his freaking hormones.

The silverette’s self-mockery and hate-filled speech to his raging hormones were halted, however, when his lover’s hands cupped his face to make him focus once more.

“And you? Don’t you have anything to report to me?” Kaname inquired, “Ichiru-kun also told me something interesting earlier.” He further clarified before Zero could even ask.

Damn it, Ichiru. The silver prefect cursed internally. Why is he reporting to this bastard? He even asked his twin not to say anything to Kaname! The bastard is already being too fussy about his well-being. If he knew about the Day Class’ new brand of harassment, he may be forbidden to go to class altogether! Not that he’ll actually obey but it will surely only lead to one troublesome argument after another and he’s really in no mood to be fighting with Kaname specially when only his scent seem to calm his ire about everything in the present world. “Nothing. The Day class was being a bit rowdy but there’s nothing out of the ordinary.” Zero immediately lied, glad for the hundredth time that he’s finally able to consciously control the ideas that bleed into the bond even though he still needs more practice. Still, lying to the pureblood was made easier by this.

The vampire only hummed in acknowledgement, “Ichiru-kun mentioned that you were confessed to. Is that true?”

Zero cursed his nosy twin again and promised grim retribution come tomorrow, “Confessed? What the fuck? They just keep pestering me for answer regarding Ichiru and that idiot blonde’s relationship. It’s a pain but it’s nothing.” He smoothly provided.

The pureblood stared at him for a few minutes. He was afraid for a moment that Kaname could
already see through his lie but he merely kissed him lightly before saying, “Very well, just be careful, Zero. Don’t make me worry too much.”

The hunter merely grunted in assent before flopping back to sleep. Really, Kaname is too damn persistent and anxious. It certainly is troublesome but what can the Day Class students really do to him? He internally mocked, completely forgetting his initial suspicion about what Kaname and the chairman talked about.
“What are you doing?”

Silver-lavender eyes frowned when the first thing they saw were the shuffling figures of his twin brother and adopted-sister inside his room the moment he opened the door.

“What else, Zero? Spreading the reference materials.” Yuki answered nonchalantly before she continued to neatly stack the reference materials for all their subjects and neatly arrange their notes on top of the short-legged tables they put in the middle of Zero’s room.

“Why?” Zero growled at the petite pureblood when she simply ignored his obvious irritation.

“To review, of course, silly.”

“I can see that but why the fuck here?!”

The hunter was suddenly disturbed by Ichiru and Yuki after dinner earlier, suddenly declaring having a study session for two angels from up above promised immediate rescue and will be coming to tutor all of them. He snorted. Like he needed to be tutored; only those two hopeless creatures needed strict and close attention.

“Come on, nii-san. Don’t be like that. You’re the only one whose room is in a presentable condition.” The younger silverette nonchalantly replied before he laid down a tray of snacks, juice and several glasses.

The hunter gave them an annoyed look that they didn’t meet. “Yeah Zero. It was just that Ichiru and I were busy, you know. So we weren’t able to do much cleaning. Don’t be stingy!”

“Argh! Why not downstairs?!”

“But what if we suddenly feel sleepy in the middle of the night?”

“You’re not allowed to sleep, moron. Now, get these back downstairs!”

The pureblood princess stood to face the hunter and prepared to give him the largest puppy eyes she could muster, when she suddenly picked up an intimidating scent and aura currently marching towards the chairman’s house accompanying their private tutors for the night. Without words, she immediately picked up the whole table, reference materials and all, and dashed out outside the hunter’s room and down the living room. The twins who were left inside the room stood in confused silence, surprised eyes meeting surprised eyes, before the younger twin mutely followed the pureblood.

Before Ichiru could even inquire after Yuki’s curious actions, the doorbell rang and he soon found the answer by himself. It seems that someone who would not be pleased with them for bringing other men inside Zero’s room invited himself to their little session. Smart move, Yuki.

“Good evening, Ichiru-kun.” Kaname pleasantly greeted.

“G-good evening, Kaname-senpai.” Ichiru returned but not quite meeting those piercing auburn orbs that seem to hint knowledge of their earlier breach of his brother’s privacy. To the silverette’s relief, the children were also there and their greetings somewhat expelled the awkwardness he felt. Together with Hana and Ichijou-senpai’s warm greetings, the silver prefect finally managed to...
completely expel his earlier unease.

“Kaname?” Zero decided to also go down after sensing his mate and children downstairs. He was quickly bombarded by sweet greetings from his children who run passed his brother to hug him. He was about to go to the Moon dorm as per his nightly routine ever since their stupid association president gave him hell so he was quite surprised to find them all at the chairman’s house instead.

“Otou-chan, good evening! We came to help aunt and uncle study as well.” Anne explained after giving him a kiss on the cheek.

Zero only nodded while thinking, ‘yeah, they need all the help they can get.’

Akira and the silver twins nodded enthusiastically even though they smiled at him in a way that say they only came there to see him and play. Since Kohaku is looking at them sharply as if determined to stop any meddling from them, Zero didn’t say anything else.

Despite the silver hunter’s worry about a noisy night for a large party was sure to put the chairman in annoyingly high spirits coupled by his energetic children who would no doubt indulge his guardian’s sickeningly sweet taste for domestic affairs, midnight found them relatively quiet. Zero supposed that might be because the main contributors to the rambunctious noise, AKA the headmaster, fraternal twins and surprisingly, Akira, were already asleep. Kohaku and Anne are both with him in the kitchen while they do the dishes used during dinner and preparation for some midnight snack.

“It’s alright, otou-chan! Kohaku and I will handle preparing the tea and snack for later. Don’t you need to do your homework and review for the examination?” Anne urged her father while examining the contents of the pantry. She supposes they have all the necessary ingredients for cookies and cupcakes.

“It’s fine. I already finished all my work.” Zero replied, contemplating another bowl or two of strawberries before sleeping.

“As expected of otou-chan.” Haku praised, offering one of his rare smiles. He sincerely wished the same circumstance is also experienced by his beloved aunt and uncle but it’s unlikely especially given how often Hana-jiji’s censures mingled with cheerful encouragements from Takuji reach them in the kitchen.

“Yuki-sama! Please don’t make your own equation. Didn’t I just explain this a mere moment ago?”

“Now, now, Hanabusa-kun, there’s no need to look so scary. It’s fine, it’s fine.”

“But Ichijou-san, how in the world is this even a proper formula?!”

“Eh?! And I thought it even looked correct.”

“What do you mean ‘look’, Yuki-sama? Please try to comprehend it.” And in a decidedly softer tone, added, “Eto, Ichiru, this English sentence is a bit…”

“I’m… I’m sorry, Hana. I’ll do it again.”

“It’s okay, Ichiru. You don’t need to apologize.”

Three pairs of eyes met at another worrying exchange before expelling deep sighs. Zero was at least glad that it’s currently the weekend so he didn’t have to worry about the two having too little sleep to catch up with the last few discussions on top of overheated brains. He just hopes they will be able to stay awake throughout the whole night. He’s not that optimistic though.
The night settled in such a manner for many hours, until, of course, Yuki broke it by painfully exclaiming “Ouch! What the hell was that?” The brunette sat up straight while massaging her injured forehead that just got stabbed by the sharp pencil taped on the table that will poke them should they start to sleepily lean forward. Evidently, her pencil did the job wonderfully. Her drowsiness, however, only vanished completely when he saw the tall blue-eyed noble towering over her slouched form. She could have sworn she saw golden fire surrounding him that she has briefly mistaken him for a golden hound from hell.

“That must have been the feel of your sharp pencil pricking your forehead when you boldly dozed off in front of me when I was trying to help you study, Yuki-sama.” Hanabusa articulated in a controlled voice.

“S-senpai… g-gomen.” Yuki quickly apologized and would have immediately dived into the textbook in front of her when she caught the peaceful slumbering form of her silverette companion just beside her. His own sharp pencil removed and safely out of his way. “Wha! Ichiru is also asleep!”

“He’s very tired, Yuki-sama. It’s not a surprise considering how it’s already 4 am. Please let him. I’ll make sure he’ll cover what he missed.”

Chocolate orbs were overcome with incredulity as she stared up at the unfair vampire teaching them – only her in the meantime – at the obvious partiality to his boyfriend. It seems like being a pureblood will never give her an edge when it comes to Aido-senpai and Ichiru. She huffed instead of voicing out her complaint and went back to her notes.

“Now, now, Hanabusa-kun, isn’t it unfair? I think Yuki-chan has also earned her right to relax even for a bit.” Ichijou smilingly entered the room while carrying a tray full of rich cocoa drinks, crumpets, cookies and cupcakes.

“Senpai!” Yuki cried in relief and gratitude. “Eh? Where’s everyone else?” she asked after noting the absence of her brothers and their children.

“Ah, Sui-chan, Nao-chan and Akira-chan all woke up from their ‘afternoon’ nap about 2 hours ago and went with Anne-chan, Haku-chan, Kaname and Zero-kun for a patrol. Apparently, the children went back to the Moon dorm to eat but Kaname and Zero-kun just came back a moment ago. They’re in the drawing room.” Ichijou explained while handing her a cup of hot beverage.

“Thanks, senpai!” the brunette beamed and accepted the cup, getting another bout of energy because of the kind blond.

“Here’s yours, Hanabusa-kun. By the way, Yuki-chan, have you ordered your ball gown for the Winter Solstice?”

The little liquid that the pureblood princess managed to sip from her cup got promptly expelled at her boyfriend’s question.

The green-eyed noble immediately patted his girlfriend’s back, “Ara, ara, are you alright, Yuki-chan?”

“Yuki-sama!” Hanabusa immediately rescued the hand-outs they were finally able to finish and made sure that his darling angel wasn’t splattered by hot choco.

“I-I’m sorry, senpai. I’m sorry. I’m okay now.” The brunette immediately assured the two blonds after her coughing fit. Goodness, she kept on forgetting just how different her life is now. The idea of the Winter Solstice completely left her mind what with the recent excitement. Also, she barely has
any dresses, let alone a ballgown. “Oh dear, I haven’t. I-I actually have no idea how to prepare for something like that.” She confessed, now worried. She didn’t want to cause her onii-sama any trouble. Certainly, she didn’t want to embarrass him and Ichijou-senpai. The brunette wondered if her best dress, the same one she used during the last banquet, will be enough.

“It’s okay, Yuki-chan. I’m sure Kaname made the preparations for you and Zero-kun. I just wanted to make sure nothing overlaps. I’m pretty sure he even has something prepared for Ichiru-kun.”

Ack! Hanabusa’s image of ‘couple’ suits disintegrated in his mind. While his darling Ichiru normally has presence of mind for he is perfection himself, he knew his angel is not someone who would think about such extravagance nor imagine himself to be part of an opulent world where such things mattered. So of course, he took it upon himself to prepare for the both of them but alas, it might be all for naught for indeed, Kaname-sama is sure to have it all planned. Perhaps he can ask Kaname-sama so he can match his lover’s attire instead, he thought crestfallenly.

“Really? I’m glad.” Yuki rejoiced. She’s relieved for while she can barely sew a button back and make a bigger hole while mending her socks, she knew that one can’t sew a ball gown overnight. “Ne, senpai, what do vampires celebrate during the Winter Solstice?”

“Well, it’s the anniversary of the vampire society’s founding. It’s when the first vampire king, one of the progenitors of the vampires and the first Kuran, united all the vampires. It signifies the beginning for us vampires that’s why it’s the most important event in the vampire society. Every noble and pureblood family will come to greet the royal family. Even the all the elders of the council of old will be present.” Ichijou explained, his voice going understandably grim while mentioning the last fact. At Yuki’s worried look, he smiled reassuringly and added, “It might become a bit stifling for you but Kaname and I will be there. Not to mention the children. Also, there will be dancing, music and delicacies from all over the world. I’m sure you’ll enjoy yourself, Yuki-chan.”

Yuki smiled and nodded before resuming drinking her now cold drink thus completely missing the look that both nobles shared. They knew that because of the danger lurking around, the event may very well become a bloodbath but while they knew that a move will be made during that time, they won’t be able to avoid it. Jilting the celebration or having the royal family hide will be seen as something weak and will tarnish the Kuran’s reputation which may also cause others to challenge their authority. Despite the fact that their king would unlikely lose, it will still be a troublesome affair in the end. They knew that their leader wouldn’t have minded going there alone but because someone just has to spread news about Zero and the children, this is no longer an option.

Really, like irritating pests, they kept on flying around.

Meanwhile, in another room, another couple is having quite a leisure time.

“Really, who would hate their daughter so much that they’ll name her NEVAEH?” Zero remarked while reading a book about baby names that the chairman still bought even though everyone already knew the names of all their children. He still ended up checking it to look up the kanji writing he would like for their names though. His hormones grumbled at each ridiculous name he encountered and he would never admit that he finds reading that silly book while perched on the couch, his head on the pillow on Kaname’s lap, quite relaxing.

“Indeed.” Kaname obligingly agreed, a hand leisurely stroking soft silver locks.

The hunter was silent for a while before off-handedly inquiring, “… Hey, Kaname, why would you name your eldest ‘Anne’?” He frowned, his lilac eyes intent on a particular name.

“I’ve never thought of naming our daughter as such.” The pureblood answered and upon
remembering something the irritating substitute instructor mentioned before, while knowing it’s a lie, burgundy eyes narrowed while adding, “Wasn’t it something you’ve thought of and decided?”

“What? No.” Zero immediately responded, lavender eyes still on the name and its meaning, “It’s too common. Also, I’ve never thought much of western names since I like kanji.” Forget about names, he didn’t even think he’ll ever have his own children, he thought silently. Then finally meeting his lover’s eyes, continued with a frown, “Weird. Why does Anne the only one with a western name?”

A detail Kaname has previously noticed himself but given the story that Takamiya told them (though Zero had already told him it’s not true), refused to contemplate. Surely there’s no force on Heaven or Earth which will make him name their daughter after his lover’s previous crush. Then, as if struck by lightning, a thought suddenly crossed his mind; an answer that can easily be deduced after knowing his daughter and her conquest better. A very small and quiet smile appeared on his ethereal face before answering, “Indeed, a most unusual thing. Do you have something in mind then? It seems a name has caught your fancy.”

“Eh? No, it’s just… I just thought it’s… pretty.” The silverette replied. After hesitating for a while, a pale finger ended up pointing out a name on the page he’s in.

Kaname read the name and its meaning. He hummed in approval.

“Indeed, it’s a very pretty name, Zero.”

Kiryu Zero thought that nothing would ever go wrong with him today.

The silver hunter woke up early, feeling quite rested despite going to bed late because of the nightly patrol around the Cross Academy. No doubt the ridiculously expensive and sinfully soft sheet, blanket and pillows on the pureblood king’s bed played a large role in ensuring that he’ll have a fine sleep. And with the pureblood himself snugly wrapped around him, his scent providing further appeasement, his comfort was completely secured (not that he’ll ever tell him that). He was even able to untangle the long arms around him without waking the persistent bastard and was able to sneak out fairly quick without trouble, a miracle in itself.

Upon arriving at the headmaster’s abode, he found that the blond is still not up so no poisonous breakfast awaited him. Not only was he able to save untold amounts of raw ingredients from becoming biochemical weaponry, he was even able to cook everything he craved to eat that morning. He even found an incredible amount of his current favorite fruit in the vegetable rack despite being quite sure that he had already demolished their supply just last night. Someone was clearly making sure that they have it on hand. Maybe given what an extra cranky monster he turns into whenever he can’t eat the freaking fruits. Really, he should feel guilty but damn it. People are careful and cautious around pregnant people for a reason. Well, whatever. Anyhow, he was truly grateful that he was able to make strawberry pancakes, strawberry French toasts, strawberry salad, strawberry breakfast tacos and strawberry smoothie all before the other three woke up. He was already devouring his third pancake and eyeing his fourth toast when they went down, apparently roused by the sweet scent.

The three prefects were also able to make it on good time to the school building well before the first class started so no one pestered him with unwanted attention. And though he can sense several
irritatingly keen regards on him, no one tried to ‘confess’ their imaginary feelings which was
unfortunately rare these days. Needless to say, given their present circumstances, Zero was quite
satisfied and happy.

Amazed by the wonderful start of his morning, he was really looking forward to a terrific evening as
well. He was convinced that the Day class students were already over whatever disease they caught
since he was able to make it to the end of his classes without being ambush even once.
He should have been suspicious. Given his luck, he should have known.

How could he have expected a catastrophe hitting him in the most unlikely place? But of course, he
should have expected it. After all, the fates have inherent talent in fucking his life in the most
unexpected way. Why doesn’t he ever learn?

It all started when he was minding the Day class students’ behavior like usual during the cross-over,
just before the gates of the Moon dorm opened. And eerily enough, though they were obviously
vibrating with energy, his lane of eager Day class students stood to attention and behaved remarkably
well which was a suspiciously common occurrence these days. The hunter just turned to Yuki’s lane
where the students were more disorderly and rowdy when out of nowhere, a light brown haired Day
class student who is completely out of her rockers suddenly hugged him from behind while
exclaiming a love so great that she’ll even offer the heavens to him.

A hush blanketed the whole assembly and even he was not able to react as the unprecedented action
completely took him off guard. He must be wearing a highly dumbfounded face since he could make
out both Ichiru and Yuki’s constipated expressions, as if they’re trying to stop their laughter, in his
peripheral vision. The silverette whirled and was about ready to roar at the trembling, foolish person
when someone actually beat him to it. Before he knew it, another Day class student has already come
close enough to also embrace him while claiming that her love for him is nothing compared to hers.
This was followed by another one who declared that her love for Zero is the truest one.

This too was crazily followed by another one and another one still.

And like a water valve going out of control, a mad throng of students suddenly crowded around, all
fiercely trying to speak louder than the others to make their genuine feelings heard.

In a matter of seconds, the silver hunter found himself being embraced, tugged and pulled in about
fifteen different directions. He was surrounded by girls and some boys all trying to claim to love him
better than the others. Several pairs of hands were on him, all trying to shake him to get his attention
and to demand that he acknowledge their feelings for him. Students tried to pull him while pushing
away all the other girls around him which crushed him as a result. Instinctively, the prefect’s hands
went around his lower abdomen. All the while, the battle around him only grew in intensity.

The quiet smile the vampire king was sporting while watching his mate go about his duties as a
prefect completely fell when he saw a female Day class student sneak behind his lover and wrap
dainty arms around his silver form. He wasted no time and turned away from the window of his
study where he was watching from, forgoing buttoning the cuff of his white uniform, to go down
and lead the Night class despite it being a few minutes early than usual. The ardent declaration from
the woman which he can still clearly hear further narrowed garnet eyes that were already filled with
distaste. If he was not posing as a normal mortal, he would have already made an undesirable move
to stop the foolish woman’s action. He schooled his features as best as he could despite the
impatience and ire that were swimming inside him. He hastened his steps when he heard and sensed
a growing commotion outside. He could tell that the other vampires also perceived the disturbing
excitement for he found them already gathered on the first floor, faced turned towards the noise
though they’re unable to see anything. He met equally concerned amethyst eyes on the face of his
beautiful eldest.

Outside, the argument between the students escalated so fiercely and rapidly that the laughter the other two prefects felt died instantly. They watched in horror as their brother got quickly surrounded by all the students in his lane. They both moved in to rescue him but like a flash flood, they got violently pushed aside, nearly trampled, by the students in their own lanes when they also frenziedly went towards the hunter. Torrents of female and male fans frantically stampeded while desperately hurling their own undying devotion to the older Kiryū.

“Zero!”

“Nii-san!”

Frightened lilac orbs watched in shock disbelief as his brother got swallowed by the mad mob of female and male admirers. The sight rooted him to where he was thrown on the ground, quite unable to feel anything except alarm at how his brother’s figure got quickly engulfed so that only his silver hair is visible to him. He could only shout for his brother while desperately trying to get to him. It was absolutely horrifying how not even his masculine and hunter strength was enough to push the rabid crowd out of the way. He was barely able to move forward and yet, he already felt crushed by the overwhelming number of students trying to push their way in. “Nii-san!” Ichiru continuously shouted. “Stop it! Enough! Hey, get out of my way! Let go of nii-san!”

All the while, Yuki was in the right state of panic. Her heart beat frantically inside her chest and for a second, stood stupefied in a moment of indecision. She was quite sure, though it’s hard when faced with something seemingly overpowering like this one, that she is powerful enough to push aside the girls but she was afraid of not being able to keep her strength in check. What if she seriously hurt someone? What if they found out that she has superhuman abilities? What will she do if they found out that she’s a vampire? Her anxious thoughts were halted, however, when she heard her other adopted-brother shout for his twin and poised to join the struggle to reach the silver hunter. “Ichiru! No!” When chocolate orbs found Ichiru also trampled in the melee, the pureblood princess wasn’t able to stop herself from joining the fray. “Get out of the way! Ichiru! Zero! Hey! Don’t push! Get away from Zero! Ichiru! Zero!” She managed to at least make more headway than her silver companion. She could feel someone’s feet and elbow connect to other parts of her body but she still soldiered on. She wasn’t hurt but still, between making sure she doesn’t hurt anyone while pushing them away and the continued pressure from the mad throng around her, Yuki wasn’t able to make as much progress as she would like.

And that was how the Night class found them.

That no one even noticed that the gorgeous Night class was already before them was testament to how far gone were the Day class students.

Startled reddish-lavender eyes widened at the riot just outside the Moon dorm’s gates. They all decided to go out much earlier than intended when they heard the commotion outside. They hurried their steps when distressed exclamations of her father’s name by her aunt and uncle reached their ears. Numbly, she can feel the aura of her grandfather and beloved ash-brown haired hunter coming closer, but all her senses could focus on was how her dear otou-chan seems to be in the core of the confusing scuffle.

“Otou-chan!” the children all exclaimed worriedly, quite forgetting to keep their secrets.

“Zero!” Kaname called in an uncharacteristically loud voice. The contrived mask of sophistication he was always wearing slipped slightly for the second time that night at the disturbing sight before him. Reaching out to their bond, he ascertained the well-being of his mate. Vast relief filled his very being
when his hunter echoed that he’s fine but he can’t move without somehow doing something decisively unnatural. He unconsciously sighed in relief. Auburn orbs then sharply turned to the students who all seem to have completely lost it.

“Ichiru!” Hanabusa cried upon seeing his lover being squished by the Day class students. He made a move to immediately rescue his angel but was stopped by his cousin. Aquamarine glare found the tall red head who, while looking perturbed as well, merely nodded towards their president, indicating that all will soon right itself.

“Yuki-chan!” Ichijou also shouted at spotting his girlfriend in the middle of the dangerous crowd. Only his trust in Kaname and their little royals prevented him from instantly flying to her side.

“Zero-sama! Yuki-sama! Ichiru-sama!” the rest of the Night class students exclaimed.

“My children! Stop it, my little lambs! No!” the headmaster wailed when he finally got closed. He hurried upon receiving the alarming report from one Wakaba Sayori who happened to be walking back to the Sun Dorm when she saw a dangerous looking tussle rapidly develop. He could barely persuade the kind girl to go back to the dorm directly before quickly running there with the apprentice instructor. He can now see why Ichiru-chan was worried.

“Shut up, chairman. Oi, that’s enough, the lot of you!” Kaito barked, a hand inside his coat. No doubt reaching for his baby and contemplating firing a warning shot.

“Don’t, Kaito-kun!” the blond ex-hunter yelled. Even though he’s sure that there won’t be any danger since anti-vampire weapons won’t harm humans, he still can’t condone firing a gun near his beloved students.

“Are you seri-,” the argument the apprentice instructor was about to say didn’t quite escape his lips for just then, a surge of aura from the pureblood king and his children immediately shot through the crowd.

There was suddenly a strange silence that followed. Humans will never guess it but even they were able to feel the change in the atmosphere and pressure injected to the very air they breathe. Something akin to fear filled their heart, silencing their voices and freezing their movements but their mortal brains can’t even keep up with the dynamic force that is the pureblood king and his children.

All the vampires and hunters present then felt an odd aura that they were sure came from one of the royal children before, as if in a trance, the Day class students slowly stepped back from the silver hunter and the two prefects.

The bizarre lull was broken when the Night class president stepped forward and politely but firmly ordered to the Day class students, “It’s already late. Please go back to your dorms.”

Cloudy gazes found the imposing figure of the handsome brunette but nothing seems to register in their minds based on their blank stares. They however nodded before slowly filing out back to their dorms without any word. Several confused eyes followed the weird movements of the ominous crowd as they trudged in a way that obviously reminded them of sinister zombies.

While others were preoccupied watching the now silent Day class students, various vampires quickly went to the prefects, joined by the chairman.

“What the fuck just happened?” Kaito demanded, while following the blond headmaster, when no one remarked about the creepy spell the Day class students seem to be under.

“Nao.” Zero breathed in relief while straightening himself up, his lavender orbs also intent on the
retreating mob. Being fully aware of his children’s power by now, he had no trouble pointing out just who’s responsible for the peculiar look on the earlier crazed individuals. He felt his mate’s and children’s auras behind him. He turned to find blood-red eyes on his desponded youngest son with uncharacteristically crumpled dark silver brows gracing his normally impassive expression. He instantly found himself wrapped around the dainty arms of his youngest daughter, a worried pout on her ethereal face.

“Are you alright, otou-chan?” the children immediately asked with varying degrees of alarm evident in their voices. Even though they can already tell that he’s not injured despite the mess his uniform is in and his appearance remains as perfect as ever, they can’t help their worried inquiries.

“Zero.” The vampire king merely took stock of his mate’s welfare before giving him a hard, disapproving look which the hunter pointedly didn’t meet. He could tell that the silverette lied to him regarding the keen attention the Day class students have been giving him but he put his trust that he’ll always keep himself safe. He was so sure that the hunter would never put his guard down and like always, tear any adversary viciously or avoid any unpleasant confrontation he senses for the sake of their unborn child. He wanted to honor his mate’s wishes and knew he can rely on his capabilities. Apparently, he trusted him too much for while he has impeccable abilities as a hunter, he tends to put too little value on himself. Knowing his lover, he must have underestimated his admirers’ obsession to him or plainly didn’t believe in them.

When the last of the female students vanished into the Sun dorms, Zero turned to his son, “It’s fine now, Nao. Let them go.”

Flaming pools of garnet blinked once to reveal reverted reddish-violet orbs. Inscrutable worry filled the youngest son’s face. He inquired, holding on to the fabric of his father’s black uniform like a child, “Are you alright, otou-chan?”

“Yes, thanks to you.” Zero confirmed one more time before guiltily smiling at his children. He can’t believe he had caused them some trouble. It’s hard not to notice especially when one frantic chairman ran to him, looking genuinely harried for once with a disgruntled looking Kaito shaking his head.

Meanwhile, one Aido Hanabusa was instantly by his Ichiru’s side. Frantically, he helped his angel straighten himself up while trying to fix his rumpled clothes. Cerulean orbs immediately inspected his lover for any injuries and dark golden brows had to crumple in confusion in miraculously finding none.

“I’m alright, Hana. Really.” The younger silver prefect assured, also surprised to find himself unharmed despite drowning in clashing bodies of deranged female and male suitors just seconds ago.

“Really?” the blond charmer confirmed despite seeing his lover’s unscathed form with his own eyes. He can see not one scratch or bruise on his pale face nor smell any blood from any injuries that he might have received.

“Wow, honestly, I thought it was too late to save you.” Kain remarked thoughtlessly. He even dully thought how he’ll stop his cousin from avenging his love. Instead, they only found the prefect’s clothes and hair disheveled but was otherwise untouched.

“Kat! Don’t just kill my angel!” Hanabusa immediately rounded his cousin like a mad dragon.

“Really, it’s fine.” Ichiru assured them once again. His hand on his lover’s to prevent him from jumping on the tall vampire and to drag him to his brother who’s surrounded by Kaname, the children, Kaito and the headmaster.
They could still hear the last of his brother’s assurances to the headmaster. Based on his twin’s disgruntled expression, he just finished giving one his multiple reassurances. For Zero, he’s already showing admirable patience for simply answering another of their zealous guardian’s confirmation for his wellbeing. But seeing how he avoided everyone’s scrutiny while stroking his youngest daughter’s silver hair, he must be feeling incredibly guilty.

The guilt that the younger Kiryū had been suspecting flowed in torrents in his brother’s amethyst eyes when he spotted him.

“Ichiru!” Zero breathed, obvious relief filled his voice.

“I’m alright, nii-san.” Ichiru smiled, the exchange far too familiar to him but now said under quite a different scenario.

“I’m sorry.” Zero whispered. He don’t know what he would done if Ichiru and Yuki were hurt because of this. Well, Yuki… maybe he shouldn’t be so worried but Ichiru… Nonetheless, upon carefully inspecting his brother’s appearance, he found that he’s as unscathed as he was… Now that he noticed it, how in the world?

The other silver prefect cut his twin’s contemplation short by determinedly criticizing his lack of foresight, “See, nii-san? I told you they were not joking.” He has been persistently telling his brother that the fervent and piercing gazes the students have been giving him are not in fact cross–eyed stares designed to taunt him but ardent ones turning manic.

“Ah, shut up. I know that now.” Zero grumbled, glaring at the ground.

“Otou-chan…” Anne and the brunette twins hesitated, sounding as if they also want to further caution their father.

“But son, didn’t Anne-chan and them already told you long beforehand about just how desirable you are to both vampires and humans?” the headmaster added, unable to help the admonishing tone slipping in his voice. “Why didn’t you tell me you were already receiving such attentions?”

“Well, apparently, they were just pestering him for answers regarding Ichiru-kun and Hanabusa’s relationship, and so was certainly nothing of consequence.” The vampire king joined, reproachfully imparting his lover’s lie, provoking him to finally look at him. He failed for his silverette resolutely didn’t return his regard even to scowl.

“What? Nii-san!” Ichiru exasperatedly shook his head. To think that he even went out of his way before going to bed just to be able to report to Kaname-senpai. “You know that this won’t go away!”

“Well, aren’t you such a stud, Zero-kun.” Dryly gibed Kaito.

Zero glared at the substitute lecturer before turning to his guardian and twin, “Yeah, I know. My bad.”

Kaien can only sigh. It has already happened so he supposed there was no point berating the hunter further, “I’m just glad that all of you were fine.” And as if only then noticing how they didn’t actually appear to have just come out of a gigantic brawl involving overly zealous admirers, he frowned.

“Ah, that…” Zero started, also not knowing the answer.

Kaname shook his head a little, understanding the blatant look of confusion on his hunter’s face. Obviously, he has already forgotten.
“It’s because of Akira’s blood stone, otou-chan.” Kohaku supplied the answer, also noting his father, his uncle and his grandpa’s confusion. “We attached them to the trinkets we gave both of you for your birthday. I’m glad you’re both using it and it was of use.” He smiled while his father finger one of his piercings. His uncle did the same to his hair tie. He could already sense his twin swell with pride.

“Oh thank goodness, indeed.” Anne exclaimed before turning to her brother and remarking rather ungraciously, “At least you have some use.”

“Hey!” Akira protested, feeling extremely slighted. And he was still basking on such a happy feeling too! However, it was easily restored when his dear otou-chan and Ichiji smingly thanked him again.

“So that’s why.” Remarked the female prefect who came nearer with an agitated looking Ichijou just beside her.

Their relatively happy bubble was punctured when their eyes fell on the female prefect.

“Yuki!!” the chairman exclaimed upon seeing his daughter’s appearance for despite being the powerful pureblood among the three of them, she’s the one who sported more injuries. They can see bruises on her temples, neck, cheeks, side lip and thighs where she might have been kicked and/or elbowed on top of the dirtied and ruffled state of her uniform. He thought that her newly awaken lineage would be enough to prevent such a state that was why he went directly to the hunter instead. His poor, beautiful daughter!

“I’m alright, chairman. Really, it looks more serious than it feels.” Yuki assured them when several eyes widened at her appearance. But she can barely feel any pain and she can tell that whatever injuries she sustained are already healing. She’s only thankful that her sickly brother and her pregnant brother are both fine. She only felt a bit sheepish since she’s a pureblood but was still unable to help. “Are you really alright? Zero? Ichiru?”

“Y-yeah. Thanks, Yuki. It was my bad.” Zero said, feeling guilty for placing the two in such a situation.

“I’m fine too. Don’t worry about me.” Ichiru managed, quite shocked at the condition of his adopted-sister. She indeed looks worse for wear. Suddenly, he wanted to grovel ingratitude in front of his nieces and nephews for their choice of gift for his birthday. He can just imagine how flattened he would have been if he had faced the same rough treatment without protection. He’ll be ichi-pancake-ru in no time to be sure. He shuddered at the thought.

Hanabusa, having no trouble coming to the same conclusion, expelled a relieved sigh. Thank goodness for that special hair tie. There are not enough words of gratitude in this world to express how truly appreciative he was.

After several more worried inquiries from the pureblood, the children and the headmaster, and assurances from the prefects, they were finally convinced enough. The three prefects were able to persuade the vampires to continue on to their classes. Kain, Rima and Shiki towed the reluctant children, Aido and Ichijou with them to class, with the substitute instructor and the headmaster following from behind, while their president remained and accompanied the prefects to patrol around the academy grounds.

Yuki was completely recovered physically and emotionally that she was already able to discuss the incident with Ichiru spiritedly. She was still awestruck at how far anyone would go in the name of love. And here she thought she had seen the worst of hysterical and frenzied confessions before. This certainly set a new record. But seriously, how could Zero have missed this or mistaken those blazing
and avid regards for anything else other than what it was?

Zero’s head can’t seem to find the strength to straighten up, especially not when a certain pureblood is walking beside him with his aura wrapping around him heavily. Anyone could probably feel the vampire’s displeasure from a mile away. It must be why Yuki and Ichiru are walking quite a distance in front of them. Normally, he wouldn’t have cared if Kaname is a breath away from exploding with ire but he knew he’s in the wrong. Given the trouble he has caused everyone, he can’t seem to find his normal spunk. He didn’t want to fight with Kaname. Hopefully, his hormones won’t get in the way now.

“My, you look awful, my love. Is that your guilt weighing you down?” Kaname asked mockingly, breaking the heavy silence, his voice not quite so angry but not gracious either.

The silver hunter flinched, “Yeah, yeah, I know. I get it.”

“Hmmmm?”

Zero sighed, already knowing what the vampire is waiting for. He faltered before finally getting the nerve to apologize, however petulantly, “I’m sorry for lying to you…”

The pureblood hummed in acknowledgement and as encouragement for the prefect to continue.

“I’m sorry for getting myself in trouble… For letting my guard down… For underestimating them…”

Kaname faced his lover, a small but genuine smile on his lips, and reached for his hand, finally yielding to the temptation of touching his lover by initiating the first contact that evening. It’s rare for him not to try and touch his mate, but he’s afraid of easily letting his hunter off without making him understand just how grievously things could have turned out. He knew he would forgive Zero for anything. Already, he’s giving him more concession than he had provided to all his subjects combined.

“I understand your disposition. You never saw yourself as anyone’s object of affection and admiration but I hope that you’ll get used to the idea soon.”

“Yeah. I guess I’ll hold on until I pop Anne out.” Zero answered awkwardly, pink scores decorating his cheeks. He’s glad that the two stooges have outstripped them and are quite far away.

“Not quite.” The brunette sighed. Old habits die hard indeed, as does deeply rooted beliefs, “You were never aware of it, but you command the attention and admiration of everyone around you.”

A silver eyebrow arched at this, just about done with this conversation, “Yeah, no. You’re just blind.” He was the academy’s demonic prefect and he was pretty sure he made multiple students cry in fright before.

Kaname chuckled, hearing his thoughts through their bond, “Your actions and attitude may have earned you the dislike of the students but had you not behaved as you did, you would have made them as obsessed with you then as they do now while you’re expecting. You’re beautiful, Zero. So much so that I’m uneasy letting anyone else lay eyes on you.”

Violet eyes can’t help but roll at the exaggerated compliments. However, it didn’t quite banish the happy color that marred the hunter’s cheeks. He’s not vain but why does it sound so damn good coming from Kaname? Well, fuck it. “Well, whatever. I’ll… I’ll be more careful.”

“Please do. I understand that you were not fond of the time when Seiren was tailing you but I must confess that the idea is tempting in the face of the present circumstance.”
“Ugh, fuck no. I’ll manage on my own.” Zero resolutely affirmed. While he’s sure to be on guard all the time moving forward so that history won’t repeat itself, he wonders if there’s anything he can do to completely make sure of it. If he’s being honest with himself, he was truly frightened for a moment there as he protected his midriff from the onslaught of the maiming. He should really start thinking not just of himself but of the life inside him as well. He can’t afford to be careless anymore.

“Very well, I’ll hold your word for it, Zero. Kindly ease my worries and try not to force my hand.” Kaname conceded but with warning in his russet eyes.

The hunter nodded, fully understanding the last chance he was given before his over protective mate, who would probably bundle him in the most expensive soft swaddling clothes for the rest of his natural life if given the chance, finally snap and just lock his ass inside a mansion or something. And fuck if he’ll take that lying down.

And so quite the opposite of his fabulous morning, the silver hunter found himself looking for ways to avoid being trampled by affection from all sides while an extremely possessive pureblood resolutely held his hand the entire time he was doing his patrol as if giving him the taste of just how limited his freedom will be if he let the same clusterfuck happen again.

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“Are you sure they won’t remember anything?” the younger silverette yawned before asking his twin and adopted sister as they traverse the familiar path from the headmaster’s house to the main school building.

“Uh… yeah? Kohaku-kun said that they modified the Day class students’ memories.” Yuki answered. She’s confident of her nephews’ and nieces’ abilities but she is skeptical as to how they’ll be able to manage that.

The silver hunter merely grunted in response. Still feeling tired because of last night’s debacle. The children informed him about using the bloodstone of their cousin. They refused to tell him about that particular cousin for some reason and insisted that he keep it a secret from their aunt and uncle as well. He frowned at the recollection but complied for he knew he can trust in his children. They must have felt that the fewer things known about the future, the better.

When the three prefects arrived at the main school building, they were startled to meet several bruised and positively maimed students who still looked towards the hunter’s way with stars in their eyes. How could they possibly find an explanation to this? Injuries don’t miraculously appear on someone overnight unless they were beaten in their sleep. Not to mention these wounds and bruises were sustained by almost the whole Day class population. Even if they can’t remember anything, it will certainly raise questions! They put their worries aside though when they met Wakaba Sayori at the entrance.

“Oh! Yori-chan!” Yuki loudly greeted when she spotted her dear, sweet friend who, she was told, called the chairman after seeing the riot, “Thanks for yesterday!”

“Good morning.” She then frowned at the brunette, “To what are you referring to, Yuki-chan?”

“Eh? Didn’t you call the chairman because of the brawl yesterday?”

“Oh. Did you mean the struggle for the special 50% off the most delicious meal combo at the
cafeteria? It’s nothing. Why are you even thanking me for that?” Sayori said, unable to understand her friend’s gratitude. Yuki wasn’t even there during that time.

“Eh?” the brunette blinked, sure that they just missed each other in the conversation.

Zero, correctly assuming that his children also modified the petite girl’s memories and that they just replaced the incident with something else, cut in before the pipsqueak pureblood say anything idiotic, “Yeah, but since we’re the prefects, it should have been our job. Thanks, Wakaba.” Really, he shouldn’t have doubted his children even for a second. They must have anticipated the damage the students have sustained.

“Y-yeah, thanks, Sayori-chan.” Ichiru offered, also coming to the same conclusion.

“It’s nothing, really.” Sayori smiled at the three, “I’m just glad that they sported only mild bruises after the struggle. I guess the cafeteria won’t be having the same promo for a while.”

“Yeah, that’s too bad.” The younger silverette nodded in agreement though he’s sure that their stingy school kitchen will never intend such a thing in the first place.

Finally, the female prefect’s face lit up in comprehension, her lips forming an ‘O’, with awe swimming in her sienna eyes. She nodded in agreement though belated as they all walk to their classroom.

It was such an uncomfortable day for the three prefects. Yuki and Ichiru resolutely stayed by their brother’s side. Aside from the two, no one else noticed the tense and on guard stance of the silver hunter the whole day. There was an almost permanent scowl on his ethereal face that still failed to completely mar his gorgeous features and mask that attractiveness that overflows from him. Still, the Day class students found it hard to approach him for he’ll send the almost forgotten vicious glare to anyone who so much as turn to his direction that not even Ichiru’s new found fans managed to come near him for new petitions about him and Aido-senpai. They can only content themselves to following Zero’s every movement with spellbound gazes. Somehow, the three managed to survive the whole day with barely any interaction from the students.

During cross-over, the relatively organized and orderly, but still lively and love-filled Day class students noticed the rather foul mood of the Night class president. He didn’t scowl nor were his eyebrows creased together in irritation. He still had the same elegantly impassive expression but they could tell that he’s somehow displeased. Like an invisible dark aura is being produced by his very cells and infused with the air they breathe. It was enough to silence them almost completely. There’s also the subdued air around the Night class who are following behind him. They couldn’t even growl in contempt when the handsome blond vice-president smiled and waved a hand at the female prefect who returned it in kind. However, a few girls still can’t help but squeal in delight when their beloved Idol-senpai playfully winked at the younger silverette which made Ichiru-kun blush and avert his eyes. Oh! So cute!

Come to think of it, why can’t they remember doing it yesterday? And they were even looking forward to seeing the two together after the cultural festival so they can show their support to the couple and let them know that while some detestable girls disapprove of the match, they’re Idol’s true and loyal fans and so they’ll support them no matter what. Also, because Ichiru is their angelic prefect and he’s the twin of their Zero! How can they even say anything against this couple?!

But even the few squeals from the newly established couple’s fans quieted considerably when the brunette Moon dorm president slightly turned back and bestowed them such a chilling and sharp look. It must be what amounted to a glare when it comes to that senpai of theirs and so a hush completely blanketed the already restrained admirers. Their bewitched gazes can only dazedly follow
the heavenly beauties of the Night class until they reach their destination. Surely, the cross-over has never been this solemn before.

“Now, go back to your dorm!” the older Kiryū bellowed with more venom than normal when the last of the vampires disappeared to the main school building.

All scrambled to comply, unable to deny the gorgeous prefect anything. They didn’t notice when the other two prefects exchange relieved looks and sigh as if they just managed to escape a very dangerous situation. Internally, the prefects were hoping that this will calm the obviously unhappy pureblood.

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The warm auburn gaze on the impassive face of the Moon dorm president that followed the silver hunter as he patrol around the academy turned severe upon noting a presence that should not be near him. Russet eyes narrowed when they spotted the familiar silhouette of a light brown haired, blue eyed bespectacled female Day class student who seems to be stalking his mate. He can easily remember her for she still wore her long hair in the same low braids with two barrettes clipped on one side of her fringe. It’s the same hairstyle she wore the first time he noticed him giving covert glances towards the silverette and yesterday, when she boldly confessed her undying love to his lover in front of the whole Day class students assembled for the cross-over.

Like the other students, her memories were modified and so she has no recollection of doing what she must have been intending to do for a while now. Cold burgundy eyes can’t help darken even further at the notion that she might try again.

How irritating.

He has never abhorred any human before. While he never shared his uncle’s idea of them being mere cattle to be feed upon nor thought of them with reverence for he did see foolishness in them, he does respect them enough especially when they try to reach for aspirations well above their own abilities and work hard despite their limitations and mortality. Indeed, it must be because of that fatality that he sometimes fancied himself envious of them. Death might claim them at any time and so every moment spent is a glorious and beautiful one. And because they know that their doom will inevitably come, they brave even the highest seas and steepest mountains to achieve whatever they covet the most.

He had seen Shindo Nadeshiko’s attempts to get close to the hunter. He would often wonder then why savage relief will keep on swelling deep inside him every time the hunter rebukes her. Now he knows why and though the pureblood knows that his mate will never accept her feelings, he can’t possibly permit her another chance to express her feelings. He won’t allow it. She’s done enough damage what with the result of her foolish action just last night. Immediately, he turned from the window and proceeded outside the room.

Damn it. The silver prefect cursed upon sensing a Day class student near. He can’t believe he was so deep in thought that his senses belatedly registered her scent, heartbeat and overall aura. These people are really giving him a headache. He scowled when the fact that he must really do something to put a stop to it once and for all grew more vividly inside him. He just knew that he’ll fucking lose it should he get confessed to once more. But before he could turn around to yell at his chaser, his hunter senses tingled at the sudden appearance of the vampire king who should really be in class like
a good student.

Lilac eyes scowled at the irresponsible Night class student who dared to play truant in front of an academy prefect. “What the hell are you doing out of class, Kaname?” he demanded harshly, lavender gaze turner sharper when he met a suspiciously smiling brunette. There’s something quite wicked and devilishly malicious in those auburn orbs that’s setting him on edge. He frowned, “Go back to class.”

“I assure you that there’s no harm done. After all, we were given a free moment to study by ourselves.”

“Then go study and don’t bother me.” Zero growled. He doesn’t know why but something in Kaname was presently distressing him. He wasn’t even aware of stepping back from the pureblood.

The action didn’t escape the brunette’s notice. An imperceptible smile reappeared on his inhumanly exquisite face at the uncharacteristically agitated expression of his lover which was apparent in his distrustful lavender orbs and by the crease on his forehead, “My, am I frightening you?”

“Fuck, no.” but despite his determined answer, he unconsciously took another step back.

“Then why do you seem to be on edge?”

“You tell me. What’s wrong with you?”

“Believe me, there’s nothing wrong with me.” He chuckled at seeing the furrow on his lover’s forehead deepen in anxiousness. He added sultrily, “Is it suspicious of me to come to my lover whenever the opportunity presents itself?” and just like that, he crossed the little distance between them and took the hunter’s lips on his. He sucked and nibbled his lower lip before taking him deeply and exploring the familiar moist and luscious cavern. They have already shared numerous kisses and yet, each and every one still tastes heavenly. Perhaps, it will always be this sweet and isn’t that such a pleasant prospect. While offering his beloved a captivating kiss, he felt his lover capitulate, closing amethyst eyes. The pale hands that were meant to push him away remained motionless on his arms.

The pureblood successfully hypnotized his hunter to join him in that familiar dance and soon the world fell away. They became blind and deaf to everything else in their surroundings. An insistent hand slipped inside the folds of his mate’s black uniform while another arm clenched tighter around the lithe body to press it closer against him, further enthralling his lovely captive to ensure that he’s mesmerize enough that he won’t notice the shock gasp and rapid heartbeat of their audience.

The prefect struggled when he finally caught himself, his hands immediately pushing the damn pureblood’s chest, “Kaname! What the fuck?!” he panted when he managed to free his lips from the sudden onslaught.

The vampire king merely redirected his kisses on the long, smooth neck before him. He sucked his enchantingly soft and tattooed skin before saying, “Never allow anyone else see this expression, Zero. Remember, it’s only I who’s allowed to see you like this. That only I can make you like this.” An authoritative voice declared instead of justifying his conduct. A thumb gently caressed the scarlet cheeks of his sexily disheveled hunter, enjoying his alluringly erotic expression.

This damn bastard. “How can I fucking forget?” The silverette growled, blushing harder than ever. “When you’ll remind me every other freaking night?” Did this freaking asshole really just come there to remind him of that? As if he needed a fucking reminder.

“I merely do not wish for you to forget.” Kaname chuckled, giving him one last chaste kiss before
letting him go.

One delicate silver brow rose in annoyance. If he didn’t know that this irritating pureblood is a creature from some dark country and really has a propensity to hellish possessiveness, he would have thought that he had finally lost it.

“Just go back to class!” the silver hunter roared before angrily stomping away from the irksome bastard of a lover even though, as a disciplinary committee member, he should really escort him back to the main building. Still, the only think in the silverette’s mind was put some distance between him and the bastard before he does something he’ll regret. The prefect has a nagging feeling that he forgot to do something quite important but was too crossed to even try to remember. He didn’t appreciate being harassed on top of everything else.

Quiet and smiling burgundy orbs followed his retreating hunter before sharply turning to the direction where a certain mortal was previously standing. He set chase once the silver prefect was far enough. He could tell that she had already stopped her mad dash and was already resting while, most certainly, contemplating what she just beheld.

“It’s futile. No matter how long you stare at him, no matter how hard you work to gain his attention, it’s all for naught. He’ll never be yours.”

One Shindo Nadeshiko hastily turned at the cold voice that suddenly reverberated around her. Why is he here? Is this about Zero-kun? How did he know she was watching him? And how did Kuran-senpai caught her so fast? Well, maybe she wasn’t able to run that far since her legs turned to jelly upon witnessing her beloved prefect get kissed by the most esteemed Night class student but she ran away while they were still kissing so how? She was still breathless because of the sudden marathon while carrying the broken pieces of her heart but found that she’s unable to catch her breath for a pair of dark and fearsome wine regards were trained on her. She froze as unexplained apprehension and terror filled her. It’s as if she’s meeting an angel’s cold and compelling regard, who has the power to smite her where she stands. She found herself unable to speak or even look away.

“Everything that he is, his past, present and future, are all mine. You have no chance to be a part of it. Never attempt or even think of closing that distance.” Kaname ordered in a low and freezing tone before finally leaving the wide-eyed female who immediately slumped weakly on the forest floor, unable to utter anything in response. Just as well, for he has no interest in hearing what she has to say.

The Night class president then ventured back to the main building. He can tell that he has yet another observer but he didn’t stop to acknowledge his presence knowing that he’ll announce himself soon, no doubt to berate him for his questionable actions tonight.

“Kaname.” One Ichijou Takuma appeared from behind a tree. His handsome face contorted with worry and confusion. “Why did you do that?” He was just also taking advantage of their self-study time to spend time with his girlfriend before the prefects went to bed when he happened upon the delicate situation. He sensed that there was a Day class student who could see the couple in their intimate moment so he got worried. What he witnessed afterwards was even more worrisome. He cannot understand what possessed his dear friend to do something so cruel to someone relatively harmless.

“Enough, Takuma. Let’s go back.”

“But!” the noble protested but still followed his king, “She’s only a simple girl of no consequence. You know that Zero-sama would have never left you for her so why?”
“I know this already, Takuma.”

The blond can only shake his head to show his objection, “This is so unlike you, Kaname. She was no threat to you.”

The pureblood didn’t justify his actions nor further provide a response to the troubled noble even to ease his distress. He knew he acted uncharacteristically petty and that someone as insignificant as that woman doesn’t warrant even the smallest attention from him. Yet, he can’t help the vile feeling that viciously springs inside him at the mere recollection of those pure and ardent gazes from innocent cerulean eyes. Even he can’t believe he was feeling insecure and inferior against a simple mortal. It’s laughable but whenever he thinks of some abominable possibilities that his treacherous mind keeps on conjuring, he can’t help the cruel wish to violently crush that fervent affection.

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He’s really stupid. Why is he letting himself get talk into doing this? He knew it’s freaking ridiculous. It’s a freaking pain in the ass and they even just about to have their examinations! It’s certainly not the time to do something troublesome. They could just count the days before the school formally let out so it means that they just need to endure it for less than a week.

In the past, he would even rather just swallow his own tongue than ever let the mere thought cross his mind but his brother and his pipsqueak adopted-sister are like a freaking irritating freight train haranguing him all the time. Not to mention a certain pureblood kept on his sour mood and despite his many reassurances, Zero is not fooled for a moment. He would never admit to anybody that part of the reason he’s willing to do something like this is because of that bastard. Yeah, relationship sucks. So after being accosted and harassed by the two obnoxious devils and reassured by his twin countless of times, he found himself on his way to make the most unbelievably moronic arrangement with an equally idiotic person.

“Argh!” the silverette growled for the hundredth time while on his way to his guardian’s office.

“It’s really fine, nii-san.” Ichiru voiced just behind him as he followed.

“That’s right, Zero. It’s already come to this so let’s do this!” Yuki cajoled, also following him.

“Damn it. I know that already. Just shut up.” The hunter glared at the two before opening the large double-doors once they finally reached their destination.

They all heard an exaggerated gasp from the chairman before the blond whack job took on a very touched expression as if about to cry from happiness, “My children visited me… My children actually visited me…”

“Stop it. Don’t even try continuing that or I’ll hurt you.” Zero threatened in a low even voice which made the chairman froze from the act of pulling out a white handkerchief.

“Eh?” the headmaster paused. As if sensing the truth behind his threat, he didn’t continue. With the knowledge of his hormonal son’s foul mood these recent days, the thought of challenging that warning and that look didn’t even cross his mind.

“We need a favor from you, chairman.”
She is a nice woman.

Garnet eyes narrowed when unwanted memories of innocent gazes belonging to a certain brown haired mortal intruded in his mind. He knew of her affection and of her kindness. Like him, her eyes always followed Zero. For sure, if a sick twist of fate happened where his lover were to be with that woman, she would have done everything to make him happy. She might even earn his affections in return just for that alone for she’s that much in love with him and that thought makes him want to crush her thoroughly. Even just the idea that she could have made Zero happier for the world she’ll provide him is that of only light, a great contrast to the world he’s living in, sends vicious envy down his very core.

“Kaname?” His hunter’s raspy voice rang in the darkness of the night, clearly having just woken up. “What’s wrong?” Zero sleepily asked, leaning on his elbow to prop himself up to look at the brunette.

The pureblood king internally berated himself. His feelings and thoughts must have bled into the bond to have roused his lover, “It’s nothing, Zero.”

Zero gave him a sleepy scowl through half-lidded eyes, “Don’t give me that shit.” He snorted. He couldn’t catch his lover’s last thoughts but it must have been gloomy enough to stir him awake. He’s about ready to flop back on the soft sheets but the unconscious worry over what’s troubling the pureblood prevented any further drowsiness. He sleepily glared at the pureblood, ignoring the fact that it must have lost all its power to intimidate and warned, “Tell me or I’ll make you regret it.”

Kaname quietly smiled at the threat before sighing in defeat. “I just wondered…” he began after he finally laid down on the bed, taking his hunter with him and arranging him snugly in his half-embrace, “if you would have been happier living in a world full of light instead.”

An alternate future.

Life as a human.

Having a cute wife.

Normally fathering a son or daughter.

The pureblood didn’t voice anything else, but he knew Zero heard all the untold questions. Lilac eyes blinked, seemingly have fully awaken, before narrowing down on him. Sure that he said too much, he added, “So you see, it was really nothing.”

An exasperated sigh came from the hunter before he huffed and turned to the other side, giving his back to the pureblood. Kaname silently sighed and smiled ruefully, knowing it was his fault and he deserved such treatment. The placating hand he raised in order to pull his hunter back froze when Zero finally spoke.

“The only world I know is one where I’m a hunter.” The silverette said softly, “Where Ichiru is my brother, where Yuki is a clumsy oaf, where the chairman is an idiot, where Kaito is an asshole, where sensei is my master and where you’re a bastard.” He sighed audibly, “You’re an idiot. Even children know there couldn’t be a world of only light since there’s day and night.”
Kaname chuckled at the insult. Nevertheless, he knew Zero understood that he didn’t just mean the literal sense of light. The hunter continued before he could say anything in response.

“I don’t know any other world than what we have right now and I don’t know what other light you’re looking for,” Zero then continued in a mumble that was almost inaudible if only Kaname was not a vampire, “You and the children are here, isn’t that plenty of light already?”

Burgundy eyes can only stare at the back of his lover’s silver head in quiet surprise because of that hushed declaration which the hunter seemingly didn’t want him to hear. Copious affection he can’t seem to contain drowned the pureblood. His arms embraced his lover tenderly and burrowed his nose on his silver locks and breathed, “Zero… Zero…” he repeated softly.

“Stupid.” The hunter only mumbled but didn’t do anything to extract himself from the vampire’s hold and just like that, he finally managed to go back to sleep.

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A few days after the horrible and nightmarish chaos caused by the Day Class’ stampede and a short talk with an ecstatic chairman, two students found themselves following a substitute instructor in the empty hallways of the Cross Academy’s main building in the middle of the night.

“I’m telling you it’s a bad idea.”

“Come now, Zero, don’t say that. Think positive.”

“Right…” the silverette sighed with a heavy dose of irritation and frustration before saying, “I’m positive it’s a bad idea.”

Yuki huffed but didn’t stop walking, “Really, Zero, you’re making a big deal out of this.”

Silver eyebrows knotted dangerously close together as he regarded the small brunette with disbelieving eyes, “You’re the one who insisted on making this a secret and getting this freaking elective class now of all times! Do you know who normally teaches that class?! But now I’m the one making a big deal out of this?!”

“Oh hush, you. They’ll hear us!” the pureblood hissed under her breath when they stopped in front of a familiar oak double door. It will be horrible if they’re heard. She was even able to successfully hold her tongue though she’s really dying from excitement deep inside. She even asked her cute nephew for his precious blood stone. It’ll be disappointing to blunder now.

“That’s right, princesses. Ready?” said the aggravating voice of the substitute instructor.

“Shut up, Kaito. Why are you even teaching this subject? It doesn’t suit you one bit.” Zero growled.

Kaito sighed as if disappointed by his kohai’s shortsightedness, “Of course, Zero-chan,” he started with a tone of controlled mockery, “if I didn’t do this, I wouldn’t be able to teach your lovely ass some manners. And of course, it will ease me to know that sensei’s class is being handled by someone capable.” He finished with an aggravating smirk.

“Fuck you.”
“It’s just your first day and already, you’re not making a very good impression.” Kaito tutted, smirk still in place. Before Zero could make additional rude remarks, he added, “Well, it’s time and being the responsible teacher that I am, I don’t want to be late. Let’s go inside, shall we?”

Zero glared while Yuki giggled.

“Ah, one other thing, no fighting. Play nice with the other kids, unless, of course, the other kids wanna fight, then you have to kick the other kid’s butt or shoot their asses with Bloody Rose. That’s preferable.”

The silverette didn’t answer and simply flicked him the finger which Yuki slapped away.

Kaito only smirked even more, clearly unaffected, before throwing the double-doors open.

Yuki dragged Zero to the side so they won’t be visible from anyone inside the room while Kaito started off with the greetings.

“What are you doing here?” someone inside that sounded like Souen Ruka voiced in a tone of irritation that Zero could certainly relate to.

“Well, don’t sound too happy, lassie,” Kaito answered, impervious to the slight hostility, “Mr. Aikawa finally keeled over so he’ll be back to being only your English teacher and I will be replacing him for this subject.” He finished the news that the silverette was sure gave no one, save for his children, pleasure. Sure enough, he heard a few brave groans from the Night class.

“Yes, yes, we can celebrate later.” The brunette continued deadpan, not hurt by the abysmally poor welcome by the Night class, “Before we start though, you have two new classmates that will be joining you for this class. They’re first years so don’t bully them.” He added the last part with suppress laughter as if the thought of Zero getting bullied was such a funny idea.

With that cue, Yuki, with her massive strength, excitedly dragged him, heavy feet and all, into the room.

Petulant lilac gaze stubbornly stayed in the dark hallway and refused to face the class in front of him even after he heard a collective gasp of surprise and heard several movements from the class. He would have ignored even Yuki, who for sure was waving enthusiastically like an idiot to a certain blond, when he felt her cling to his white uniform as if startled.

He finally looked in front only to groan at the sight of the whole class, except for Kaname, the children, Ichijou who was still sporting a look of utter surprise and Shiki who was asleep, in a respectful bow.

“Welcome to the Night class, Yuki-sama and Zero-sama!” the students simultaneously exclaimed loud enough that the silverette thought that the whole Cross Academy would wake up.

“Uhh…” Yuki uttered eloquently.

He heard a snicker and his lavender glare immediately zeroed on the substitute instructor.

“Well, this is quite a welcome. You don’t get this every night, Zero-sama.” Kaito mocked in a voice full of mirth and amusement.

The silverette ex-prefect groaned again. This is going to be a hell of a long night.
**The Kuran Castle**

**Chapter Notes**

Author's Notes: Ah! \( \geq \omega \leq \) To think that there's still some of you who are reading this story. I'm so thankful. \( \geq \) I started to write again because in the offset chance that some are still waiting for the end of this story, I really don't want to disappoint. \(((@/3`)\) \( \cdots \Sigma^\dagger \) \( \\) As an avid FF reader as well, I keep on wishing that my favorite authors will take arms again and continue on to write their fantastic stories! And I already made a promise! \( (`\}\)\)

\( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) So really, I cannot say my gratitude enough to express its full extent. \( \phi(\sim\sim\sim)\) Thank you very much for waiting!

Also, I understand that many got excited when Zero transferred to the Night Class. \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) The happenings during that time will be included in the extras that I will post after the end of this fanfiction. \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) I just really needed to move on with the story.

To be honest with you guys, this chapter is full of useless details that's why it's reeeeeeaaaalllllyyy long. \( \phi(>\omega/\omega)\) It's just that I'm trying to make a point here and I'm just really fed up with some stories with royalties with too little staff (thank goodness for Livius!) \( \Sigma^\dagger \) I mean, you're the almighty dark king of the realm and you only have three maids?! What are you? A pauper?!! So I might have exaggerated or overdid it a bit (or a lot) but the point is... our pureblood king is a KING! We should give him everything (including and specially Zero) that he is owed! Am I right?! (Just agree with me, please!) \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) So err... there's that... I hope that you'll enjoy the wealth of details here! \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\)

This is the longest chapter I’ve ever written so hold on! \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\)

\( \phi(\sim\sim\sim)\) I did some estimation and if I can write everything accordingly and without fail, again please don't hold out any hope since I'm incompetent, this story will be finished in less than 10 chapters and by the mid of next year! Woah! \( (>\omega^\wedge)\) I have so many extras planned for this. I hope that you can still find it in you to look forward to it! \( \phi(\sim\sim\sim)\)

Another note, I have been recently accepted in a new job so I'm honestly quite busy. \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) Though I initially wanted to update bi-weekly, it seems that it would be impossible given how busy I will be. \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) I'm so sorry! I think I would update every month as well, like my sister. I'll try not to be absent again like last time. \( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) The other chapters have been outlined but not completed yet so please bear with me!

\( (>\sim\sim\sim<)\) Cheers to Kanze! o( \( \wedge \) \( \wedge \) o)

“We’ve entered the castle’s premises.” Kaname declared as he roused the sleepy hunter.

Zero languorously stirred and turned to look outside the still moving vehicle. He could see green grasslands and rows of trees but based on the still even speed of the limousine, it seems that they’re
still not there. Indeed, when amethyst eyes looked more carefully out the window, he can’t see a, he’s assuming, big castle. He grumbled. He could have used five more minutes of sleep. He scowled at the brunette who looks like a perfect picture of patience and indulgence.

Damn it. He’s tired since he since hasn’t establish a solid rhythm after transferring to the Night class a few days ago. Yeah, sometimes he falls asleep during his classes as a Day class student but he’s still mostly awake during the day. Good thing that it was the examination period and Yuki and he were excused from taking the ones from the electives so they were relatively free. He was able to sleep during breaks and during classes once the exams were over and they were just waiting for the Academy to formally let the students go.

Remembering those last few days of school is making a huge, invisible vein in his head throb. He thought it was already a strain having to silence hysterical and passionate cries of admiration directed to other people, he learned that it’s even more stressing being on the receiving end of the unwanted attention. There was also that slight issue when he asked for his own room in the Moon dorm. Damn it. He was already trying his best but wishing to keep his own privacy isn’t too much to ask, right? Well, the pureblood bastard deemed that it is and the result was the shattered windows of the entire old building adjacent to the Moon dorm. There’s even that infuriating Aido, a definite waste of space, throwing baleful looks at him while sulking obnoxiously as if he did something unfair.

Another difficulty came in the form of their exquisite silver fraternal twins raising a fuss about wanting to transfer to the first year department to join the silver hunter. They were denied since they’re already registered as second years which have been known far and wide in the whole Cross Academy. They didn’t exactly take the news elegantly. Zero reckons that there are still about three uprooted trees in the academy which they probably will never be able to replant. It took several promises of spending time together as much as possible and bribes of several of Zero’s home cook dishes and desserts to calm them down. However, even with that, the two (sometimes with Akira to Kohaku’s dismay) still manage to sneak in a first year class or two even during the examination.

It’s a great thing, however, that his concerns about having to leave the tasking disciplinary committee duties to his brother and the newly appointed prefect were put to rest. It’s reassuring too since the Day class students seemed to have finally dropped their fake acts of obedient behavior and went back to the dreadful habit of annoyingly screaming their vocal cords out after they learned of his transfer. Impressed lilac orbs watched as one Wakaba Sayori relatively quell the loud commotion from hormonal teenagers using only a quiet look. The students still hurled undying love towards the vampires’ direction but not one tried to step out of line.

The silverette internally snorted when he remembered the insulted expression on Yuki’s face when he pointed out how Wakaba Sayori managed to perfect the disciplinary committee duties in less than four days, something Yuki wasn’t able to achieve even while doing the same job for almost four years.

Yuki and Zero were spared from the guilt of involving someone innocent to replace them and do the thankless and unwanted post when the chairman informed them of the new system that he has devised. Ichiru and the new prefect will only need to help with the cross-over while the nightly patrol will fall entirely on his and Yuki’s shoulders and will be done during every break. This way, the prefects won’t be burdened with sleepless nights and exhausted bodies on top of insurmountable dislikes. But since it’s Ichiru and Wakaba-san, the hunter doubted that they would experience the last concern. Anyway, it assuaged Zero’s worry and guilt for doing something selfish. He also won’t feel so useless, dumping his responsibilities to someone else.

After announcing the start of the holidays, they weren’t able to leave right away since they waited for the chairman to finish his work so they were delayed for another day. Now, after an ass long train
ride and just as long car ride, he’s even more exhausted. Grudgingly though, he’ll have to admit that this freaking limousine is very comfortable even though he did kick a fuss about not wanting to get in such a fancy car. Kaito’s loud groans accompanied his in the background. If not for the gathering onlookers at the train station and the large pleading eyes of his children, he would have opted in to just taking the bus (even though Kaname said there would be no buses that will pass there). He could just tell they were a spectacle of sleek black cars headed by a damn limousine.

Needless to say, Kiryū Zero is extremely tired and the last thing he needed is an unfairly good-looking pureblood cutting his precious sleep short and muddling his brain with that irritatingly fond smile which seems wont to appear after his transfer. Well, if the bastard’s mood didn’t improve even after going through all that hassle, there’ll be hell to pay. Is not like Zero will actually admit the greatest motivation for his transfer to the brunette but given the genial aura replacing his mate’s forbidding and cold one, Zero reckoned he won’t even get away denying it.

“We are here.” The pureblood repeated, smiling affectionately when glaring amethysts decided to close again.

Belatedly, the excited cheers of the children reached the silver hunter’s ears. He confusedly looked outside the car again. But they’re still moving… they must still be several miles away… He might have accidentally let that question slip through their bond or his confused expression was a dead giveaway but the brunette answered him anyway.

“Well, the castle itself is indeed still miles away, but we have entered the Kuran land. You should be able to see the castle from here.” Kaname patiently explained before pointing forward.

Lilac eyes widen when he can indeed make out a grand white palace standing proudly in an elevated place at a distance through the windshield, numbly noting that the privacy barrier is down. It’s probably the largest building he has ever seen. It looks five times larger than the Hunter Association headquarters. Damn, and only Kaname used to live there? Annoyingly rich bastard. He provided a heatless sideways glare to the pureblood, not bothering to close the bond and letting his thoughts echo earning him a chuckle.

“It’s not just my home. It’s yours now as well.” Kaname offered, still smiling lovingly at his hunter as a becoming flush decorated normally pale cheeks, fully waking him up. “And in the future, our children’s too.”

He averted his eyes and simply stared at the admittedly stunning structure. *Damn it. Trust Kaname to slap him with cheesy lines with every freaking opportunity.* He heard him chuckle once again at his disgruntlement. Despite his ire, he didn’t attempt to detach from the hand that intertwined itself with his own.

Their vehicle passed several rows of maple trees which painted such a classical view of a spectacular autumn. Several oaks, elm trees, cherry trees, and old rhododendron trees that they can see at a distance drew the castle ground as a picturesque and breathtakingly beautiful estate. When lavender orbs spied a large, sparkling lake, small hills and more trees dotting the green, uneven terrain, he wished he could have brought White Lily. Ah, but he won’t be able to ride her even if she’s here since his doctor had forbidden him from horseback riding until after the delivery, he belatedly remembered, unable to help the slight coloring of his cheeks.

“We still have functioning carriages.” The vampire king offered even though he knew that his lover would never accept and true to his expectation, the silverette growled an ‘I’d rather walk’ with an utterly revolted expression on his ethereal face. He chuckled.

They passed by enormous ornate black gates of a towering four-storey stone gatehouse and soon,
they felt the vehicle slowly decrease its speed, passing by immaculate lawns and manicured trees and hedges. They finally stopped in front of a large portico where a waiting attendant opened their limo’s door. Zero almost retracted his hand from his mate’s grip when he instinctively pulled back upon seeing the large assembly of uniformed servants welcoming them beside the huge entrance hall. Nevertheless, Kaname, who had already alighted from the car, refused to let him go and immediately ushered him out of the vehicle. The attendant then escorted the children out. The hunter idly wondered how many of them were forced to wake up and were kicked out of bed just to stand beside the doorway in broad daylight. He almost felt sorry for them.

Zero looked up and he barely collected enough presence of mind not to gape like an idiot as lilac orbs surveyed the impressive edifice. He didn’t really know what to expect. Obviously, he envisaged it to be humongous and maybe with some turrets and towers like the ones shown in some animated movies meant for children that Yuki still likes to watch from time to time but what met his eyes is simply outside anything he had ever imagined (if he tried to imagine it anyways). They called it a castle but it’s more like a palace and was easily the grandest structure he had ever seen.

The hunter could vaguely hear their children animatedly exclaimed about the similarities as they climbed the few broad travertine steps of the porch. They mused loudly about the things that are missing and murmur about the familiar faces that they recognized. Before he was able to turn to them, a smart and venerable looking old man, who is more properly dressed than Zero, approached them and politely bowed. His last action was immediately copied by the staff standing on either side of the gigantic double doors.

“Welcome back, Kuran-sama.” Politely addressed the old man and was echoed collectively by the staff. “And welcome, Joō-sama and your royal highnesses. We look forward to showing you the utmost hospitality the Kuran castle has to offer. Please accept our deepest congratulations, your majesty.” He, and afterwards the employees, offered.

The ostentatious greeting heaved a deep sigh from Zero. Suddenly, he wanted to sleep again but then frowned upon registering the old man’s words. What did this guy just called me? Before he could ask for clarification, Kaname cordially responded.

“I’m back, Katsuragi. Thank you for looking after the castle while I was gone. This is Kiryū Zero, my mate.” He then started introducing the children even though he knew that his butler was already well aware of the facts and by the sweet and warm smiles on their seraphic faces, it seems that his children were also acquainted with him, though it’s in the future. “Please see to it that they’re comfortable and that they have everything they’ll require.”

“Understood, Kuran-sama.” Katsuragi replied with a bow again before turning to the silver hunter and the children, said in the same manner, “My name is Katsuragi, the butler. If there’s anything you need, please don’t hesitate to let me know.”

There was really nothing Zero could do but grunt his acknowledgement while the children graciously thanked him and assured him of their ready compliance. He could tell that they’re extremely comfortable with this situation and are used to the pampering attention. But then again, how can they not when it’s the environment they grew up in? He’s only thankful that they’re not exceedingly spoiled and annoyingly whinny though even he cannot deny the persistence and stubbornness born from being used to having their way their whole life. But that must be just Kaname’s genes talking.

He could sense rather than see their whole party gather at the entrance as vehicle after vehicle arrive and stop in front of the porch and the passengers were escorted out their cars. He could hear Kaito’s hiss at the poor servant who tried to usher him that he’s not an invalid and to leave him the fuck
alone with the chairman berating him for his rudeness. The knowledge that a certain pair of amethyst orbs is peering worriedly at the ash-brown hunter made Zero wish that Kaito trips and lands on his face just for a little while. After all, it won’t be the first time he would have broken his nose.

They were greeted by an imposing gothic styled castle. With its ancient, noble air, multiple towers, differently styled and sized bay windows, oriel, spires and its massive breadth, the edifice could give an intimidating and cold impression. However, the pearly white walls, the countless large, tall windows and the signs of life in the form of smoke coming from numerous chimneys rather gave it an inviting ambience. Despite the intriguing and strikingly magnificent exterior, the hunter found himself taking a step back, unable to stand the opulence and extravagance of the grandiose palace. Every curve and glass, even the way the plants were maintained, screamed of wealth and prestige. For sure, the interior is even more stately and lavish and the thought is enough to make Zero feel like he’ll go blind. He didn’t want to imagine the fortune needed to maintain such a behemoth of a place. We’ll that’s Kaname’s money anyway. Why should he concern himself with stupid vampires spending their stupid money on stupid things?

The astonished gasps from Ichiru and Yuki on perceiving the castle were masked by the commanding voices of the Night class to the attendants who welcomed them. After Kaname introduced a very shy Yuki, a slightly embarrassed Ichiru and a gruff looking Kaito, they proceeded inside and were followed by the Night class.

“My, it’s been a while.” Kaien breathed, his voice and eyes soft with nostalgia and a touch of loneliness. He gazed at Yuki, who was still looking around with large, excited chocolate orbs, with somber eyes as if wishing that his dear friends could also witness the return of their daughter to the home they grew up in, “Though it delayed us for a day, I’m glad that I was able to arrive together with everyone. What a lucky thing.”

Zero didn’t let his guardian know lest he was subjected to obnoxious crocodile tears and excessive fatherly fawning, but he was actually the one who insisted that they can’t leave the ex-hunter alone. Despite all his skills and capabilities, it would be nothing if cornered alone by an entire association. Seeing him happy like that, without his usual irksome tone and aggravating mode, he was glad he insisted upon it.

Passed the gigantic entryway was a spacious foyer as vast as an average ball room in cream and rose gold with burgundy and mahogany accents, and polished porcelain flooring with large rosette inlays. Twin grand staircases with polished wooden bannisters framed a wide hallway leading to the corridor connected to the other chambers on the ground floor.

They were led to a double door on their right and to a large, and uselessly spacious in Zero’s opinion, reception room with colors of soft jade and emerald, elegant mahogany mouldings and cornice with bronze flowers motifs. Several bronze colored chesterfield sofas and armchairs, and mahogany Edwardian tea tables made up four different sitting areas. Long amber velvet curtains were drawn, affording them a pleasant view of the maintained front yard through the large bay windows. The worn out group were instantly assisted by the maids and footmen who were already inside with Victorian tea trolleys containing drinks and snacks for refreshment.

Finding himself quite famished after crossing unnecessarily wide space just to get somewhere to seat on top of the long journey, Zero grudgingly accepted the spread that a maid had laid out on the table near the seat he had taken when he saw iced water and smelled the hot strawberry tea, strawberry cakes, strawberry cookies and skittles. Damn, they know his weakness. He should really be getting tired of strawberries by this time but he still can’t stop himself from continuously devouring the accursed fruits whenever in sight. He nodded his thanks and looked around as the others settle about the room with tea at hand, expelling deep sighs of relief. Kaname, who naturally took the seat beside
him, addressed the crowd and began directing them about the sleeping arrangements. To the hunter’s relief, everyone gets their own room, except him (well, what did he expect?), so his brother is not roomed with that irritating blond. He also hoped that wherever this state apartment is, where Kaito will stay, it’s far away from the royal bedchambers or whatever.

“Ichiru-kun and Yuki will stay in the Artemis Hall. Hanabusa and Ichijou will take you there. Takamiya-sensei and the chairman are to be installed to the state apartments in the West wing. You’ll find your belongings already brought up. Katsuragi, kindly show Takamiya-sensei and the headmaster to their rooms.” After getting an affirmative response from his butler, he turned to the Night class, “You may all use the same quarters that you’ve been using, as always.” And to his sweet little darlings who have previously informed him which of the royal quarters they will eventually claim for themselves, “I believe you already know your way well.”

“By heart, chichiue, and with several shortcuts.” Beamed Akira.

When they were dismissed by their king, Aido immediately took Ichiru’s hand to expertly lead him up the grand staircase and to the state apartments in the central ward, obviously knowing his way through experience. Ichijou with Yuki, the children and the rest of the Night class followed for the royal bedchambers and guest bedrooms are in the same way. Because of the long exhausting travel and the fact that it’s not yet midday, the majority of the Night class decided to retire first.

Kaname whispered through the bond about a wish to visit a certain place with him. The hunter frowned at the quiet request but nodded and so the couple was left in the reception room while the others went to their respective bedrooms. After filling himself at least so he can continue to function before supper, the silverette was again led to the wide cream hallway with gold panels and numerous wall sconces. He didn’t try to take back his hand since it will bring more trouble than its worth.

Twin footsteps resounded on the ornate marble floors as the vampire king led him through different corridors and rooms, offering only slight nods to the bowing servants they occasionally meet, until they reach a covered outside hallway lined with ionic columns.

They journeyed on to what Zero could tell was a courtyard in the east side of the palace. There was a brief tug in his guts upon spying the somber expression on the silent pureblood that he wasn’t able to appreciate the romantic fountains, classic garden statues, amazing topiaries and the way the hedges and trees were arranged symmetrically in various parts of the landscape. After a long moment of quietly traversing the ridiculously expansive courtyard, the hunter finally found out why when they paused in front of a pair of U-shaped stairs leading to a stately ivory domed structure suffused with solemn ambience. Even without being told, Zero just knew that that was a mausoleum. They took one of the stairs and silently went inside the eerily mute space. Kaname guided him through another flight of stairs and various corridors before finally stopping at an archway.

Just before they went in the large vault, lavender orbs were met by melancholic burgundy orbs and a mournful smile that were so different from his usual serene or teasing ones and for a moment, he felt his heart break at the sight. Upon entering the solemn room, the silverette can vaguely note the modest but artistic designs of the walls, floors, ceilings, and the simple alabaster sculptures inside arched wall niches, but his focus was stolen by the two large stone caskets situated in the middle of the room, only slightly illuminated by the few decorative glass windows depicting large roses. Stone sculptures resembling the image of the late king and queen lay on top of the burial boxes. He didn’t know what to do or say as he was led closer still by the hand tightly grasping his.

“I’m home, hahaha, chichiue.”

The deep, quiet voice of the pureblood that knifed through the hush of the tomb still felt so imperceptible despite the absence of any kind of noise. In fact, the earlier hums of birds, sound of
rustling leaves and steady flow of the water from fountains didn’t penetrate the silent room as if they’re too shy to rouse any disturbance that might disrupt the peace of the beloved souls that slept within that place. Zero, for the life of him, was unable to speak for there was a heavy pressure weighing his heart down and choking him. He can only stand stupidly as the brunette continued on in that heart-wrenchingly quiet tone.

“I’ve brought my mate with me… I’m sure you would have loved him as much as I do.”

And as if kicked by a horse, Zero was unable to stop himself from making a sound but with no concrete words to say, stuttered, “I… I…” he started, generating a quietly surprised look from the pureblood like he really didn’t expect him to say anything and merely wishes for his presence to endure the stabbing pain and loneliness felt when seeking those that he’ll never be able to meet in his lifetime, but Zero felt compelled to speak. It’s as if Kaname’s parents are in front of him and as someone who has experience being a parent to a child who is romantically inclined to someone, he wanted to ease their worries, even more so since they were no longer here. He knew that he would escape from the underworld if he’s even the slightest doubt of his children’s happiness. So despite the self-consciousness he was feeling, he bared his feelings, forgetting about how ridiculous he must sound and all those who would have laughed at this unusual act from him. After taking a deep breath once, he straightforwardly said, “I’m Kiryū Zero, a hunter. He… Kaname… To be honest, he’s such a pain in the ass but… well… I love him and-and I’ll protect him. So please rest in peace.” and then ducking his head in a rather brusque but formal bow, he continued, “Thank you for protecting Kaname, but both of you don’t have to worry anymore.”

It’s extremely rare that the pureblood would find himself at lost for words, but it’s exactly how he felt as he watch this impossibly beautiful creature bow deeply to his parent’s grave with a lovely blush running to his ears and down his neck. The contrived mask he was forced to wear to hide the weaknesses his enemies are always searching for slipped completely to reveal such a tender smile and an almost vulnerable look in his auburn eyes, quietly watching as the silverette straightened up and quite unable to meet his eyes. He had once already forsaken all notions of being happy like his parents despite their reassurances that there was someone out there for him. Apparently, they were right, but how did he come to deserve such a lovely being when his soul had already been completely corrupted and sullied?

Now, more than ever, he wished that his parents are alive to meet his beloved and witness the love between them that he thought he was too sinful to obtain. He knew they would have loved his hunter like their own child and would have found his daring and crass attitude as charming as he does. How he wished he could proudly show him off. He just knew how happy they would have been for him. How they would laugh at their children’s antics, how they would have showered his silverette with so much gifts that he would throw a fit, how his mother would have pestered the silverette to join her in her tea parties and shopping with the help of their daughters, how his father would have invited the hunter to shoot with him in the castle grounds and how they would have loved to see him spend his life with this unbearably captivating person.

‘It’s as you see, mother, father. I’m the most fortunate man for I have this perfect creature by side. There’s no need for you to worry anymore.’

“Thank you, Zero.” Kaname softly whispered, squeezing the pale hand that was still in his grasp.

“Well… it’s not like I did it for you.” The hunter responded while looking anywhere but the pureblood. He winced at his obviously gentle tone. Damn it. He intended to voice that out more brusquely.

The brunette chuckled at the uncharacteristically flustered state of his lover. At length, he added, “Let
us visit your parents’ grave next time.”

Startled amethyst gaze finally got the nerve to meet sincere russet eyes. He sighed as he briefly smiled before nodding to the pureblood beside him.

The pair stayed in the mausoleum for a few more minutes. Zero patiently waited for Kaname while he returned his tight grip and internally murmured more words of gratitude and promises to the couple who treasured the pureblood. They promised to bring Yuki and the children with them next time.

Once out, the couple was in a still somber but decisively more cheerful mood. Kaname then proceeded to show him the white chapel standing a few kilometers away from the mausoleum. Zero briefly wondered why there would be a chapel inside a vampire’s castle but not because of the bullshit myth of them being unable to come inside. He just thought that vampires are too vain and pompous to actually bow down to a god which earned him an indulgent head shake from Kaname. It was a fair distance from where they came from that Zero was sufficiently tired by the time they finished the tour of the small sanctuary. The silverette felt that the strawberry snacks were decades ago. Sensing this, the brunette offered to go back inside the castle for some refreshments while pointing out some of the towering structures like the glasshouse and aviary that they can see far way. The hunter was astonished to know that they have visited less than half of one of the two courtyards in the castle.

Later, Zero would learn that the Kuran castle is a colossal rectangular structure covering what amounts to about eighteen acres or more than seven hectares of floor space containing two extensive courtyards, the east and west, in the hollowed center separated by a large building, the central ward which connected the south wing and the north wing. In the west courtyard, a large white chapel, an oratory, a dovecote and an elegant building containing the large apartments meant for the relatives of the royal family that was annexed to the central ward can be found while the Kuran mausoleum, a smaller chapel, an aviary and three greenhouses are located in the east courtyard. Four round towers can be found at each corner of the palace, mostly containing the staff bedrooms, some small offices, storage rooms and other utility rooms. He wondered if he’ll be able to survive the whole winter break living in this place with his two eyes intact.

When the silverette was informed that the whole Kuran property covers more than eight hundred hectares of land all in all, he amended his thoughts. He was now more afraid of losing his legs before going blind. Zero briefly wondered if, should the interest and desire arise, he would be able to explore the entire castle during their stay there. He reckoned he wouldn’t.

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After leaving the royal couple, the group treaded several marble and carpeted halls of the Central Ward where the group split up. The Night class, except their pureblood princess and Shiki, are staying at the Northwest Wing where their rooms are located. Ruka, Rima, Seiren and Kain went straight to their respective ward while Yuki, Shiki, and Ichiru guided by Ichijou and Aido proceeded to an annexed building called the Artemis Hall where the royal’s relatives stay. The children went to the part of the central ward where most of the royal bedchambers are located.

Ichiru, who’s already drained after their journey, can’t help the appreciative sighed that escaped from his lips upon spotting an elevator. He’s just about to collapse and just crawl in one of the settees that can be found against the rococo paneled cream walls from time to time. He wondered if it’s what
they are for, an oasis for weary travellers feeling faint crossing the Kuran castle’s fucking extensive and meandered corridors. As it is, only his lover’s hand holding his is preventing him from sliding on the floor and never getting up. The silver prefect was already wishing that the steel doors will open up to his floor, better yet directly to his room, but the first one to get off the lift was the listless brunette who managed to stay silent the whole time. To the silverette’s relief, his lover guided him out on the next floor and proceeded to lead him to a state apartment on the fourth floor of Artemis hall.

Despite his fatigue, lilac eyes were still able to perceive the grandiosity of the chamber they entered and can’t help pausing for a bit to admire the lilac and gold room with deep purple accents. Gold plated hand carved solid wood and gilded wall panels, baroque wall sconces and paintings decorate the interior. An antique tripod tea table was placed between two classic violet bergère near the lilac mantelpiece with gold plated brass decorations, an elegant beveled glass fire folding screen placed in front. A seating area made of vintage camelback sofas in mulberry and, to his surprise, since less than an hour in this castle made him forget that he’s currently living in the modern era, a large flat screen television occupied the another part of the room. Further in the room, beyond the heavy double-sided purple velvet cupped draperies with golden embellishment, silk plum with rococo designs covered semi-octagonal window seats of the oriel.

Ichiru was still scrutinizing an antique looking candelabra on the fireplace when the door to the left opened and out came five liveried vampires who all lined up neatly in front of them. One of them, a sharp looking guy with sleek tawny hair, came forward before all five collectively bowed while greeting them politely, “Welcome back, Aido-sama and welcome to the Kuran Castle, Kiryū-sama. My name is Neil and I’m at your service.” He then introduced the other male and three female attendants with him, “Behind me are Ayato, Ayumu, Yuzuki, and Honoka. We’ll be at your disposal so please let us know if there’s anything you require.”

“H-huh?” the silverette eloquently uttered.

“He’ll be your valet, Ichiru. He’s like your personal assistant.” The noble immediately explained.

“Oh… eh… uhm… err… thanks?” Ichiru flushed at his inelegant response.

Thankfully, his lover saved him from further embarrassment, though no one seems to mind but him, by addressing the servants in his stead. “Thank you for attending to Ichiru. If you’re done unpacking his things and arranging the quarters, I think that would be all for now. He’ll call you if he needs anything.”

Neil politely smiled and nodded, “Understood, Aido-sama. Please excuse us.”

A deep sigh escaped bow-shaped lips at the attendants’ departure. He’ll never get use to this treatment, he’s sure. While Ichiru can say that he had received his fair share of admiring fans and besotted attention, he’s never been regarded quite so highly and courteously.

“You must tell me if you’re feeling unwell.” Hanabusa said in a serious tone before proceeding to the door where the attendants emerged from. The main bedroom has a lighter color scheme with white ceilings and walls and lavender paneling with carved scroll designs, and cream and beige vintage carpet. A silvery Georgian chandelier with almond and spear-shaped crystals hung in the middle of the ceiling. Most of the furniture, drapes, coverings, and decorations are in violet, cream, silver and
A magnificent cream four poster bed that is twice as large as his dorm bed with an ornate headboard and purple quilt and hangings was situated in the middle of the furthest wall with a violet upholstered tufted storage bench at the foot, a cream end table which is a cleverly disguised small beverage cooler beside it. Big colonial windows and a balcony glass doors with gold and mauve draperies lined the right wall. In front of one of the windows is a cream executive desk and bookshelf. To their left, a grey Florentine oval gilded wall mirrors at above the elegant cream marble fireplace with a black wrought iron fire screen, accentuated by painted violet porcelain floor vases at each side and a plush violet high back armchair placed in front. This room could probably house a female since there’s a cream and grey, thankfully not overly girly, French vanity dresser with lavender stool and purple upholstered chaise at the leftmost part of the room.

The blond vampire guided him to the side of the canopy bed and pressed what he thought was part of the elaborate scroll wall panel just under a silvery Georgian wall sconce. A small part of the cream wall turned to reveal a secret device with a touchscreen monitor, and the silverette can’t help but be strongly reminded of the spy movies he watch with his guardian and Yuki (for some reason, his brother found them corny. The heathen.)

“Press this so you can contact your valet, the kitchens, the servant’s quarters, or the butler’s office.” Hanabusa then launched a simple explanation about how to operate the device. He could tell that while his lover was listening, his expression says that he’ll try not to use it so he was compelled to repeat and stress out that he can contact someone if he needs any assistance.

While perusing the contents of the secret chiller the silverette discovered at the other side of the bed, the noble went to check the door on its left. The prefect followed, with a cold canned tea, when he heard him sigh in relief.

“Ah, they’re all here.”

“What is-, woah.” Ichiru faltered after following his lover to the other room. For a moment, he had forgotten that he’s currently in a castle for it felt like he was transported inside a small but roomy sophisticated boutique with grey, charcoal and dark purple motif. “What’s this place?”

“The wardrobe, of course. These are all yours.”

“Eh?” How depressing. This wardrobe is even bigger than his room in the chairman’s house or the dorm, thought the silverette drily as he let his lover guide him inside.

Rows upon rows of shelved clothing met startled lilac orbs. To his right, he could count up to three horizontal built-in two partitioned, double poled clothing racks and with the ones on the walls, resulted to a total of five partitioned clothing racks. All of which are filled with rows of t-shirts, polo shirts, henleys, turtlenecks, sweaters, pullovers, knitwear, hoodies, vests, coats, winter coats, jackets with different kinds of collars, cuts and fit, in various colors, designs and fabrics, both casual and formal, a mix of long sleeves and short sleeves. On the furthest wall, passed the rows of upper garments, were shelves for what look like several pairs of denim pants, dress pants, khaki pants, and cargo shorts, still in varieties of style, designs, colors and fabrics, were neatly stacked and folded. Upon inspection, the prefect found that all the vertical panels can also be opened to reveal neatly lined ties and bow ties, another with handkerchiefs and gloves and other things on tiny slanted shelves.

To his left, there’s a wider horizontal, double-sided built-in shelf, a floor to ceiling mirror mounted on its vertical panel, which created another two areas where two big built-in center island, glass covered jewelry holders with drawers can be found. On the side of the built-in shelf facing Ichiru was several
wide and narrow drawers. The wider ones houses some of the clothes he brought with him, some contained lounge wear, sportswear and pajamas while the narrow ones contained underwear, boxers, socks and scarves. A multiple partitioned, slanted shelves covering two walls were filled by a ludicrous number of shoes. Each shelf were dedicated to pairs of differently styled derbies, oxfords, brogues, loafers, monkstraps, sneakers, running shoes, rubber shoes, boat shoes, espadrilles, sandals, slip-ons, brogue boots and chukkas in various shades of black, brown, white and gray. Accessories like watches, earrings, necklaces, rings and bracelets in gold, white gold, silver, stainless steel with leather, gemstones and other crystals are found in the built-in center island on that side.

On the other side of the double-sided built-in shelf, the walls were also partitioned shelves. The shelves on one wall were dedicated to various colors and designs of hats and caps like panamas, homburgs, porkpies, boaters, fedoras, bowlers, trilbies, newsboys, western, trappers, flat caps, baseballs, and for some unknown reason, top hats. There’s even a specialized shelves made for watch caps, bonnets and other knit hats. Ichiru is never really the type to wear hats even during hot or rainy days so he doubted those guys will ever see the light of day. On the other wall, the shelves contained multiple briefcases, backpacks, messenger bags, duffels, sports bags, crossbodies, satchels, sling bags, belt bags and the big travelling bag he used. The built-in center island there is filled with leather belts, sunglasses and wallets of various colors, styles, kinds and color.

If the silverette had known that there are already clothes waiting for him, he wouldn’t have bothered packing. Damn it. He lost sleep doing that since he completely forgot about the trip to the Kuran castle with the flurry of the examinations. He’s sure that even his best shirt is a disgrace next to the ones provided for him. Well, he guessed it will be a comfort to know that should he try to runaway for some reason and seek asylum in his future brother-in-law’s abode, he need not bother packing some clothes. He wondered how his twin’s own wardrobe is. Knowing Kaname-senpai, he would prepare more for his brother and knowing Zero, he would throw a fit. Yeah, he’d rather not know.

Behind the three large white papasans placed in the middle of the walk-in closet, there’s a light grey, four fold lacquered screen and Ichiru had been bullied to watch enough period dramas to know it’s to give him privacy while changing. He can’t help internally snorting since he doubted he’ll find it hard to change given how many rooms are in his room.

Ichiru noticed that the lined partitioned shelves for the folded clothes was broken in the middle to give way to the door leading to a big bath and comfort room in mosaic granite tiles of brown, flesh, tan and beige. The wall, with built-in shelves housing decorative jars containing some unknown bath herbs, flower vases, several scented bath oils, a small television which will probably electrocute him given his luck and at least four neatly folded towels, curved to fit in a white porcelain bathtub that’s big enough to accommodate two people.

Beside that is a large shower room, with withdrawn shower glass slides, also semi-oblong shaped that could probably harbor five people at once and right across it a decidedly long mirror counter, perhaps for the use of those five people, with two sinks. Three small white vases containing some white flowers, scented liquid soap pump bottles, a cute synthetic tissue holder, an unopened toothbrush and two water cups were placed near the sink. Numerous drawers and two cabinets can be found under the counter. On the same lane, just a little space beside the counter and located near the bidet and a metal toilet tissue holder is a porcelain bowl.

It’s definitely too big for the use of only one person but it’s almost like any other bathroom he has seen, just ten times more posh, except for the large vintage cushioned wingback armchair in front of the big curtained colonial windows situated at the other end of the vanity counter and near the tub. Maybe it’s where he can sleep if he’s too tired to carry himself to bed after his bath but he could probably just lie on the wide flesh carpet on the floor since there’s more than enough room, the silverette thought. It seems like the Kuran Castle is his natural enemy for it’s designed to kill him
with fatigue before he could prepare himself for the day. He'll never get anything done to be sure because he’ll be exhausted just trying to go to the entrance hall. He can already imagine himself panting in the effort of just reaching the dining room for breakfast every morning. He sighed.

The silverette went to the other door on the opposite side of the room, near the tub and armchair, and found himself back in his sleeping chamber, near the windows, just as the blond vampire emerged from the wardrobe.

Cerulean orbs immediately noted the slight exhaustion in lavender hues, “What’s wrong, Ichiru?”

“Nothing, Hana.” The silver prefect reassured, “Just overwhelmed, I guess. Never really thought that vampires are this rich.”

“Oh.” At the slightly troubled look etched on his modest lover’s face, Hanabusa thought it’s not the best time for him to reveal that he has already taken the liberty of preparing the same courtesy for him back in the Aido’s main mansion and that a completely filled wardrobe that is twice as big as this is already waiting for him for the inevitable time that he visits. “Well, I’m sure… err… you’ll get used to this.” Then after clearing his throat, offered, “Why don’t you rest first? I’ll get you once we need to go down for supper.”

“Yeah, thanks.” Ichiru really didn’t want to be left alone inside such a gigantic room but he’d rather not risk his lover’s life. If his brother decided to check on him and found him snuggling with the noble, he might just lose it. Given the ire and exasperation his frugal twin must be feeling after seeing such extravagance coupled with the fast becoming normal crankiness he’s been feeling as of late, he’d rather not test the pregnant demon’s temper.

So after sharing a brief but deep kiss, the blond left the silverette to rest.

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The couple finally made it inside the castle and was on their way towards one of the private parlors when Kaname stopped at a hallway, at the mouth of a different corridor leading to a vast open space with high ceiling. Lilac orbs followed his mate’s gaze and fell on a set of heavy-looking ornate double doors beyond the spacious hall. He looked back to the pureblood to find a serene smile.

“Kindly come with me for a moment, Zero.”

The silverette let the brunette usher him to that direction, frowning curiously when he noted a small dose of rare excitement that crept in his normally quiet voice.

The two servants just outside the huge entryway of the Grand Hall, or throne room and one of the largest chambers in the castle which is mainly used for important public assemblies and very special balls, bowed when they approached. The vampire king elegantly waved his hand and the lads quietly went away, giving their sovereigns some privacy. They can’t help but glance at the consort and wasn’t able to stop themselves from blushing to find him as stunningly beautiful as the rumors said.

“This is where the gathering will take place and where the announcement of Yuki’s return and your formal introduction as the royal consort will happen.” Kaname explained as they neared the entrance. “Nor-,”

The silverette sharply turned to his lover, a confused frown marring his features, “Wait, what? Con-
what? We’re not even married!” Zero interjected, anxious at being put in the spotlight and in a possibly embarrassing position in front of an assembly he didn’t care about.

“But we are already mated.” The brunette calmly pointed out, unperturbed by the wild glint filling amethyst eyes.

“Is that how it is?” No one gave him the fucking memo. While the hunter knew he’s going to be subjected to an annoying amount of disgusting fawning and unwanted attention, he didn’t know that he’ll also be called in a disturbingly girlish way.

“Well, it was certainly unorthodox for a marriage ceremony is normally conducted first before vampires officially mate but establishing the mating bond is the most crucial part of the vampire union. A simple marriage would be null if the couple is not mated.” Kaname knew that had he been anyone else, criticism about his immoral behavior will be decorating the newspaper of their society. His status and his immense power as a pureblood and king were the only things protecting him from the vile foxes and wolves in their race. “I guess we are labeled as a modern couple. But then again, one look at you and surely everyone will understand how I couldn’t have helped myself.”

It seems that all the mushy crap inside this ridiculous vampire’s mind has finally caused him head trauma since he had apparently forgotten that it started when he was trying to save this bastard ass from the wound he sustained after being skewered by a level E. The hunter heard his mate’s soft chuckle, no doubt hearing his disparaging insults through the bond.

“Regardless, you will be introduced as the consort.” Kaname repeated, smiling affectionately, “Together with the children, Ichiru-kun and Yuki, you and I will be the last ones to pass through this door once all the guests have gathered.” He finished before easily throwing the great and thick double doors that must be about three or four times as tall as him.

Russet orbs met the familiar grandiose interior of the rectangular room that is three times as long as it was wide with incredibly high ceiling magnificently painted with images of Roman gods and goddesses and where several vintage murano glass chandeliers with large ice drop crystals hung, surrounded by floor to ceiling windows and glass terrace doors. Washed white marble mosaic depicting large Kuran insignias covered the floor. Above the main entrance is a small balcony where an orchestra will play music for the guests. Several glamorous baroque columns bearing the Kuran crest lined near the walls with the walls’ borders decorated with marble statues. Under a canopy, a large dais with three broad steps situated at the other end of the room where two large, dark, ornate mahogany thrones in crimson and gold proudly stood. Directly behind the literal seats of power is an almost concealed passageway connected to a large private salon where he, the brunette remembered, would often disappear to in the past. The entryway to the preparation area for the food and the servants’ hall are on the leftmost and rightmost part of the dais end of the room.

He looked at the considerable distance from the door to the other end of the room feeling an odd excitement and anticipation that he had never felt before whenever he’s thinking of an incoming ball. For many years, he had travelled that distance alone under the burning scrutiny of the nobility but this year’s Winter Solstice ball will find him surrounded by such a large company, with a lovely mate by his side. “Well then take our place at the head of the room.”

Lavender gaze followed where the pureblood pointed and he had to fight a grimace, “Oh, hell. No.”

“My, afraid of two innocent chairs, Zero?” Kaname teased, immediately identifying just what made his hunter growl.

“I don’t care what you say, Kaname. I’m not going to sit on that pansy ass chair.”
“I assure you that you’ll find them very comfortable.”

“That’s not the issue, bastard.” Zero hissed. He never even imagined one day setting foot inside a freaking castle much less in actually living in one and sitting on a fucking golden throne. The past him would surely be denying his present existence. Amethyst orbs can already see the mocking glee on Kaito, Ichiru and Yuki’s expressions when he sits down on that throne like freaking royalty.

But you are royalty. You are my mate. The brunette whispered through their pulsing bond. Loving sienna eyes intent on his blushing mate. He knew pigs will fly first before his hunter accepts such fancy tradition with open arms. He had been expecting his embarrassed complaints and protests but he did hope that he’ll be able to make his lover relent. It’s out of character for the hunter but it would mean so much to him if Zero accepts his role at the pureblood’s side for Kaname had no intention of giving him up, no matter what, even once. Nevertheless, he knew how uncomplicated and smoothly everything will be if his silverette acknowledges and accepts that he’s part of this world. His world.

“Can’t we just stand the whole time?” Zero grumbled. He could feel the heavy burgundy regard on him but he was unable to meet it for fear of seeing hurt or disappointment in them. Grrr! Why is this so hard? Fucking coward. Didn’t he already make the decision to face whatever it is with Kaname? But just… fuck… thrones! Why must they do something so sissy like sit on thrones like fat, bearded assholes in some very cheesy and unoriginal medieval movie?

Instead of answering, the vampire king, as if remembering a bittersweet memory, merely said, “I’ve sat on that throne countless times and I must admit that the view it afforded me weren’t always welcomed but I bore it with the same patience as my father did, as I did during my initial reign. I thought that it will always be a burden to me but I believe I’ll find it pleasurable from now on if I turn and see you there by my side.” He turned to Zero once more and continued, “It’s very special seat you see. After all, it was my mother who last sat there and now, it’s yours.” Kaname finished, a small tranquil and wistful smile on his lips, nostalgia lighting up his russet eyes.

Oh, fuck it all.

Kaito and the two dolts will always be insufferable monkeys with their relentless teasing no matter the occasion anyway. This bit won’t make any difference.

“Fine.” Zero groaned before adding in the face of the warm aura surging from his mate, “But I’m warning you, if someone actually laughed at us, I won’t be responsible for my actions. And damn it, Kaname, I swear I’ll go to the fucking ball naked if you ask me to wear pumpkin pants or whatever!”

“There would be no such thing.” The brunette promised, chuckling at the absurd image of his lover wearing medieval clothing, warmth surging from his deepest core at his lover’s concession.

Zero huffed and scowled but allowed the pureblood to lead him by the hand towards the two cushioned and upholstered thrones. They quietly crossed the distance of what seemed like the length of the whole Sun dorm, reinforcing the thought in the hunter’s mind that he’ll likely lose his legs first before managing to explore the whole huge ass palace. He was suddenly worried about his twin brother who’ll be walking the same distance. Well, the silver lining would be that he would be too fatigued to dance with that irritating blond which will be a sore sight to his already weary lilac eyes.

The silverette sat on the grand chair, refusing to admit that it’s indeed more comfortable than it looks. Like, really comfortable. He’s not about to give the pureblood that satisfaction though. He slouched, leaning on his fisted left hand with his elbow on a golden arm of the seat. Zero turned slightly towards the pureblood who was seated beside him and found soft auburn gaze on him. Lavender orbs narrowed, he can just imagine the sappy and sickly romantic thoughts going on in the brunette’s mind.
The quiet smile on Kaname’s elegant feature grew as pleasure and contentment filled his being just as his hunter suspected. But he cannot possibly help himself for he can still remember the dismal and gloomy feelings that infested his heart during the last time he sat at this very chair with an empty void beside him. He never had a queen or consort even during his initial reign for the hooded woman was his friend, not his lover. He has never felt romantic affections for anyone so he never even tried to look for someone to take that place beside him, even after the endless encouragements of the council and numerous marriage proposals he received. Knowing the conniving and abominable minds of the rotten schemers around him, he thought he would be better off alone. How quaint that instead of his usual dull expression and grim state of mind, he currently finds himself quite content, complete and with an actual future before him. The moment was shadowed by the horrendous and ominous threat around them, but Zero’s presence was enough to mark this as one of the most glorious moment of his long life.

It will never cease to amaze Kaname how the existence of this one silver creature can make the greatest difference in his life. How, even with that familiar scowl, challenging glare and creased dark silver eyebrows, does he still manage to be the most exquisite and precious sight that his burgundy eyes has ever laid upon? How, even with his brusque manner and inelegant speech, can he still manage to provide him the peace and redemption that he was never able to find in the midst of opulence and luxury? With Zero, the previously desolate and dreary palace became warm and inviting at once. It’s as if he’s the important piece missing to complete the picture of refinement and splendor the castle has been aiming for all this time. For the first time in a while since the death of his parents, the Kuran castle managed to become home to Kaname and with the impending arrival of their children, it’s assuredly the paradise he had been searching for.

“Stop thinking about worthless things.” Zero groaned though unable to hear Kaname’s thoughts for he is the king of all unfair maneuvers. Still, basing on that freaking elegant, genial smile, he’s completely sure it’s all sappy contents. He’s willing to bet everything he owned. When his mate responded, he knew he was correct.

“I assure you I wasn’t thinking of anything worthless. I was thinking of you.” Kaname warmly disclosed with an almost reverent haze in the warm pools of wine orbs.

The hunter gruffly sighed before turning to the other side of the room, staring unseeingly at the handsome garden view through one of the tall windows. Based on the warmth creeping up his neck and face, his normally pale skin would be burning bright crimson by now. He internally cursed his extremely fair complexion for always implicating him rather easily like this and show the bastard just affected he was every damn time. However, instead of the usual teasing and chuckles, the brunette merely gave him an adoring smile before standing up and offering his hand once again.

“I believe you’re feeling quite famished. Forgive me for delaying your meal. I daresay having a light lunch wouldn’t hurt. Let us continue on to the small dining area.”

Frowning amethyst orbs suspiciously scrutinized the luscious curls at the back of the vampire king’s head as he guided him out of the room, noting the obviously lighter air around him that was undoubtedly imperceptible to others. The hunter shrugged, deciding that the pureblood was simply feeling uncommonly merciful today. That or he’s also hungry.

Kaname internally sighed at the confused regard on him. Zero has no idea of what his every little move does to him.

Perhaps, Zero will never know…

Just how much happiness he brings with him.
The pureblood princess had slept almost through the whole journey and has much energy to explore but she still felt gratitude knowing that she was spared from climbing five flights of stairs just to go to her room. Thank goodness there are elevators here! Still, it took them quite a while to reach the chamber designated to her. She reckoned that Shiki, whose room was on the third floor, had already managed to sleep during the time they took still traversing the hallways to her room.

When the noble opened the much sought after pair of doors to the antechamber, they were greeted by five female vampires in classic maid uniforms. One of them, who stepped forward after straightening up, wore a different uniform. Her floor-length long sleeve dress, with white turn-down collar and cuffs, was in navy blue instead of black. Unlike the other four, she also wore a white lace bun cover instead of the standard laced cap and ruffle waist apron replaced the white pinafore.

“Welcome, Yuki-himesama, Ichijou-sama, my name is Misaki and I’ve been given the pleasure of attending to Yuki-himesama as your lady’s maid. These are Miyuki, Mei, Risa, and Chihiro who would also be attending to you during your stay. Please don’t hesitate to let us know if there’s anything you need.”

“Oh! Uhm, yes, thank you.” The brunette said, feeling quite foolish.

“I hope you do not mind, princess. We’re still in the middle of arranging your things.” Misaki said.

“Uh, okay? I don’t mind.” Yuki tried for a smile but failed. She could feel her lips tremble with uncertainty on how to act and what to say. She could hear a rude voice, which sounded a lot like Zero, echoing words like ‘tomboy’, ‘clumsy’ and ‘inelegant’ to her ears. How she wished that characteristics like elegance and grace were something one can inherit. She wondered if she should ask her beloved brother for pointers or better yet, lessons on how to appear regal enough so as to not bring him and her noble boyfriend any shame. Something odd and heavy tugged at her stomach at the reminder that there’s also an old coot that she needs to intimidate, preferably enough that he’ll leave his grandchild alone.

“Thank you, princess.” The lady’s maid then turned to the other four and all of them went to the white double doors to their right.

Yuki looked at her companion to find smiling emeralds on her. She blushed and looked away, finally giving notice to the beauty of the room they entered. She found the antechamber in shades of rose, ash grey, white and gold. Gold Victorian crystal chandelier hung from white plaster ceiling while grey inlaid seamless floral pattern panels adorned the rose quartz colored wall, and a wide ash Persian rug covered polished oak hardwood floor.

Victorian gray with pink floral embroidered blackout curtains covered all of the windows up front. A carved marble mantelpiece with gilded wall mirror and silvery arabesque scrolls iron fire cover were between two sculpted porcelain columns to their left facing two Victorian gray couches, one of the three different seating areas that occupied the room. Against the right wall, an 18th century elm oval center table was between antique pink tufted tub armchairs, a rose pink chesterfield and a flat screen television near them. Sienna orbs roamed around and fell on the large framed portrait on the wall behind them, next to the doors to the hallway, above a 17th century baroque beech table and two crystal candelabras with four silver finish arms, exhibiting blissful smiles of two adults holding a bundled baby and a much younger Kaname.
Like magnet, it beckoned the pureblood and trembling fingertips were already tracing her parents’ enraptured smiles without her conscious permission, vaguely sensing a somber blond behind her and his hand on her shoulder. Yuki didn’t turn around for she didn’t trust herself not to cry. Instead, she stared at the lovely image before her while breathing deeply and calming herself. It’s been a while since she recovered her memories, but she has yet to fully dwell on the fact that she’s an orphan. It’s not just because of the engaging bustle around her nor the crazy family always nagging her one way or another. Yuki never allowed herself to think of such bleak thoughts. It’s against her principle of always moving forward and not dwelling in the past. Yet, she found her petite body swayed by overwhelming sorrow and heartbreak. Despite her best efforts, a rogue tear still fell and she wasn’t able to stop herself from whirling around and burying her flushed face on the solid and comforting chest of her boyfriend. Soft caresses trailed down her long mahogany hair accompanied by soft murmurs of support and finally, after what seemed like an eternity, she felt her composure return. Bright and still moist chocolate orbs looked up, smiling tremulously, and was awarded by the calming and serene jade crystals on the face of an angel. “I remember them being so kind.” She found herself whispering.

“They were indeed, so very kind. I’m sure they would have been proud if they see you now.” Takuma whispered back, placing a kiss her forehead before continuing, “Never forget, love, we’re here with you now.”

Delicate hands grasping the back of the noble’s black blazer clenched as dainty arms tightened around his lithe body and for all Yuki knows, she might be suffocating the noble due to uncontrollable strength, but the gentle caresses never stopped. After what could be a century or three minutes, the brunette emerged again. This time, with a relatively more cheerful smile, though russet pools were still glazed with tears. Ichijou kindly didn’t comment on it and even returned her smile with a small one of his own when she exclaimed with strained excitement about what the other room might look like.

“Let us find out.” The noble invited, also trying to be cheerful for his princess.

The couple went to the doors the maids disappeared to and found a large wide and short hallway opening to a bigger space further with Champaign pink walls accentuated by cream and white floral wooden wall panels, moulding, draperies and furniture. They could note the tasteful paintings, vintage brass sconces and the gorgeous vintage French cream cane-back armchairs that lined against both walls of the hallway at both ends of the identical rectangular Regency mahogany side tables occupied by some 19th Century hand painted porcelain lidded vases but what arrested their complete focus was the way the maids scurried about the room to their left and how the hardwood floor was almost entirely covered with mounting garment and delivery boxes from famous boutiques and four torso display tripod wearing an elaborate strapless tulle ball gown in old rose, a dreamy ivory and gold off-shoulder long-sleeves lace chiffon princess ball gown, a regal royal blue off-shoulder satin tea-length puffy formal dress and a sophisticated queen Anne neckline emerald chiffon empire dress. From some of the open boxes, Yuki can see cute floral dresses, wrap dresses, fit and flare dresses, maxi dresses, peplum dresses, party dresses, blouses, polo shirts, ruffled tops, miniskirts, pleated, layered, tulle, trumpet and maxi skirts, shorts, denim, dress pants, palazzos and other types of clothing she can’t name in several colors, fabrics, cuts and designs. There are also several wedges, high heels, stilettos, platform, pumps, boots, flats, sneakers and bags like hobos, satchels, handbags, wristlets and clutches and even hats still with varying styles and colors. From smaller boxes, the maids took out expensive belts, laced gloves, sunglasses, scarves, hair accessories, jewelries, and watches.

Maids kept on going in and out; taking some of the items from the boxes from the hall to take it inside what the brunette had correctly guessed is a walk-in closet in blush and charcoal. Sharp
pureblood ears caught the servants whispering things that were not meant for her ears like ‘poor service’, ‘late shipments’ and ‘uncouth mortal delivery men’. She instantly felt sorry for them. It seems her boyfriend was right; her onii-sama did indeed make arrangements for her attire for the ball and, apparently, with heaps of extras.

The door directly across the bustling room was opened to reveal a giant ivory bathroom with granite tiles. Chocolate orbs can make out a big oval Victorian clawfoot ceramic bathtub, wide coral fluffy bathroom rugs, a built-in shower stall, a porcelain bowl, a wide granite bathroom countertop, drawers and mirrors, and, for some reason, a rose velvet chaise lounge.

Awe settled in as her blond companion proceeded to guide her further in the room, completely restoring her cheer, careful not to step on the scattered boxes on the floor. Yuki had just managed to close her mouth when she felt it promptly open again when they reached the main area of the bedroom. The wall in front of them was almost covered by brocade white curtains. A Louis XV loveseat, two armchairs in blush and an antique wooden center table made up a seating area in the middle of the room, a Napoléon III crystal chandelier overhead.

“Come here, Yuki-chan.”

The pureblood’s head snapped to the direction of her lover’s voice who she didn’t notice had already left her side and found him closely examining the embossed decoration on a wall. When she realized that he’s standing next to the cream Victorian canopy bed with coverlets, hangings, sheets, quilts and pillows all in old rose set against the left wall, in front of one of the ivory baroque bedside table, she blushed for reasons she really didn’t want to mull over with the blond still in the room. It just hit her that she’s with her boyfriend inside her bedroom. Internally smacking her own head, she slowly went to him, fervently hoping that the heat she can feel on her cheeks is not obvious and therefore only vaguely noted the large gorgeous ivory vintage oak dresser with three-way mirrors and with matching pink velvet stool that sat in a corner near the door that she believed leads to the walk-in closet, already equipped with bottles of perfumes, lotions and creams, hair brushes, a Chinese cosmetic chest and a lacquered makeup box.

Yuki managed to stand next to Ichijou-senpai without combusting spontaneously. She immediately tried to simply watch the handsome noble press random embossed flower decoration on the pink wall and not be conscious of the invitingly large bed that treacherously tried to catch her attention.

“Ah! Here it is.” Takuma triumphantly sighed when a small touchscreen monitor finally appeared on the wall, not noticing his girlfriend jumping slightly at his voice, “When you need to call someone, just-, are you alright, Yuki-chan?” he worriedly asked, finally spying the furiously blushing brunette and heard her racing heartbeat.

“Y-yes? Yes! Yes! Of course! Err, wow! W-what’s that?” the pureblood agitatedly reassured her companion, internally ready to die of shame and slyly calculating how fast she’ll be able to jump off the nearest window should the need arise. Still, not wanting to have an awkward confrontation with her boyfriend, silently cursing her sexually active brothers for fuelling her inappropriate fantasies, she tried to keep up the charade and smile tremulously, “O-oh, that… that’s a… uhm… c-communication device, r-right?”

Ichijou nodded but frowned, unconvinced. He whisked and emerald orbs fell on the flames already cracking merrily in the fireplace with ivory marble mantle covered by a scroll floral vintage fire screen and can be enjoyed by anyone sitting on the pink French cabriole couch in front of it at the other end of the room. His gaze travelled to the vintage wood cover wall heater found near a white secretary and pearly wall bookcase placed beside the door he believed will lead to the bathroom and wondered if the heater was also on. Well, it is quite warm inside the room. “Should I turn off the
“Eh? O-oh! Y-yes, please. Whew, I thought it was kinda hot in here.” Yuki swallowed, even fanning herself with her hands for effect. She dazedly watched as the noble fumbled with a remote he took from the drawer of the bedside table. Hopefully, she’s safe. However, the thought vanished instantly the moment the angelic noble turned to her again with a cheerful smile.

“There. That should do it.” Takuma assured in a lively voice. However, noting the undiminished flush still covering his beloved’s normally creamy complexion, he offered while eyeing the other bedside table he knew is a chiller, “Would you like something cold to drink?”

“I’ll be fine, senpai.” Yuki shook her head but she retracted her words when the blond peered in more closely and placed a cool hand on her cheek to check her temperature, “Ah! I-I-I guess, I need to t-take a n-nap a-aft-ter all.”

“A nap?” dark golden eyebrows met in confusion, clearly remembering his girlfriend’s peaceful slumber in the car just an hour ago. Well, it was a long journey and Yuki-chan indeed seemed to need the break, “Alright then. I’ll come and get you for breakf-, I mean dinner. Ask your lady’s maid or use this to call anyone for assistance or if get hungry before supper, alright?” he said, his tone still merry, and pointed to the small screen.

“H-hai, senpai!” the pureblood could barely contain her grimace. If only she could contain her own raging fantasies, she could have spent more time with him. And to think that she’s been looking forward to exploring the castle with Ichijou-senpai! Yuki resolutely held her breath as she accepted a chaste kiss from the noble before chocolate orbs followed his retreating form.

She can’t help but bury her still blushing face on a soft pillow once the blond was completely out of her chambers. Argghhh! She mustn’t keep this up. She seriously needed to get her act together if she’s to secure him! How can she even dare hope to intimidate an old evil aristocrat into submission if something like this can throw her off kilter?

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The hunter can distinctly remember his lover telling him about going to the ‘smaller dining area’ and so he found himself wondering if Kaname’s size perception had already been horribly altered because of the abnormal environment that he grew up in. Surely, no matter the case, this cinnamon carpeted room with too much useless space that is about two times larger than a school cafeteria containing a protracted shinny dark oak table, which was like the chairman’s dining table on steroids gone wrong, surrounded by what seems like twelve chairs on each sides and so able to seat twenty-six people at a time can be anything but small.

He was heralded to a big armed dining chair in the middle of the long table but not before the brunette operated a device that appeared from the coral colored wall after pressing a certain button that looked part of the elaborately embossed chestnut brown flower wall decoration and ordered a castle employee to bring a light meal to that room. Lilac eyes noticed that other than the chair he’s sitting on and the one opposite his that Kaname took, the chairs at either end of the table were larger than the rest and with golden roses finely brocaded to the expensive silk of the upholstery. He’s guessing these are where the big shots normally sit. He shrugged.

“I assure you that this is already the smallest dining room we have. The first dining hall houses about...
80 guests and I’m sure you would prefer this room over that.” The pureblood explained, idly wondering what his mate’s reaction will be once he saw the Great Hall.

“Yeah, I get it. It’s fine.” The silverette nodded, though he really can’t fathom the excessive fanciness and luxuriousness of this place, he really doesn’t have any right to grumble. It’s just that it goes against the economical sensibilities he had developed while growing up with someone who would waste monthly groceries trying to cook a dish for the night. If one is forced to cook using scarce ingredients to feed four people for many years, they would definitely learn to save resources and be thrifty. But really, he never expected his lover to be this wealthy. Somehow, though belated, it was just hitting him now that Kaname is actually a king. Well, he had only associated that epithet to his arrogance, pride and domineering countenance.

After waiting only for a moment, too early than the hunter expected, there was a knock on the door which Kaname opened through psychokinesis before Katsuragi strode in that precise and dignified manner of his, followed by three footmen carrying large round trays of oyster mushroom, avocado and tomato ceviche with tortilla crisps dish, grilled rosemary rack of lamb with a parmesan crust, crushed potatoes with braised baby leeks for the main dish and strawberry-hazelnut meringue shortcakes for dessert, two maid carrying three tray stands and another one pushing a trolley containing several kinds of drinks. He cannot recall if Kaname actually forgot to mention the word ‘light’ before ‘meal’.

“Your majesties, please forgive me for this shortsightedness. Had I known, I would have arranged this room accordingly.” The old butler sincerely imparted while bowing lowly.

“It’s quite alright. The consort,” the brunette smiled at the slight twitch of silver brows and the feeling of strangeness at being treated with such eminence and reverence that coursed through their pulsing bond, “and I were simply famished after the long journey and our short walk. It’s unlikely that this deviation would happen often so you may prepare and serve the meals as scheduled.”

“Understood, Kuran-sama.” Katsuragi responded before signaling the footmen and maids to put the glasses, plates and silverwares before serving the entrée.

Zero grimaced a little when a maid dropped two blood tablets in one of the three wine glasses she positioned symmetrically at the top right of the plate and folded napkin that a footman had already placed though he didn’t tell her off. As amethyst orbs beheld the expert and coordinate way in which the staff arranged the table setting and served their ‘light’ meal, he had to wonder how on earth they were able to prepare all those so quickly. It could be that they have luckily caught them while they’re cooking the supper for later. Or, these could be leftovers from an earlier meal or are simple frozen processed commercial foods which are both quite unlikely given how much they seem to take serving their king seriously. But if it’s not any of those then there’s serious sorcery at work here. Really though, why was the old man apologizing when they’re the ones rudely interrupting?

At the hunter’s confused frown about the fuss while picking on his entrée, the pureblood immediately launched an internal explanation that normally, chairs that were not being used were removed from around the table and that a detailed and measured table setting is normally prearranged before the diners enter the hall.

While Zero can vaguely hear his mate informatively ramble on about preparations and such, all the hunter could focus on was the first fact he mentioned. Suddenly, an unpleasant image of a lone, much younger Kaname sitting at the head of the table having his meal alone amidst empty chairs in this spacious and cold room invaded his thoughts. The hunter will never say that he had led a rosy and jolly life but even after the death of his parents, he had Ichiru, Yuki and their guardian. There’s even the occasional dinner with his sensei and that annoying Kaito. He realized that he rarely ate
alone for there’s an irksome blond, a whiny brunette and a persistent silverette around him the whole time but Kaname, with his parents murdered and his only sister gone, must have endured countless meals in solitude. Like a fist to his chest, the guilt that suddenly attacked him upon remembering the numerous times he had stormed out of dinner whenever the brunette joined them made him grip his fork with more pressure than it deserved. A hand gently touched his tightly closed hand, jostling him from poisonous thoughts. He looked up to find soothing auburn regard on him.

“Your reactions during those times were to be expected. You also could not have known my experiences. I will never hold you accountable for that, Zero. On the contrary, the mere fact that I can now peacefully share a meal with you already fills me with so much joy.” The pureblood quietly said in a sincere tone.

Zero sighed and pondered his lover’s words. That’s of course true but it still makes him feel so culpable. Well, there’s really nothing he can do about the past now. Looking back then and the view before him now, of Kaname wearing that irritatingly affectionate smile of his face instead of the quietly mocking one he used to wear, with warm burgundy gaze replacing the previous soullessly hollowed one, with daylight spilling from the multiple casement windows lining the wall behind the brunette, casting a golden glow around him, in this grand dining room inside this ridiculously enormous palace, with him peacefully having a meal with him, without shouting and his Bloody Rose nowhere in sight, he can confidently say that they have come a long way. The silverette knew that it will take a while before he gets used to the idea of this castle becoming his permanent home in the future but he’s certainly sure that the view before him is the one he’ll be coming home to from here on.

He reflexively blushed at his thoughts and he had to grimace when amethyst gaze fell on an extremely elated brunette who no doubt heard his runaway thoughts. If he wasn’t decided before, he’ll surely be convinced now. If engrossing about such lamely sappy thoughts was not proof that he was really in love, then he doesn’t know what was. The silverette suddenly became more aware of the multiple vampires standing silently about the room.

“When will you stop peeking at my thoughts?” Zero growled, still flushing crimson in mortification.

“When you finally learn to verbally share your every thought with me.” Kaname answered affectionately.

“Hah… so… never?” the silver hunter asked rhetorically, already knowing the answer.

“Precisely.” The brunette smiled.

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After finishing their (heh) light meal, they went to the nearest office because the old butler wished to discuss and confirm some of the arrangements regarding their stay and the coming event with the pureblood who went missing in action almost as soon as they arrived. The silver hunter can’t help but blink at the sleek monitor and keyboard of the computer in the study, the communication device notwithstanding, it felt like ages since he had seen signs of modernity inside this warped space. It’s all because of the swirly panels, fancy palettes, classical embellishments and regal air all around him.

Based on what Zero had seen so far, the old castle was decorated with art pieces with eastern and western influences, mostly furnished with antiques but modern fixtures were also added for comfort
and convenience. Really, if the silverette didn’t see a touch of the present time in the form of the latest technologies, appliances, lights and other things, he would have thought that their daughter played a trick on him and he somehow slipped through time. No wonder Kaname acts like an old man sometimes. Well, he IS an old man. The hunter managed a smirk at that thought.

“Forgive me for detaining you, your majesties, but I have yet to confirm some of the arrangements made and I do not wish to inconvenience you with any mistake.” The butler started, cutting the silverette off his thoughts.

“It’s quite alright. What concerns you?” the pureblood regarded one of the oldest manservants in the Kuran castle. Katsuragi started as a young footman and trained to be a butler. Now, after thousands of years, his previous youthful face had already aged considerably.

“Your majesty, are you quite sure that a nursemaid is currently unneeded for our royal highnesses? I’ve already made some inquires for the preparation of hiring the most accomplished and competent nursemaids for the birth of the royal princess. Just give the word and I shall summon the most qualified at once.”

“Nursemaid?” the hunter asked.

“A person who will take care of the children.” The brunette explained.

“Like a nanny? We don’t need one.” The silverette scowled, as if he’ll let an unknown vampire near his children.

“But Joō-sama -,” the old chamberlain started but with a signal look from his king, he quieted down.

One dark silver eyebrow twitched at the ridiculous way he was addressed, irked lilac meeting amused russets. Why would anyone fucking address HIM like a queen? He gritted his teeth and he tried not to hiss. Even he was raised not to be impolite to old men though he sometimes conveniently forgets it. “Can you stop calling me that? Just call me by my name.” Zero barely managed not to add one curse and hide his irritation.

“How can I even address your highness so disrespectfully?” the old man insisted, the contrived mask of sophistication unnoticeably cracking under quiet indecision. He would never disobey an order from his masters but how could he call his sovereign so familiarly? Not to mention the creature his king is so terribly fond of. It’s already too much that a lowly servant like him had been given leave to call their king ‘Kaname-sama’. As someone who aspires to protect the royal family through humble means, he can’t possibly breach etiquette.

Kaname watched the exchange with a hidden smile. He could tell the mounting annoyance his mate was feeling but as expected of his butler who had been with his family since his parents were children, he didn’t visibly flinch even in the face of that ferocious glare. Well, he did survive even his gloomy and dark temper so he shouldn’t be surprised by this old vampire’s astuteness.

“It’s alright, Katsuragi. If it’s Zero’s wish, then it is to be done. His every need is to be met.” The vampire king finally joined, a warm gaze falling on the silver creature who colored a bit at the command.

It made the butler pause for a moment. Zero wondered if he’s internally sighing and cursing about selfish masters. Though he knew it was unlikely, the hunter still felt bad.

“If it’s your decree, Kaname-sama.” The old man conceded finally while bowing respectfully, “Please allow me this honor of addressing you familiarly, Zero-sama.”
“A-ah, no problem…” Zero gruffly sighed. He doesn’t know if he should feel guilty for putting the old man in an uncomfortable position and for causing him so much grief or be irritated because he didn’t really exactly get his request. Really why would anyone’s panty be twisted this much because of things like titles and how in the world is ‘-sama’ familiar? The people here are so weird and fucking proper so much so that it looks like they have sticks up in their arse.

“Did Zero-sama and his honorable twin bring their own valets? I’m afraid that no such personnel made their way to the servant’s hall. Was it alright that I have appointed someone from our own household, Kaname-sama? I’ve already made the appointment so lady’s maids and valets will to tend to princess Yuki, the royal highnesses and your noble guests. Please do let me know who among your noble companions are Zero-sama’s gentlemen-in-waiting and Yuki-himesama’s ladies-in-waiting so I may transfer their belongings to a room nearer to the royal bedchambers and the Artemis Hall. Forgive me, Kaname-sama, but I’m afraid I didn’t receive instructions regarding the matter in the last message you’ve sent me so all their belongings have been sent to the suites they have previously occupied.”

The pureblood can’t help but chuckle at the priceless look on his little spitfire after Katsuragi’s multiple inquiries, unknowingly making his butler stare a bit. He could feel the incredulousness filling his hunter. Yet, despite the amusement it was providing, Kaname felt compelled to cut it short to ease his mate’s ire, “There’s no need for those, Katsuragi. You only need to send attendants to see to the children and our guests’ needs but Zero and I will not require help settling in. Just have someone unpack and arrange our things. Also, Yuki and Zero do not have ladies-in-waiting and gentlemen-in-waiting. I believe that we’ll find ourselves surrounded by our companions anyway.”

To the old butler’s credit, he was only mildly taken aback at the unconventional way his king wished for things to be done. But then again, he was already used to it having grown accustomed to the late queen’s jolly whims and unique orders. Her majesty, lady Juri, would also dress herself every day except during balls and other large occasions when she inevitably needed help donning her gowns. He nodded in affirmation.

“Your majesty, I also need to trouble you regarding the additional help needed for the Winter Solstice. Is it alright to hire 300 more helpers for that day?”

Incredulous, Zero can’t help but comment even before the pureblood can answer, “300? Isn’t that overkill?”

“We need them, Zero-sama. The castle has 900 rooms including 40 state rooms, 208 royal and guest bedrooms, 200 staff bedrooms, 88 offices, 102 parlors, 57 drawing rooms and 94 bathrooms.” The kindly old butler patiently imparted, “There are almost 300 servants employed by the Kuran castle but during important and grand occasions, we hire temporary employees to help serve and assist the guests. Especially during this annual celebration when the most notable people from the vampire society will come. We’re expecting this year will be even more special given the wondrous addition to the royal family.” He finished with a small, happy but still polite smile.

“Well, damn.” Zero can only mutter in response.

Kaname quietly chuckled fondly at his hunter’s reaction before answering the question, “You may employ as many hired help you deem necessary to accommodate all the guests and manage the kitchens. I leave the calculation to you.”

Katsuragi nodded and after arranging other things with his masters, quietly went away to direct the household staffs.

The silverette resisted the urge to rudely sigh in relief at the back of the retreating old man. How can
a conversation, not to mention simply commanding someone to do something for his own comfort, be so stressing? If Kaito or his two dolts of siblings witnessed that, they’ll surely be chorusing ‘Zero-sama’ or ‘your majesty’ in loud teasing and mocking tones.

He had always known that his and Kaname’s world were far apart. When he accepted Kaname as his mate, he thought he had already given every detail thorough inspection but it seems he didn’t think it through enough. Stuffs like directing servants, living in a freaking castle, becoming the fucking consort and being regarded so highly flew over his head like an international flight that he’ll never board. And he thought that the Night class was already given unfairly luxurious accommodations and amenities (they even have a maid, for heaven’s sake!), he can now see just how much they were being deprived of their normally extravagant and sumptuous lifestyle. It’s a miracle that Kaname even learned how to dress by himself. Then remembering how sensuously sloppy he wore his shirts, almost always unbuttoned during his private time, he thought maybe that this was the reason for that. He knew that it was not true but he still snorted at the idea.

“My, having fun at my expense?”

Laughing lavender eyes met solemn burgundy ones. On that extraordinarily handsome face, there’s the serene smile ever so present whenever he’s in the presence of the mighty pureblood. The hunter sobered up at the sight and cursed the heavens one more time for making him fall so deeply for such an impossibly perfect creature.

“It seems you still have enough energy to continue the tour. Can I entice you for a stroll inside the palace premises?” the pureblood invited when his rhetorical question was answered by a satisfied sigh and gentle, albeit small, smile that the hunter must have unconsciously let out. He’s sure that his lover will never provide such an unguarded look so willingly.

“Let’s take the children. I’m sure that they’re dying to explore the castle. Maybe, Yuki and Ichiru would like to come as well.” Zero nodded, accepting his mate’s invitation but thinking that he’s in danger of acting out an embarrassingly weak character like a pansy princess in the arms of her prince charming because of this exasperatingly romantic vampire, he thought that it would help to be surrounded by a boisterous and cheerful crowd. Also, he remembered his children loudly wondering if there are any differences between the castle they grew up in the future and in this current one. They already determinedly arranged a grand tour of the palace parlors and chambers. Since his ears caught words like dungeons and hidden passageways, he decided that he must accompany his little rascals. Half out of concern and the other because of childish excitement at the scent of an adventure. Shut up. He’s not been getting missions after the messy debacle with the Hunter’s Association and he sorely needed some distractions that don’t involve a perverted and possessive pureblood taking advantage of his hormones.

Kaname smiled quietly in assent, “Very well, I shall have someone inform the children and the others. I daresay it will still take them a while. Let us go to your private quarters while we wait.”

-Hanabusa had just dismissed the maids who unpacked his luggage for him and was seated behind the large, dark mahogany executive desk to do some crucial work when their pureblood princess rudely intruded upon his solitude and privacy after just a warning knock and without his express permission. As a healthy male, he would have been quite flustered to have such an esteemed and important character in his room when he had yet to make sure that it’s presentable but it’s not like he would
have anything embarrassing lying around in the open while he’s in his liege’s castle. It’s not like he
even has a back to back cover of stolen shots of his beloved angel since that had already been
unfortunately confiscated by that damn hunter. He even argued that he was no longer a prefect and
thus has no power to do such a thing but when he glared amethyst eyes at him and asked him to talk
to the Moon dorm president to explain himself to get it back, he was quite unable to get another word
out. Thank goodness that the other volumes and original copies of those images are safe back in the
Aido mansion. Also, his most prized possession of his and his lover’s photos during the cultural
festival was safely tucked away in his chest of drawers. But why do the headmaster’s adopted
children, except for his lovely Ichiru of course, have this unbecoming habit of rudely entering
another’s room?

“Yes, Yuki-sama?” the cerulean eyed noble breathed in resignation, pausing from making the list of
schemes he had planned to introduce his lover to his family. Knowing his sisters, they’ll be too
overjoyed by the news which might just trample his Ichiru and he’s not about to let that happen.
Counter measures are in order.

“Aido-senpai!” Yuki lively greeted, elated that she got his room correctly since she only tried to
locate it using her senses as previously thought by her dear brother. She decided to bother the noble
since if she’s not wrong, based on the auras inside the rooms near the blonde’s, the others were
already asleep. “Katsuragi-jichan said that onii-sama and Zero will explore the castle and asked if
we wanted to join. The children will also come and I already went to Ichiru’s room and he said that
he’ll also come.”

It’s only been an hour or so since he left his darling angel to rest in his own room so he’s not exactly
pleased with their princess barging on his beloved’s privacy and much needed rest. The noble found
himself in quiet indecision. He fought the urge to snap at the pureblood even through all the
ingrained sentiments to love, honor, respect, obey and fear her kind. While he was still considering
his words that won’t cause his conscientious father to disown him for shaming the Aido family, the
brunette pressed on and curiously peered at his work.

“What are you doing, senpai?” Yuki asked, eyeing the scattered papers on the blonde’s desk.

One Aido Hanabusa contemplated the chances of him getting away with harshly lecturing a mighty
pureblood with royal lineage about manners and propriety. “Something that is a matter of life and
death, Yuki-sama. I’ll appreciate it if you keep your nosy but-, mind out of it.” He answered stiffly,
trying his damnest not to be impolite as he gathered his paperwork and hid another important list at
the bottom of the pile. If his darling Ichiru and their princess knew of it and decided to tell the hunter,
their pureblood king will take his head. While he’s confident that his angel wouldn’t do anything to
betray his trust which might just land his noble ass in a, hopefully just metaphorical, guillotine for an
epic punishment, their pureblood princess might just spill the beans. Their pureblood king ordered
their absolute confidence. The silver consort must never learn of the tasks he handed them.

The brunette only huffed but was relatively unoffended. Rather, she found the aristocrat’s normally
casual tone of handling her very welcoming. She much preferred they act like how they did before
she recovered her pureblood ancestry to the overly formal and polite treatment that most of the Night
class students were giving her. Goodness, she and Zero received the same exaggerated greetings
when they were introduced to the first year class that they belonged to. They even have a whole row
to themselves for no one tried to seat beside them which she was sure suited Zero just fine. Except
during the two electives they were allowed to share with the second year class, the two found
themselves only in each other’s company (unless some of the children managed to sneak in to their
class). Though the isolation was not out of hatred or bullying, she still felt just as harassed. She
missed Yori-chan’s kind voice and easy conversation. She idly wondered if it will continue on once
they come back. Well, hopefully she’ll no longer be called in class so she’ll be able to claim that
there’s at least some consolation. However, Takamiya-sensei can be depended to call her during class, especially when it’s least likely that she’ll know the answer.

Yuki perked up when she felt the aura of her adopted-brother who will undoubtedly restore the noble’s good humor, “Ah! Ichiru’s here! I’ll go get him!” she eagerly offered and was out of the bedchamber and ante chamber even before the blond could respond. Great! She needed as many companions as possible so they can go to Ichijou-senpai’s room. The pureblood felt that she will only repeat her earlier muddled performance if she were to invite herself in his room unaccompanied. And after all the trouble of getting her complexion back to normal shade too! “Ichiru! Here!” she waved at the silverette who just turned to that corridor and seems to be deep in concentration, no doubt trying to feel her or his lover’s aura.

“Yuki.” The silver prefect sighed in relief. It was hard attempting to sense a vampire in the castle since the whole place was apparently swarming with them. He could only try to follow the aura he knew was uniquely Hana’s through his depleted hunter senses. He smiled when his lover also appeared from the door where his adopted-sister was. Lavender gaze then travelled to the other end of the hall when he heard a door open and out emerged the gorgeous visage of the Night class vice-president.

“Yuki-chan? Oh, Ichiru-kun, Hanabusa-kun, is something the matter?” Ichijou asked upon seeing the other three, closing the door of his own chambers behind him and starting towards the other blonde’s room.

“Ah, senpai, we were just about to get you. Onii-sama and Zero wants to explore the castle with the children and asked if we wanted to come. Err, I think the others are already asleep but do you want to come? Or, will you sleep already?” Yuki replied, chocolate orbs flying to one of the windows in the hall and observing the bright late morning. Since her body clock is still out of whack, it fell clean of her silly head that creatures like her should still be asleep at that time.

“I’m quite fine, really. I rested well during the journey.” Takuma answered genially, eager to spend time with the brunette.

“How about you, Ichiru? Did you rest well?” Hanabusa immediately asked the silverette once he reached them.

“I’m all good, Hana. I slept a little.” Ichiru assured, also looking forward to investigating the whole of the monstrous palace and gauge how long he’ll be able to traverse all those winding halls and spacious chambers before he keeled over. He supposed it was a challenge worth taking.

“Great! Let’s go to… err… I think they’re this way.” After taking the vice-president’s hand, the pureblood led their group to where she believed her two brothers are.

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After an elevator ride, what felt like an eternity, through dozens of corridors, passed hundreds of rooms, and with half of his lunch already digested, his lover finally stopped in front of another ornate white double-door in the easternmost part of the castle. The hunter seriously wondered how anyone could get anything done when a simple trip through the palace was a chore already and if one could possibly get a map of the place since he’s sure to get lost if left alone.
Zero was ushered inside a room of considerable size and pleasantly appointed in shades of beige, mahogany and gold. The walls were in the lightest shade of brown with rose gold baroque rococo panels and moldings. There were no windows but the room was well lit by the large baccarat crystal chandelier, vintage recessed cans, wall sconces, and area lamps which were thankfully not all in use. A beige and gold Persian area rug covered part of the polished dark walnut hardwood floor and taupe and off-white Victorian velvet couches, armchairs and chaises and mahogany tea tables neatly littered about the room to form several seating areas. A grand marble mantelpiece with hand-carved roses was situated at the center of the wall opposite them, elaborately carved oak doors, symmetrically aligned at each side. Near an old grandfather clock, a similarly carved wooden door can be found at the left wall directly across another wooden door on the right wall that was close by the baby grand piano. The room was further decorated with gilded mirrors, tapestries, paintings, and porcelain vases.

“This is antechamber of the Queen’s Chambers. All of these rooms are yours now.”

“Hah?!” Zero demanded menacingly at the name of the rooms. One arched silver eyebrow disappeared in his hairline while the other one twitched dangerously as if he can’t believe his ears.

Kaname chuckled at his hunter’s familiar aversion to anything remotely feminine. He explained, “It’s just the name of these quarters for it always belonged to the royal consort and as such, it belongs to you now. It’s for your own private use and no one shall disturb you here.”

The last bit of good news made the hunter perk up and quickly made him slyly glance at the pureblood as if he wants to immediately kick him out. Despite the name, this might just become his favorite room in the castle.

“Unfortunately for you, my love, I’m still at liberty to come here whenever I wish to seek your company.” The pureblood smiled, having no trouble understanding his mate’s heartless thoughts. But really, he should have known that he wouldn’t allow even a sliver of space separate them.

Great. So much for no one disturbing him! Zero doubted it will ever help when the biggest pest for him can come and go as he pleases. Trust Kaname to rain on his parade like that. While his spirits were a little dampened by the notion that all semblance of privacy is completely beyond him now, he still felt grudging admiration at the elegance of the rooms despite the needless embellishments and extravagance.

The royal couple ventured to the door to their right and found a sizable recreation room that the silverette was sure his twin would love. An ever present crystal chandelier hung from the red plastered ceiling while the pearly walls were adorned with golden Tuscan embossed wall panels and moldings, renaissance style sconces, tapestries and paintings. Three crimson and gold Tuscan area rugs covered chevron-planked hardwood floors. One was beneath an antique pool table to the leftmost part of the room, another under two blood-red high back vintage armchairs and Italian octagonal marquetry tripod table that were in front of a sculpted stone mantel and wrought iron fire screen on the right wall while the last was below two vintage sectional sofas, tufted round floor cushion seats and velvet bean bags in the same shade of red surrounding a large home theater near the windows. The Florentine mahogany display cabinet placed near the large flat screen was full of different game consoles that Zero was sure he will never play and in turn will make Ichiru cry. The hunter was just thinking how he’ll at least be able to touch the contents of the other display cabinet near the fireplace when he saw a shōgi board and promptly erased every thought of even going near that cabinet as well.

“Come with me. This was my mother’s favorite room.” Kaname quietly said as he guided him to the door to their left.
The silver hunter found himself blinking lavender eyes at a sun-drenched study and small library in old oak and mahogany with burgundy accents. The wall facing them was filled with colonial bow windows and to their right, there were two semi-octagonal rococo window seats lined below the colonial bow window of the same shape, all were framed by heavy wine-colored brocaded draperies. Despite not having much time to study and read, the silverette thought that he liked the room. Maybe because of the comfortable looking window seats that would hide him once he untied the drapes or the warmth he can feel inside the room. A small smile graced his lips, mirroring the ones he saw on his mate who was watching his expression. Lilac orbs averted from the affectionate gaze of the vampire beside him, pink scores painting his cheeks as he studied the room.

A baroque carved stone and oak mantelpiece and several wall bookshelves were situated near the entrances to two other rooms to their left. One door, the hunter found, led to a gorgeous bathroom and comfort room with beige and cream palette. Built-in ceiling-to-floor wall bookcases filled the wall behind them, encasing the door to the recreation room and a door he believes will lead back to the antechamber. A handsome antique mahogany desk and armchair were placed near the windows. Victorian burgundy settees, armchairs and tufted ottoman were placed in the middle of the room, near the fireplace and an antique mahogany upright piano. A baroque wrought iron chandelier, a large antique globe, a landscape painting and ornate brass candelabras further decorated the room. The silverette unconsciously hummed in approval. Indeed, despite the elegance and luxuriousness of the room, he found that he liked it very much.

Next door, amethyst orbs were met by a surprisingly relaxing and serene bedchamber with cream walls embellished by bronze rose and rococo wall panels and mouldings, numerous colonial windows with crimson curtains and a glass door opening to a large veranda covering the right wall, polished dark hardwood floor, and white plastered ceiling supporting a rather modest wrought iron chandelier with silver finish. The couple walked further in the room, bypassing an elegant cream Victorian dresser with a velvet stool and a hand-painted antique ivory armoire which reminded the hunter that the chamber used to belong to a woman. Against the furthest wall, a huge four-poster mahogany bed with crimson drapes stole the hunter’s gaze. And he thought that Kaname’s bed in the Moon dorm was already uselessly big even with the two of them, well, he was certainly wrong. The silverette cursed his hormones when the thought of how likely he’ll be unable to use it alone crossed his mind. A velvety chuckled reached his ears and he scowled at the brunette still holding his hand. Well, damn you.

On the left wall, between the doors that the silverette knew was connected to the antechamber and the one leading to the next room, a large garden view painting above a beautiful marble mantelpiece with vine and roses carvings was place. Near the door connecting to the bathroom, above an antique brown and red floral Persian rug, two comfortable upholstered mahogany crimson wingback armchairs faced the fireplace while red Victorian cabriole couch and armchairs faced the windows.

Next door, Zero knew that despite the classic embossed seamless vector gold wall panels on ivory walls and two small golden chandeliers hanging from white plastered wall, the last room was recently made as evident from the latest gadgets filling the reasonably sized kitchen and dining room. Grudgingly, Zero can’t help but be excited at the thought of cooking there. It seems that everything there was built-in and made specially to blend with the décor.

Covering the front and left wall and part of the wall behind them, built-in exhaust hood, pantry, cupboards, cabinets and shelves perfectly integrated with the decorated wall. As did the built-in fridge, range, double ovens and dishwasher whose only indications of modernity were the glass or metal exterior parts. A mahogany table with seven seats was place near the Kitchen Island and sink. The left part of the room, near the door that leads back to the antechamber, was turned to a mini-bar with the same cream and gold design.
“This was a sitting room before but I thought that you’d rather have a kitchen at your disposal instead.” The brunette confessed. Knowing his hunter’s reluctance to order anyone to do his bidding and uncertain schedule because of his missions, he wanted the silverette to be able to eat at any time and easily rest soon after.

The hunter was loath to admit that he might just enjoy staying in his *private chambers*. With a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, he didn’t need to go out and just stay there. Since there’s also an open balcony there, he can just jump out and save himself the trouble of memorizing the maze-like puzzles there that they fondly call halls. Surely, five floors are nothing to him and he’ll still land on his feet.

“Not in your present condition, Zero.” Kaname affectionately but quite firmly said. “I sincerely urge you to use normal means to reach the front entrance.”

The silverette glowered at the vampire peering into his thoughts yet again, “I know that already, damn it. Did you really think I’m idiotic enough to do that while five months…” he stopped, still conscious of saying the P-word. When glaring amethyst orbs met amused russet ones, he growled instead, “Whatever. Damn you. You’re an asshole.”

The pureblood quietly chuckled, enjoying the scarlet notes filling normally pale skin, “You’re adorable, Zero.”

Even more mortified at the heat melting his face, Zero hissed, “Shut the fuck up.”

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“There, huh.” Kaito tiredly uttered, hazel orbs trained on a pair of ivory doors nearest the area where the glaring presence of the vampire king and his kohai are. Turning his head back to his companion, he shouted, “Oi, chairman, can you hurry up?”

“Just give me a moment, Kaito-kun.” The blond headmaster sighed at the insensitive hunter who kept on interrupting his nostalgia parade. Well, it’s not like the brunette knew that he has precious memories connected to this castle. The times he had been there can be counted in one hand yet every memory was filled with so much happiness. How he wished he could see his friends again upon opening one of the doors in this palace.

The ash-brown haired hunter grumbled at the carefree way the ex-hunter traversed the lavish halls. They were there for a reason, damn it, and the sooner he can get the okay to patrol this monstrous place, the better. Based on the walk they experienced just to find that bastard vampire, they got their work cut out for them. They would need all the hunters at their disposal in order to guard the whole fucking area. Shit. There aren’t many they can trust right now since most of the hunters are of course around that bitch of a president’s thumb. How can he even do his job properly during that freaking Winter Solstice when he can’t even trust his comrades? Ah, damn it all. It’s that fucking cross-dressing bitch’s fault.

His fingers were already around the doorknob when suddenly, one small and pale hand landing on top of his gently halted his action. He instinctively jumped away, a hand automatically landing inside his blazer though he didn’t draw his baby once he recognized the aura of the royal pipsqueak princess who came out of nowhere.
Said princess was sporting an apologetic look, her small hands held up in a placating gesture, her beautiful features unfazed even after travelling using inhuman speed to stop her favorite hunter just in time, “Forgive me, Kaito-san. It’s just that the quarters beyond this door are not open for public viewing.”

“Huh?” the hunter brusquely asked after straightening his posture, hazel orbs noticing the arrival of the other brats who had stopped before chairman and greeted him.

Only vaguely noting the exchange of greetings happening behind her, Anne tried to explain that the Queen’s Chambers are for the immediate Royal family’s use only. However, before she can even launch her clarification, the door opened to grant exit to her parents. “Oh, chichiue, otou-chan, we were informed by Kat-jiichan that you wish to explore the castle with us. I believe that aunt Yuki, Takuji, Hana-jiji and Ichiji will join us in the blue room.”

“Indeed. Impeccable timing as always, my love.” Kaname rewarded his daughter with a fond smile which she answered with an enticingly sweet one.

“I thought you two will rest first.” The silver hunter turned to his guardian and his senpai.

“As if I can sleep in that fuc-(“Kaito-kun!”), yeah, yeah, I know, chairman, in that fancy princess-y room.” Kaito scoffed. He thought that he would drown on that feathered mattress. Seriously, just how soft can a bed be? Based on the silverette’s lack of retort, he can at least sympathize with him. “And we still need to check the perimeter and see the place where that,” he smirked at Zero who scowled at him, “ball will be held.”

“Oh, then please accompany us, Kaito-san.” The royal princess eagerly invited, “We’re hankering to explore the castle too. We will show you the way to the Grand Hall.” She could tell the secret understanding that passed through three pairs of auburn orbs as her younger brothers and chichiue exchanged surreptitious glances.

“Wonderful idea, my granddaughter!” Kaien exclaimed, holding hands with the fraternal silver twins who looked a bit sleepy, and added excitedly, “Let’s check the other rooms while we’re at it.” The grandfather and granddaughter pair smiled beatifically at each other upon the loud murmur of assent (resigned grunts of acknowledgement from the two hunters) from everyone present.

“There are so many rooms in the castle, where should we start?” the royal princess mused loudly as they continued on their way along the east wing, headed by the brunette twins and the royal couple at the tail while she shrewdly measured her pace to be able to casually walk beside a certain tall hunter, her actions not escaping the notice of sharp amethyst orbs and amused auburn ones.

“I’m fine anywhere as long as I’m with my darling grandchildren!” squealed the headmaster.

“The library.” Naoto recommended in monotone, tugging his grandpa’s hand.

“Uhm, the gallery! The gallery!” the other silverette twin chirped more cheerfully, energetically swinging the older ex-hunter’s hand she was holding.

“Ah! This room first! I remember this!” Akira excitedly exclaimed and walked much faster towards a certain pair of doors.

“Really, Akira, the playroom?” Kohaku mockingly voiced. While it’s true that they don’t often to that particular room in their time any longer, there’s surely still nothing that will interest them or their present company there. Hmmmm… But… he wondered how was the state of that room considering that there were no children in the castle after Yuki-bachan. In fact, his grandparents, father and aunty
spent their time in a mansion after their aunt’s birth to escape Rido-ojiisama. Is that already a playroom during this time?

The pureblood blinked upon remembering what was behind the double doors that his children were pointing at. Despite the absence of fear, he must say that he’s not overly fond of the contents and its arrangement. Had he any other designs or need for another kind of chamber, he would have picked that room to be dismantled without a second thought. Before he could confirm his children’s intention of visiting the room, the younger of his brunette twins already threw open the door. He could feel the older of the two froze when his burgundy orbs fell on the contents of the supposed to be innocent and cute playroom so the pureblood chose to stay with his son in the corridor instead of joining his mate and the others in scrutinizing the contents of the chamber.

The room was obviously rarely used given how the heavy tangerine curtains were closed, but despite the rather dim interior, the intruders can see the contents just fine. The happy colors of light yellow walls and white panels can’t quite mask the rather ominous and disturbing effect of the numerous and various dolls filling the room. Multiple bisque dolls and parian dolls occupied the large shelves to their left while several ball-jointed dolls and china dolls took the one on the right side. More than two dozen square glass display cases sheltering gorgeously attired fashion dolls neatly littered the middle of the room while eerily beautiful life-size dolls and puppets were arranged in sitting and standing positions on and around the four seating areas and some scattered armchairs. All were adorned by stunningly detailed clothing and accessories from different eras and countries. The person who organized the room might have wanted the guests to feel welcomed by the way their wax and porcelain faces were turned to the door but failed miserably. There are only a few things more disconcerting than hundreds of soulless marble eyes scrutinizing an individual all at the same time.

“Oh my.” The eldest of the Kuran children gasped, surreptitious lavender glance fell on her beloved, normally fearless and calm brother. She didn’t want to expose his trauma if he’s not comfortable with other people knowing this weakness so she decided to go inside the room normally, briefly throwing a warning look to a jolly Akira who lit up at the sight of the room and now possibly up to some mischief.

“What the fuck is this room?”

“Kaito-kun! Mind your language now!” the headmaster immediately berated. Even with the knowledge of his grandchildren’s true age, nothing was enough to make him pardon the hunter’s crude tongue.

Zero rolled his eyes at his senpai but then turned to the elder of the brunette twins when he thought he heard him squeak with something akin to fear. He frowned when amethyst orbs fell on a rather petrified Kohaku who he noticed was still hovering at the entrance of the room with his lover. Before he could ask his son to enter, his attention was arrested by the silver twins who both clutched behind his legs, seemingly crept out by the lined up dolls. Well, even he can’t say that he like this room very much… or at all. Thank goodness Yuki and Ichiru are still in their private rooms or wherever, this will surely scare the hell out of them.

“Forgive me. This room is full of my mother and grandmother’s dolls. It seems that at the birth of my mother, my overjoyed grandfather bought many dolls. You can very much tell that he rather overdid it.”

“Maybe this is the reason why Juri never seemed to like dolls.” The blond ex-hunter whispered, mostly to himself.

“Look! This is pretty cute. If only Fuu decided to use this kind of doll for his experiment, eh, Haku?” mischievous little Akira remarked loudly while taking one bisque doll in a traditional blue Georgian
gown, having no compassion for his twin. It’s his fervent belief that one needs to face their fears in order to overcome them.

“Be silent.” Kohaku responded in a cold voice. His burgundy eyes firmly trained on the red carpet on the hallway. He wondered if he can go to the blue parlor already to wait for his aunt and uncles while their current party explores this damnable room. He can’t help but curse internally. They were all excited to explore the castle despite living there for many decades to know just how different it was in their past. To think that they had such a horrible chamber before, thank goodness it no longer exists in their present home. He’s thankful to whatever caused its change.

“Fuu? Experiment?” Kaname asked, catching the information and remembering the name previously uttered by their silver twins. Warm russet orbs, however, still unwaveringly observed his mate who crouched down to pat the silver twins’ backs as they cautiously roamed their lavender eyes around the room. He could tell that Suiren love dolls but was bewildered at the volume of them inside the room.

“Oh, chichiue. He’s our cousin. Err, he once tried to make a ball jointed doll that’s alive. However, instead of just experimenting on beautiful ready-made dolls, he initially decided to make one from scratch and the result was simply horrific.” Anne answered instead, a rather beautiful antique Japanese doll that’s half her size in a very detailed Oiran attire in her hands.

“How intriguing.” The pureblood quietly professed, genuinely curious about how such a thing could be possible and about what the future has in store for all of them. He’s sure that a certain blond would want to hear of this.

“Indeed, chichiue. The term ‘Original Aidonian Maiden’ is still part of some of the most popular haunted stories in the town.” Akira chortled, obviously recalling an amusing memory.

“A-Aidonian Maiden?” the headmaster asked hesitantly, inspecting one of the creepily realistic faces of a life-size doll in silk *juunihitoe*, though he slowly smiled when he guessed whose child they were referring to.

“Oh, grandpa, believe me, I tried to convince that moronic cousin of ours to change the name but he insisted. A pity. It was such a brilliant idea too. So much so that I was surprised that it came from him.” Anne added mercilessly, her hands now around a large beautiful ball jointed doll wearing a traditional red Chinese wedding dress. She smiled though when she caught Kaito-san poking a large bisque doll with a disgusted frown on his handsome face.

“It was a horrible idea.” Kohaku muttered darkly, uncharacteristically bitter for no one seems to understand his feelings.

Finally catching on his son’s immense dislike for dolls, Zero joined him outside the room, taking the silver twins with him, “Are you okay, Haku?” He worriedly asked, spying the mounting irritation on his son’s expression.

“I’m fine, otou-chan.” The older Kuran twin assured by giving his beloved father a brief weak smile but feeling an inappropriate smirk appear on his naughty twin’s face, he immediately send him a glaring glance that can only be interpreted as ‘be-silent-or-else.’ Mercifully, this had his twin quickly glancing away, whistling.

“Since he created the first doll by himself, the product was extremely nightmarish.” Anne further explained, now inspecting another ball jointed doll in bulging emerald Victorian dress with her grandpa who’s silently listening.
Zero was sure that his children were exaggerating but when Anne came to him after producing a picture of the so-called ‘doll’, even he can’t say ‘it’s not that bad.’ He stared at the grotesque image before him and can’t, for the life of him, imagine how someone could create something so hideous while trying to create a doll. It’s enough to give even him a nightmare.

“Oh my.” The vampire king managed upon glancing at the image. In a way, it was truly quite an interesting creation. He’s having a feeling that he should keep an eye on Hanabusa and Ichiru’s child.

The hunter could sense, more than see, the appalled and revolted expressions of his guardian and his senpai who also both looked at the same picture over his shoulders.

“Dear me.” Kaien softly gasped. In all his years, he has never seen quite anything as disturbing and that is saying something.

“The fuck?” Kaito mumbled. He would never admit that that thing actually made him a little queasy like no other creature he had encountered before.

Amethyst orbs hastily removed its gaze from the frightening image and hurriedly gave the photo back to his eldest who was still shaking her head in exasperation at the reminder of her cousin’s epic fail. He could hear Akira snicker but what arrested his lilac eyes were the spectacle of the seemingly aloof son and the serene little silverettes covering their eyes with both their hands as if to make sure that there would be no danger of them being shown that horrifying photograph even by accident.

The lilac and auburn orbs of the royal couple met when they realized that Kohaku doesn’t just hate dolls but also fear them. Despite their superior powers and old age, they still have some childishness left which made the older silverette smile.

“Kindly put away that photo, Anne.” Kaname immediately ordered their eldest.

“Hai, chichiue.” Anne readily complied. Reddish-lavender orbs zeroed on her troublemaking brother when she caught his dejected sigh. As if she’ll let him use that affronting picture to torment his twin. Really, she told Akira that force will never cure his twin brother’s phobia. She gave another warning glare which made him swallow.

“What happened to that thing?” the silver hunter asked, snatching his children’s attention. He might as well know so he can be sure to keep it as far away as possible from Kohaku in the future.

“Please don’t worry about it, otou-chan. It was completely destroyed by Hana-jiji. Afterwards, Fuu decided to have some professionals create the dolls instead.” Akira responded with real disappointment laced in his voice which made his father shake his head in exasperation.

Really, this little rascal. The silver hunter eyed his son a bit in admonishment while crouching in front of his other three children who finally decided to liberate their eyes once they were sure that the abominable picture of that abominable creature was already tucked away.

“It’s a great thing he was persuaded to give that… err… thing up.” The chairman cheerfully joined.

Anne giggled before replying, “Oh, we were finally able to convince him when his creation made Ichiji cry in fright.”
The hunter was almost sure that everything he had eaten earlier was already grinded to nothing after the length in which they travelled the endless walls of the castle. Every chamber they went into was pointlessly spacious and luxurious and he’s sure that half of them are left unused. Because seriously, why is there even an opera house inside this place?! And if there’s that Grand Hall, why are there a Royal Ballroom and Small Ballroom?! Damn wastage. Somehow, he felt comforted at the look of exasperation on his senpai’s face and confusion on his twin’s and Yuki’s face who finally joined them. It’s refreshing since everyone else, even the chairman, acted as if it was a matter of course.

Zero threw open another set of heavy double doors and lavender eyes fell on a very large chamber in burgundy and mauve with rococo wall paneling in mahogany containing six, three on each side, vertically positioned extremely long, banquet-style cherry tables, each lined by numerous individual cherry dining chairs. At the head of the room, another long but considerably shorter table was horizontally placed on a dais, facing the whole room. Behind the high table were about ten upholstered chairs with high straight backs and arms, the two at the center noticeably larger and more ornate than the others, and three discreet doors leading to other rooms can be seen. The silverette walked on the wide carpeted aisle separating the two sides and looked at a series of wooden planks with a number of stepped shelves covered with rich drapes in deep crimson brocaded with the Kuran family insignia. Several tapestries hung on the wall, chandeliers illuminated the place, and a very large landscape painting decorated one of the walls.

Vaguely, he could hear Kaito, Yuki and Ichiru’s varying sounds of amazement and the children’s hum of recognition. The silver hunter whirled at the pureblood and asked, “This is not the first dining room, right?” How will he enjoy his meal if he’s force to eat it there?

Kaname quietly chuckled at the hopeful tone of his lover. Shaking his head slightly, he answered, “No. This is the Great Hall. Rest assured that this is only used during formal dinner parties with an extremely large audience. We’ll need not use it unless strictly necessary.” He chuckled again at silverette’s relived sigh.

Naoto then requested to visit the solar, a cozy and moderately furnished room which was accessible through the door at the center that was behind the high table. It turned out to be a considerably sized modern-looking private sitting room in cream and beige with dark, wooden floors. It was adorned by several small paintings and a few pictures of the previous king and queen.

Upon entering, a fatigued Ichiru sat on the large, plush cream sectional sofa which was placed in front of an enormous flat screen television above a grand light brown carpet. On the other hand, Kohaku favored one of the two comfortable looking armchairs before the inviting fireplace at the side. While Akira and Aido took refreshments from the built-in chiller in the kitchenette, Kaito went to the adjoined mini-bar that sits in a corner near the door which the pureblood’s youngest son opened, followed by his twin. A wondering Yuki and supportive Ichijou joined Anne in examining the pictures on the wall together with her wistful grandpa.

Zero and Kaname followed their purposeful youngest children in the next room which, as the silverette discovered, has a modern contemporary canopy bed that now shelters exhausted and sleepy silver cherubs. The hunter shook his head with an affectionate smile. He was wondering what they wanted to see here, so it was this big bed. The corner of amethyst eyes spied two beige cabriole couches facing each other with two small side tables at each side, a barrister bookshelf placed near a beech executive desk and a linen cabinet, perhaps for extra blankets, on the opposite wall. Seeing that it’s near the Great Hall that he imagined could become filled with bothersome meddlers and irritating bustle if completely occupied, Zero could tell that this place was like some hideout so a silver eyebrow rose at seeing a work desk as if the occupant here were never really given any kind of
reprieve.

Kaname smiled at him, “I’m alright now, Zero.”

The hunter caught himself and scowled at his mate for reading his thoughts again. “I was not worried, stupid.” He scoffed, earning him a chuckle from the brunette, before turning to his sleeping angels. “I think they’re out.” That’s fast, they must be really tired.

“Indeed.” Fond russet orbs genially watched his little darlings slumber. “It’s no surprise given the time.”

The couple’s eyes met and silently decided to leave the two exhausted seraphs after briefly watching them softly snore and childishly mumble in their sleep, not having the heart to wake them up. They’ll simply collect them once on their way back to the royal bedchambers. After taking out another blanket, turning on the heater in the room and informing Katsuragi via the castle’s internal communication system, they quietly closed the door behind them and explained their youngest’s disappearance to the waiting crowd in the next room.

Their group continued on from chamber to chamber, certain two hunters’ grumbling at the absurd expansiveness and splendor of the whole castle accompanying the animated reactions of a silver prefect and a brunette ex-prefect. Outside of the Kuran castle, the heavens were stained crimson over the darkening moors.

Finally, after exploring several more lavish rooms, the silver hunter again set foot at the Grand Hall. They found the chamber occupied by several attendants and the old butler conversing with an old amiable woman who was introduced to the silverette as the head housekeeper, Mrs. Kobayashi. All stopped what they were doing at the entrance of the vampire king’s company and curtsied.

“Your majesties, we were just in the middle of planning the necessary activities to guide the servers and attendants for the Winter Solstice.” Katsuragi explained after straightening his posture.

“Do not let us delay you.” Kaname waved to signal the other workers to continue what they were doing and after a nod from the butler, the servants resumed the tasks at hand. “Please don’t mind us. Takamiya and the headmaster merely wished to survey the perimeter.”

“Very well, your majesty.”

The silverette could hear Yuki and Ichiru energetically review and examine each glamorous detail of the chamber. They of course can’t help but note the ornate thrones on the dais. Zero tried to ignore the two embarrassing dolts pestering him for his attention, no doubt wanted him to join them on the dais.

The hunter was just about to shout at them to stop badgering him when he noticed that the thrones have multiplied since the last time he was there. Instead of just two, there were now a total of nine ornate chairs at the center of the room. Evidently, seven other fancy chairs were added though the original two were obviously still more lavish and elegant than the rest. On a step lower than Kaname and Zero’s place, five baroque upholstered seats were placed – two on Kaname’s side and three on Zero’s side. On another lower step, one more were added on each side forming something that resembled an unequal and flattened inverted V symbol.

The pureblood explained that the added seats were for the children, Yuki and Ichiru which promptly silenced the troublesome duo of shameless siblings in mid-tease. The hunter smirked at the frozen expression of his twin and adopted-sister. Had Kaname headed with that information earlier, he wouldn’t have made as much fuss. What better way to endure a possibly awkward and embarrassing
situation than to share the experience with your loved ones? That lifted Zero’s spirits up like nothing else did.

A blushing Yuki was then directed to sit on the lone ornate chair placed on the lower step on Kaname’s side while a flushed Ichiru was made to sit on a similar chair on the same step but on Zero’s side. A nonchalant Anne and Kohaku occupied the two above Yuki’s seat, closer to Kaname’s throne, while a laidback Akira made way for the one closest to Zero’s side. Evidently, the other two seats above Ichiru’s were for the silver fraternal twins.

The hunter’s snort at the deepening crimson hues on his siblings’ faces at the appreciative and vigorous exclamations from the two aristocrats and the headmaster were accompanied by the predicted snicker from Kaito. Zero knew that he’ll also be subjected to the same kind of reaction during the event itself but he can’t help but enjoy the moment, generating a fond look from his mate. He snorted even louder when Yuki and Ichiru jumped out of their seats upon the kind old butler’s announcement that supper or normally, breakfast for them will be served in less than half an hour and Katsuragi’s question of whether they would like to already proceed to the drawing room was met by eager affirmation by the two.

Zero can’t help but mirthfully shake his head as he watch the two lead their assembly outside the room as fast as possible. His amused gaze met the pureblood’s quiet but equally amused russets. Somehow, the idea that he might enjoy the Winter Solstice with diversions like that filled his mind.

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After dinner (breakfast or whatever) was announced, their party consisting of the obviously fresh from bath and overdressed (in Zero’s opinion, though his mate had good-naturedly informed him that they’re the ones who were underdressed for the meal. Ridiculous.) Night class made way from a second floor drawing room to the small (but not small) dining room and were exasperatedly seated accordingly. Zero was pretty sure that he saw Kaito threw his place card somewhere behind his seat. How he was itching to do the same.

The dinner went on quite well despite the formality and even though the table manners were ignored (deliberately by Kaito and Zero – they were tasked to stand guard on too many soirees and dinner parties to know there’s an order to things like this - and because of lack of knowledge by Yuki and Ichiru) by some which were graciously tolerated by the rest (though Ruka imperceptibly rolled her eyes every now and then).

Several topics and discussions were going on during the (stifling, grumbled Kaito and Zero) meal. Zero was just listening to his daughter talk about her inclination to visit the grounds and gardens the next day when Ichiru and Yuki suddenly professed a wish to see the royal couple’s bedchambers. It looked like an uncomfortable Ichijou and Aido were about to comment on the suggestion when surprisingly, Kaname gave his consent.

“I’ll have some matters to attend to with my steward later on but you may take Zero with you.” The vampire king genially offered.

Yuki beamed. She really wanted to get the chance to visit that room even just once and before there are any activities done there that would make her combust spontaneously just at the insinuation. She didn’t think she’ll ever have the courage to ask again after that night. “Thank you, onii-sama! Then, Ichijou-senpai-,”
“I’m sorry, Yuki-chan. But I think I must pass this time.” The blond immediately apologized. Loathe as he was to deny his princess anything, he can’t possibly intrude that particular space. It would have been quite different if it had been just his friend’s own bedroom. Since the silver hunter started sleeping in the Moon dorm, not one of the Night class students, save for the royal children, dared enter their main sleeping quarters.

Seeing the normally calm blonde’s unease, the pureblood princess didn’t even try to persuade him or argue.

One Kiryū Ichiru only glanced towards his lover’s direction across the table, immediately catching nervous cerulean orbs and the slightly tense shake of his blond head to understand that the aristocrat would also not be joining their little expedition. He gave a nod of understanding. “Well, isn’t it nice to have the old team back? It’s been a while since it was just you, I and nii-san. Unless, of course, the children would like to come.” He lively joined in, generating a sparkling gaze full of gratitude from Hanabusa.

“ Aren’t you going to invite me?” the headmaster piped in a hopeful voice.

“ Don’t you need to scan the grounds with Kaito?” Zero interjected. He would have also joined them during normal circumstances but because of exhaustion and his annoying guardian and his overprotective mate’s insistence that he doesn’t overwork himself, it was decided that he’ll continue on the next day. He ignored the chairman’s heartbroken sobs and subsequent whines.

“ Oh, I’m sorry, Ichiji. I’m afraid that the day has caught up with us. We’ll retire after dinner.” Anne apologetically said to the silverette.

“ Uhm! There’s also cigar with the gentlemen after dinner!” lively piped Akira but when sharp amethysts and russets fell on him, he hastily retracted his joke, “I’m just kidding, otou-chan, chichiue!”

Kohaku can only sigh in exasperation. There’s no cure for his twin’s foot and mouth disease. “We’ll also take care retrieving Sui-chan and Nao from the Solar of the Great Hall. Please enjoy your time leisurely.”

“Then I-,” the blond ex-hunter’s petition was cut-off by loud Ichiru’s words.

“Then the old team it is!”

Having no intention to abide the fancy after dinner rituals, Zero directly gestured his two companions to go with him to the room which even he hasn’t seen yet. They were guided by the head housekeeper while Kaito immediately waylaid the chairman’s attempt to follow them by dragging his ass to the direction of the Grand Hall leaving the aristocrats, the three royal children and the king. Normally, after such events, the ladies would retire to the drawing room to gossip and the men are left to enjoy cigar or idle conversation but the vampire king’s company retreated to a large study after the five had left.

While Kaname was not fond of other people intruding a place that was meant for just Zero and him, he can’t help but silently thank his sister for unwittingly suggesting something that’s ultimately for his benefit. He wanted his hunter to be as clueless as possible regarding the things that will come to pass in the coming days. The pureblood then cast a barrier inside the room to make sure that the conversation they’ll have will stay inside the room and will not be heard by anyone outside. The brunette was not worried about his old friend for they already had their own discussion a few days ago.
Once the door closed, the air inside the study instantly turned heavy with tension. The plan had been drafted a few days ago but it will just be implemented tonight, once the prefect and ex-prefects have gone to bed.

“How are the preparations?” Kaname’s even voice knifed through the gloom.

“I’ve already put in the Somnus incense to ensure deep slumber in the grand bedchamber, Ichiji and Yuki-bachan’s room. That will guarantee that the others’ absence will not be noted.” Anne answered first.

“Akira and I have also finished your request, chichiue.” Kohaku responded soberly. He caught his twin’s uncharacteristically serious regard before he produced a wooden box that they then presented to their father.

“Excellent. Thank you.” The pureblood then rewarded his children by a small but sincere smile. Then facing the silent Night class who can’t help but eye the contents of the box with awe, he ordered, “Claim one of these to hide your auras. You know when to move out. I expect complete success in these missions.”

“Hai, Kaname-sama!” the Night class steadfastly exclaimed, Ruka and Hanabusa’s voice audibly louder than the rest.

After being satisfied by the look of absolute decisiveness and courage from his faithful subjects, the pureblood dismissed them to confer with his three darling angels who were all sporting somber and worried expressions. An unconscious hand reached out to wipe the forlorn appearance of his normally boisterous son, “Forgive me for putting you all through this.”

“There’s nothing to forgive, chichiue!” Akira started and was immediately followed by his siblings who all tried to acquit their dear father of any guilt and responsibility.

The small childish voices and stubborn remarks drew an affectionate smile on the older vampire. “Thank you for all your help. Do you think that we’ll be able to cast that spell on the castle?” the oldest brunette asked, pertaining to an ancient spell Aido previously found in an almost decrepit book that he learned from his children would be used in the Kuran castle in the future.

“It can surely be done, chichiue. Hana-jiji had already finished studying about it in the future, but we’ll need to inspect the whole palace first to see if anything had changed and if we can simply copy the seal’s arrangement like in the future. There are specific calculations done, you see, to ensure that the area covered the whole castle. However, I’m afraid we only know of the placements of the seals inside the castle. In the future, we have ones for the gardens, courtyards and extended castle grounds. Had I known that the knowledge will be needed, I would have checked were you put them so we can duplicate it here. Forgive me.”

“I’m sorry too, chichiue. I didn’t think it would be important.” mumbled Akira.

“I must apologize as well, chichiue. I should have studied more…” the eldest whispered, ashamed.

“You need not apologize for that.” The king assured them with a smile, “Setting the barrier inside the Kuran castle is sufficient enough.”

“Once we complete putting on all the seals at the right places, nothing will move in this castle but you know of it.”

“We only need to mix your blood with mine and Kohaku. I’ll also be able to make it so that it’s undetectable. Otou-chan, Yuki-bachan and Ichiji will never find out.”
“Excellent.” Kaname gently patted the twin’s head.

“I’m so sorry I’m not of any help, chichiue.” Anne mumbled again in a small and remorseful voice. She had recovered barely any of her power since her last stunt even though it’s been quite a while. Well, that’s what one has to pay for bending time and space at her will. And while she knew that her abilities are also unneeded given that the tasks to be done are outside her expertise, she realized that she would be unable to call even a small tornado with her current state in the inevitable instance that a battle will breakout. Other than being able to fight using her anti-vampire weapon, she’s practically powerless. The brunette had never attempted it but she knew that she’ll be in a dire state indeed should she attempt to open even a small portal without the use of her ready-made bloodstones.

“There’s no need for you to apologize, my princess. It is I who’s ashamed of having placed all of you in danger.” The pureblood reassured with an affectionate burgundy gaze on his little treasures.

The royal princess immediately shook her head, an action that the twins instantaneously copied, and asserted with childish stubbornness, “It certainly is not chichiue’s fault! It’s already deplorable enough that you’re burdened by Rido-ojiisama’s nefarious manifestation, you shouldn’t blame yourself for a fate you did not design.”

Akira wholeheartedly agreed, “That’s right, chichiue! How can it be your fault that Rido-ojiisama is such a malicious, slimy, vile ol-,”

“Aki!” Kohaku interrupted his twin’s rude tongue and gave him a scolding look which the younger brunette petulantly didn’t meet before also turning to their beloved father who’s eyeing them with fondness, “But really, chichiue, please think not of us for we’re not taxed nor troubled by these responsibilities. We’ll gladly use every last ounce of our power to see you and otou-chan safe.” The young heir resolutely imparted.

Kaname can’t help the joy springing deep inside him as he beheld the precious sight of he and Zero’s three eldest children holding his gaze with unwavering love and tenacity in their large eyes. He went down on one knee and held out his two hands. The children immediately laid their small hands on his, “You have my gratitude, but I’d rather that all of you need not use your abilities to fight.”

“Please ease your mind, chichiue. Once this has passed, peace will surely grace you.” Anne reassured. She knew that there are slight issues here and there but his father, in the future, had told her that such things were unavoidable and that despite all those, he’s at peace and is contentedly happy.

“I shall depend upon those words, my love.” The pureblood smiled and squeezed the three pairs of hands in his grasp.

“Ano, chichiue,” Akira started, hesitating a bit before continuing, “I understand that there’s an unwanted link binding you to Rido-ojiisama and preventing you to… well… so… if you wish, Kohaku and I…”

“It’s quite alright, Akira. I would never ask any of you to sully your hands for my sake nor would I ever wish you to.” Kaname softly but firmly said. He’ll never forgive himself if he let that despicable creature taint any of his children’s hand. No, hell will freeze over first before he let that demon touch his angels’ pure lights. “You’re already aiding me more than enough.”

The three exchanged concerned looks as if debating if they should argue further but in the end, all looked up at him and nodded.

“We understand, chichiue.” The eldest voiced, barely able to completely hide the worry filling her.
“We’ll then make those bloodstones and distribute them at the appropriate places, chichiue.” The younger twin said.

“Please let us know should you require anything else from us, chichiue. Anything at all.” Kohaku offered.

“Very well then. Thank you.” The pureblood then embraced the three of them at once and smiled even more when he felt their small bodies fell into his arms.

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Places of Memories

Chapter Notes

Author's Note: Opps... I forgot to upload it in this site... ・゜・ (ﾉД`) I'm a delinquent in updating again! I'm so sorry. ．:゚(\(ω\)/)・． I moved to another country and started a new job so I'm sorry for not delivering my promise of monthly update (let alone, weekly) but I'll try to post the next chapter as soon as possible since it's been drafted for the most part and indeed, the end is already near. (・ω・） Please have more patience with me. I'm so sorry!

(ノ^ω^\)ノ And of course, thank you all for holding on and for still being with me in this ride. ０(≧∇≦)0 I can't thank you all enough for the support and for still reading this fanfiction. ︾(﹀︿﹀) I hope that you'll all be with me till the end. (▽\(^*\) J

(¬‿¬) Another thing, dearests, for those reading my sister's (drywaters08) fanfiction Moon Waltz, she asked me to send her deepest regrets in not updating for months now γ (﹀∧﹀)γ (definitely not my fault nor my influence). She's still trying to finish the next chapter. *in a low voice* she was caught in the world of 'Kingdom' and was mourning General Ouki's death among other things. (You don't know that manga? Read it! It's sensational!) \(\left(\right)\) For those who know the epic-ness that is Kingdom, I'm sure you understand how hard it is to pull away, so please excuse her. γ (∧▽∧) γ I'll bully her into writing again (She's already in the current arc and so determined to wait out the new chapters before reading it again.) _ω(_¬ω－_)ω_ and promised that she'll go back to the yaoi world and KanZe ship (never will we let go).

I'm going to try to finish the next chapter and hopefully, I'll be able to finish it before December 11. (〜(ψ・ω・ Ill))) I'll hate myself if 2020 saw this fanfiction still unfinished! (φ(*・ω・)) I will finish this by 2019! ((((( J'3 ') J) Thanks again my darlings! \(\left(\right)\)

The bright morning sun determinedly cast warmth even with the autumn chill hovering about the Kuran castle. Despite the late hour, the temperature stubbornly stayed low and the crisp wind brought forth frozen kisses on the pale skin of the silver creature traversing the wide halls with his personal seraphs, his hand unconsciously massaging the lower part of his midriff where it's wont to wander these days to feel the budding life within him. It seems that someone is also up for the day, he mused with a small unconscious smile lighting his ethereal face.

Just less than an hour ago, lavender orbs were languorously blinking at the silvery rococo panels on the far cream wall near the door to the bathroom, blind to the elegant beauty presented to him as he valiantly bullied his hazy brain to return from the world of dreams. Dazedly, he noted that he woke up so late even though he went to bed relatively early. Based on the strong sunlight peeking through some of the heavy crimson drapes framing the numerous colonial windows in the room, it's already late morning. Well, it's still too early for a vampire but definitely late for any sane and responsible adult living in a practical world.

Despite resolutely claiming that all of the rooms are too extravagant for comfort, especially that bedchamber which gave him a headache just at the mere sight of it, Zero still found himself falling into a profound sleep, giving his body the much sought after relaxation and rest. He reckoned that it's
no wonder given that he slept on an impossibly soft and cozy four-poster bed and amidst a fortress of fluffy crimson pillows and sheets. The hunter didn’t even wake up when the pureblood joined him which was tremendously rare since he was so attuned to his mate’s presence.

He later finished a hearty breakfast served by poor vampires who should still be asleep given the time. In fact, the vampire king was still very much deep in slumber which made the hunter briefly wrestle against the solid embrace caging him without waking the brunette. Zero knew that vampires are normally dead to the world in the mornings so he was prepared to find himself in a quiet castle and resigned to be accompanied by only his twin and adopted-sister. He was ready to blindly tread his way to that Queen’s Chamber or whatever to make his own breakfast since he hasn’t been to any castle kitchens yet when he was greeted by a knock on the door of the roomy red and gold antechamber. Two footmen wheeled and served a lavish breakfast which was ordered to be brought around that time in the morning. Grudgingly, he internally offered his gratitude to his attentive mate.

As he was wondering what he should do with the time in his hands after breakfast, debating whether he should do the inspection of the Grand Hall that he wasn’t able to do with Kaito and the chairman the night before or perhaps find a place where he can practice target shooting for it’s been a while since he last took out Bloody Rose, five welcomed auras warmed him like no fire blazing in a hearth was able to. He went out of the room to find his children coming to his direction.

A bouncing female silverette immediately tottered quicker at the sight of him while easily towing her twin, cheerfully shouting her greeting and drowning Nao’s quiet ones. It was followed by the eldest’s genial greeting and the identical twins’ sleepy voices. It seems that Akira was still fighting a yawn as he attempted to walk straighter beside his dignified twin. They’re apparently exhausted and got only a few hours of sleep. He wondered if they spent their time playing and exploring the castle.

“Good morning, otou-chan!”

“Good morning.” Zero greeted, a small smile gracing his lips at the wonderful sight of his little lights. “Is it okay for you to be up this early? Shouldn’t you all still be in bed?” he asked, crouching down to receive the silver twins in his arms and pointedly look at the two male brunettes, “I think you two could still use more sleep.”

“We’re fiiii*yawn*nee, otou-chan.” Akira assured unconvincingly, his large somnolent russets blinking blearily at his dear father. Kohaku and he went out with their aunts and uncles to silence the growing number of pests craving the Suzaku blood and who are planning to use it to gain powers equaled to a pureblood thus snatching a chance to overthrow the current monarch. Like that will happen. Those fools quite forgot that his parent’s bond gave the couple astounding powers that transcended that of a pureblood. Still, having them attack all at the same time will prove to be a chore so culling the herd was in order. Unfortunately, the list of families that aunt Seiren brought back guaranteed them that they’ll be out doing their night escapades a little before the night of the Winter Solstice.

“We can’t possibly let otou-chan and nee-chan handle those two bundle of energies alone. With enough rest and motivation, they can be quite a handful.” Kohaku offered. It was not a lie though the real reason for their presence is to place the seals in certain parts of the castle. They were already finished with the inspection of the palace last night but given the task that they’ll need to accomplish during the few hours of their silver parent’s slumber, they must finish establishing the barrier whenever they have time to spare. Also, they’re expecting attacks from powerful beings to strike them any time soon. There’s no time to lose.

“That’s right, otou-chan. Also, the more the merrier. Let’s explore the castle again! Since otou-chan is not yet familiar with the palace, leave it to us to guide you!” Anne piped in, redirecting her father’s
attention away from her sleepy brothers. It’s up to her and the darling fraternal twins to distract their silver father while the other two placed the seals.

Amethyst orbs skeptically observed the adorable faces of his treasures before shrugging. Well, if they’re really sleepy, he had no doubt that it won’t be hard to find a place where they can lie down and rest. “Well, if you’re sure. Tell me if you’re about to pass out.”

“Hai, otou-chan!” childish voices rang clearly through the spacious corridor. After the hunter inquired if they’ve already eaten breakfast which received affirmative answers, they set out towards the other rooms that had evaded their exploration yesterday.

Because of the time, most the rooms were not yet prepared to receive some visitors thus retained their wintry temperature. The freezing air made the hunter clung to the light pea coat that his children had personally selected from his wardrobe and insisted he wear. Good thing that they were the ones who took it out from that monstrosity of a closet.

Really, he’ll get lost inside that place. It was the first time he saw stairs inside a ‘closet’. The sight of which contributed to his early retirement to bed last night. He frowned when he saw a large antique English leather travelling trunk at the bottom of the shelves dedicated to countless bags and he had to wonder when in the world is he going to use it. Perhaps he can use it to smuggle the pureblood’s body undetected for when he finally had enough of his wastage. Zero sighed and continued to walk after the children.

They went to several luxurious guest bedchambers, lavish state apartments, uselessly spacious drawing rooms and sophisticated offices. Before the morning was completely over, the small lively band of six found themselves inside the grand library on the floor beneath the grand bedchambers. He could tell that Nao and Haku favored the room when he spotted quiet smiles on their normally placid expressions. Lavender gaze travelled to the wide expanse and Zero was no longer surprise but was still exasperated to find it even bigger than the Cross Academy’s library. He’s still debating if he would feel surprise if Kaname revealed having read every book inside the humongous chamber. Maybe he would given the outstanding volume of books inside. It’s just impossible to read everything there, even for his mate.

Exquisite floral murals were stenciled on the extensive cream barrel vault ceiling where several golden baroque chandeliers hang. Built-in wall bookshelves covered almost every inch of the wall except for the four carved marble mantelpieces and the occasional full length colonial windows framed with brocaded heavy golden drapes peeking in between on the first floor while octagonal window seats were found on the second floor. The second landing with elaborate Victorian wooden and wrought iron railings is accessible via the two narrow twin U-shaped stairs found on either side of the room.

As if the wall bookshelves that are so tall one needs assistance from the rolling library ladders attached to them are not enough, there are also rows of thick antique standard oak bookcases in the middle of the room. Edwardian study tables, antique library tables, chairs and wingback armchairs were methodically scattered in the room. Comfortable and plush crimson vintage couches and chaises were placed in front of the windows and the mantelpieces ensuring that all visitors will find their preferred reading space.

Their small curious party dispersed upon entering the large chamber, their footsteps silenced by broad crimson and gold area Persian rugs covering the chevron-planked hardwood floor. The large grandfather clock, old standing globes, an ancient map of the world inside an oak pedestal document bespoke glass display case, numerous gothic standing candelabras with gold finish, classic indoor sculptures and statues further decorated the room.
The lone door on the right wall caught Zero’s notice and he left the silver twins inspecting the books on the nearest shelf they found to explore the room behind that entrance. The hunter twisted the knob of the door and frowned to find it locked, a first for him. He didn’t even think that locks were used in that place. Surely, only insane bloodsuckers will even try to rob a place housing the vampire king and any mortal thief will be easily detected and apprehended before they make it to the front entrance.

“Ah, here, otou-chan.” Anne, who spotted him and left an old leather bound copy of *Pride and Prejudice* on a random desk, pressed a button disguised as a flower on the small space not occupied by shelves on the wall near the door but instead of a touchscreen meant to communicate, the wall made way to a black biometric scanner.

The hunter then remembered having his fingerprint scanned the day before. Having enough wit with him, he put his index on the scanner and immediately, he heard the door thud signaling the automatic lock’s removal. Zero opened the door and found a large and intimidating crimson walled study with dark mahogany panels and furniture. He was still wondering why such a place has tight security when questioning amethysts then fell on a small spiraling staircase inside the room. Before he can even ask where it leads to, his eldest kindly explained that it connects to the study inside the Grand Royal bedchambers so that the king will have easy access to the library. He amended his earlier thoughts. Maybe he shouldn’t feel surprise if Kaname had read his way through all the books there.

The silverette sighed once before closing the door, not quite willing to give in to the temptation of ascending the narrow stairs to go back to the room he unfortunately shares with the pureblood and sleep off the growing headache born from exasperation. Zero then noted that their group is two people short and was about to inquire where the little silver angels went to when he noted the busy identical twin behind a bookcase at the far end of the room. He frowned at Kohaku’s back when he saw him lift one standing candelabra, his twin hunched on the space where it was originally placed, “What are you two doing over there?”

Anne who spotted this immediately marched to them, ruffling her satin skirts with both hands on her waist, and admonished in a loud voice, “Oh! You’re trying to find a secret doorway again, aren’t you?”

With her back on him, the silverette wasn’t able to catch the widening of her amethyst eyes as if in warning.

“Right you are nee-chan. It’s just that Aki is convinced that Kat-jiichan is hiding secret passageways and I just humored him for the sake of my sanity.” Haku immediately faced them, easily carrying the large candelabra which was more than twice his size as if it’s a paper baton, shielding his twin from view.

“O-ohhh!” the little rascal also joined after seemingly straightening himself up and scrambling to his feet, “M-my intuition is telling me so. I must be right!”

A dark silver eyebrow arched at his sons, “If there are any secret passageways in any of the chambers here, won’t you already know all of them?”

The eldest only blinked for a second before remarking while smiling sweetly, “That’s absolutely true, otou-chan! This nonsense is certainly because of Akira’s diminishing brain cells. I humbly implore that you bestow him excruciatingly heavy school loads in the future.” Anne could tell her poor brother was gaping at her in disbelief while his twin averted guilty russets to stare at the lovely morning view outside, the large metal article now in his embrace as if to provide protection from possible rabid brothers.
Fortunately, the hunter didn’t sense anything amiss and simply thought that his cute rascals were only up to some mischief, “Don’t break anything. If you vandalize the property here, you’ll answer to Kaname directly.”

Chorused ‘hai, otou-chan!’ came from the three. The silverette thought he heard his eldest whispered an ‘I love you, Akira. I’ll give you my desserts for a week.’ He wasn’t able to look back at them though because the ethereal fraternal twins came running to him while nonchalantly carrying an indoor marble life-size sculpture of an angel and a framed wall painting of a Greek god who they were loudly claiming both look like him. He started, “Suiren, Nao, where did you get those?! Put them back!”

Their company was later joined by Yuki and Ichiru who they both met when they had lunch. After another exhausting excursion of the whole third floor in which the younger Kiryū’s stamina was seriously challenged, three newly awaken vampires found the wandering group.

They were in a castle room that was intended for the Lady of the house and used as her private withdrawing-room when Kaname, followed by Hanabusa and Takuma, joined in. Unlike the Queen’s Chambers, the bower is much smaller and immediate relatives of the royal family are allowed in so Yuki and Ichiru were free to roam around only to tease the hunter about his new private dwelling.

Zero was sincerely thanking his lucky stars that the two were not allowed to that freaking Queen’s Chambers or whatever without invitation because he’s just sure that he won’t be able to live that down any time soon. He just wished that no one would impart its existence to the two dolts pestering him to open up one of the antique chests, investigate the contents of the cabinets, raid the kitchenette or taste the wines in the mini-bar inside the room even though they’re minors. He was just contemplating grinding their heads together to render them unconscious for a bit when the stately figure of his mate, whose presence he already felt nearing since a few minutes ago, elegantly strode inside the chamber. The two nobles who respectfully stood outside were then joined by Ichiru and Yuki, much to the hunter’s relief.

Ichiru who immediately noticed his lover’s extremely pale complexion, asked, “You look tired, Hana. Are you okay?” The younger silverette silently wondered what time his lover went to bed.

“Of course, Ichiru, don’t worry about me.” Hanabusa assured, valiantly fighting off a yawn. It was already morning when they managed to come back, barely making it in time for the oldest silverette’s awakening. He reckoned he only managed a few hours of sleep but since their absence during the time when they’re normally awake might be questioned, he had to say goodbye to the comforts of his bed. Damn Shiki. He must be the only vampire whose abnormally long sleeping habits won’t attract suspicion. Inconspicuous and resentful cerulean found the other noble bouncing with energy who’s chatting with their pureblood princess with his usual cheerfulness. How in the world can Ichijou-san maintain that cheerful persona when he was sure to have also suffered lack of sleep was completely beyond him.

“Good morning, chichiue!” the children immediately greeted the vampire king which the pureblood genially returned when he noted his mate’s narrowed gaze trained on Akira who crawled from behind the large flat screen television.
“What were you doing there, Akira?” the silverette demanded to the little brunette who visibly winced at being interrogated. Now that he thinks about it, his identical sons kept on skulking the dark corners or behind or under the furniture of every room they visited. He can’t help but think they’re up to some mischief.

“E-eh? I… Ah! I lost my earring, otou-chan. I thought it might be there.” The young rouge laughed awkwardly generating a funny expression from his older sister who seemed to be in pain because of his obvious lie.

The silverette looked at his child closely and raised an eyebrow, “Why would you even look behind the TV? Also, I can’t see any of your earrings missing. What were you really doing there, Akira?” He questioned again which made the four brunettes flinched, one obviously and the three imperceptibly.

“I’m sure that whatever the reason is, it’s nothing to be concerned about.” Kaname calmly intervened, redirecting his mate’s suspicious gaze.

Zero sighed at the look of absolute trust on his lover’s face, completely missing the look of his other children shuffling in the background. “You know, if something went wrong here and your palace catches on fire, I won’t care.” While he knows that his fire-conjuring son won’t do anything deliberately reckless, he’s not sure that he’s not prone to causing chaos through sheer chance and stupidity.

The pureblood chuckled, “I’m sure that nothing of the sort will happen.”

“I’m sorry, otou-chan. We were actually planning to play hide and seek later on. Aki must be trying out several hiding spots. Of course now, I know where to look first.” Haku added, hopefully erasing the lingering question in the hunter’s mind.

“Don’t go around hiding in dangerous places, alright?” Zero strictly warned, fighting off a smile at the cute image of his hiding seraphs. However, a niggling feeling of doubt refused to abate deep inside him. He can’t help but feel that something was not right. He tried to shrug off the feeling despite its claws clinging persistently at the back of his mind.

“Understood, otou-chan.” Anne nodded and went to a large linen cabinet and knocked, “You heard otou-chan, Sui-chan. Kindly come out of there.”

The door of the cabinet opened to reveal the cute female silverette perched on the linens at the top shelf. She giggled when the pureblood came nearer to collect the youngest child and landed a kiss on her moonlit hair.

On the other side of the room, the Kuran heir lifted the lid of a large antique chest and carried the youngest son out. “Don’t hide here, Nao. What if you fell asleep?” Apathetic amethysts merely blinked at him before his silver head bobbed in understanding.

The smile the hunter was fighting off prevailed and he can’t help but snort of his children’s antics. Really, they’re still little rascals at heart. Really, what was he thinking? There’s no reason for him to doubt his children.

Deciding that it’s better not to court his mate’s suspiciousness again, the pureblood invited, “It’s very fine out. Why don’t we take a stroll in the gardens?”

“A fine idea, father!” cried the eldest child. She initially thought that she’ll be able to easily distract her otou-chan especially given her aunt Yuki and Ichiji’s presence but spectacularly failed. It’s better
to take a break first. She’s also been hankering to visit a certain place.

“Most of the gardens will not be able to offer their normal appeal because of the present season. I suggest going to the autumn and winter gardens in the western castle ground.” Kaname offered as their small group made way for one of the castle exits.

“Indeed, chichiue, it’s lamentable how we’ll not be able to visit the spring garden, the Wisteria tunnel or Eliot.” Anne pouted, disappointment clear in her voice. However, no matter what, she’ll visit her grandmother’s garden! The little princess thought resolutely.

“I’m sure that other opportunities will arise.” Kaname offered, the back of his index finger softly caressing his eldest child’s cheek as if to erase the forlorn look etched on her beautiful face. She rewarded him with a sweet smile before allowing herself to be herded to the west exit of the central ward and to the outstanding sight of the West courtyard.

The bright afternoon sun struggled to provide warmth despite the autumn chill and prevailed somewhat which resulted to a relatively pleasant temperature. Most of the trees’ leaves have almost completely turned a beautiful crimson color. Some of which were finally seduced by the cool wind to relinquish their hold of their home and be carried somewhere else which painted a serene and beautiful view.

Anne breathed deeply at the nostalgic sight of the garden in the West courtyard. It’s not exactly as she remembered in the future. Some arrangements are different but the feeling it invokes inside her is exactly the same. It’s still very beautiful that she can’t help the smile that immediately appeared on her ethereal face and the fast steps that carried her ahead of her companions. Despite the distance, the eldest Kuran child can still hear her father, with the occasional help from her siblings, genially explain to her otou-chan, aunt and uncle the different sights inside the courtyard.

His mate pointed out a towering dovecote in a fair distance which made Zero wonder how many pigeons and doves they have and whether they are sometimes served for dinner. His attention was next turned to a stately building adjoined to the central ward at their far right where Ichiru, Yuki and Shiki are staying.

They passed several magnificent fountains with varying size, garden benches, tasteful garden sculptures, romantic garden pavilions neatly surrounded by trimmed bushes, hedges, topiaries and trees. The small group went through the West wing of the castle before finally arriving in a garden full of autumn flowering bulbs and flowers.

“Wow! So many flowers!” Yuki gleefully exclaimed, her cheerful sienna eyes meeting the smiling emerald orbs of her boyfriend. Excited sienna eyes roamed through the wide expanse of the garden which is full of Dahlias, Begonias, Gladioluses, Winter-flowering cherry, Snowdrop Winter Aconites, heathers, cyclamens, Christmas roses, Daphne and other flowers that the brunette ex-prefect can’t name.

“Woah, how many gardens do you have, senpai?” Ichiru breathed deeply, feeling the start of the building fatigue. All this time, he thought they were already in the garden… He didn’t know they were just on their way to the garden. Damn it. He won’t survive this vacation.

Kaname and the children all answered at the same time, “8.” / “9!”

“Eh?” the adults confusedly voiced.

There was silence while the children exchanged looks amongst each other before the three older ones awkwardly laughed while sheepishly amending their statement.
“Of course, there are only eight! Goodness, how could I have forgotten?” Anne even chuckled rather unconvincingly.

“Indeed, for a moment I was confused.” Kohaku followed lamely, his eyes not meeting anyone’s while his hands were busy covering Suiren’s pouting mouth, her expression screams of confusion.

“W-well, it’s been a while, yes?” Akira proposed weakly, even nodding to himself as if the idea that a few months away are enough to forget the details of their home for several decades is perfectly reasonable. He tried to cover Nao’s imperceptible bewilderment by also covering his mouth in the guise of playfully pinching his cheeks but failed.

The adults frowned, lopsided smiles in place as if they can’t decide whether to show confusion or to laugh at the obviously fake acts. In the end, they decided to humor the children who must all have very good reasons to keep the mysterious ninth garden as secret. For sure, it’s something to do with the future. If so, they’ll eventually find out about it then.

“I guess it’s an easy mistake to make.” Ichijou offered, smiling at his friend’s angelic children.

“Y-yeah, it’s easy to forget about things that you normally don’t think about, right?” Yuki readily agreed.

“Yes, take Yuki for example. She always forgets to do her homework.” Ichiru cited which made the silver hunter snort.

“Hey!” the female brunette protested.

“Maa, maa, Yuki-chan, I’m sure Ichiru-kun is only joking.” The green-eyed noble soothingly whispered, squeezing the small hand in his grasp to further pacify his girlfriend.

Zero, ignoring the rest of the party, only focused on his children and said, “We won’t ask about it so don’t worry.”

“If it’s something you’re not comfortable sharing or something you deem that we should not know during this time, rest assure that we shan’t pry.” Kaname also assured them.

The three little brunettes smiled shyly at their parents, the identical twins finally letting go of their youngest siblings, and nodded happily. It’s just they can’t ruin such a surprise for their otou-chan.

They then went on their tour of the royal gardens. Anne once again bemoaned not being able to explore the wisteria tunnel and the cherry blossoms garden for they will simply look lifeless branches during the autumn season.

Despite the lack of much color because of the season, they decided to still visit the main garden with Anne’s insistence and so continued on their walk. After traversing through the other smaller gardens, they found themselves in a vast lawn littered with several manicured trees and topiaries of various shapes and designed. Like the other gardens they’ve passed through, there are trees, hedges, bushes and maintained Bermuda grass as far as the eye can see. They could also see several fountains, bird baths, garden benches, small garden pavilions and lots of marble sculptures here and there though with different designs than the other gardens. At the center, there’s a huge hedge maze leading to and containing other small stone gazebos. A sparkling man-made lake sits at a distance.

They barely made it to the middle of the main garden when Zero inquired about his twin brother’s well-being and Hanabusa who’s growing worried about his lover’s extremely pale complexion requested to have a break for Ichiru’s sake despite the silverette’s insistence that he’s fine.
“I-I’m really f-fine, Hana, n-nii-san.” Ichiru breathlessly assured but no one took it seriously for the loud and fast beat of his heart coupled with the sheen of sweat covering his extremely pale complexion gave away just how exhausted he must really be feeling.

“Hush, Ichiru. You’re obviously not well.” The blue-eyed noble admonished in a worried tone as he hurriedly supported his lover to the nearest garden pavilion with the other vampires following them while asking after the silverette’s condition.

“Ichiru, are you okay?” Yuki anxiously voiced. She cleanly forgot about her adopted-brother in her excitement.

“Oh no, uncle! I’m sorry I wasn’t thinking!” Anne guiltily cried, immediately rushing to her uncle’s side and summoning several fans, face towels and cold canned drinks using the blood stone on her ring. How could she have forgotten her uncle’s condition and propose such an extensive walk? Oh, how stupid of her! Because of her selfishness, her dear uncle is suffering!

“Ah, thank you, Anne-sama.” Hanabusa said and pick up one of the towels to wipe his lover’s sweat.

“Forgive me, Ichiru-kun. I should have ordered for some horses or a vehicle. It might be quite an exercise for you.” Kaname apologized before turning to a groundskeeper at the vicinity who immediately nodded and promptly went away to do his master’s bidding.

Ichiru waved away their concern though he’s unable to speak because he was still quite unable to catch his breath. “I-I’m fine, really.” He assured them again once he’s at least able to talk, “N-nice garden, senpai.” The silverette tried for a smile but failed.

“Oh, we’re sorry, uncle. We forgot to mention that the main garden covers almost 600 acres of land.” Kohaku, one of those who had taken the task to fan the exhausted prefect, remorsefully said.

Two pairs of lilac eyes and one pair of sienna eyes widened at the information. The three exchanged incredulous look. Both nobles didn’t seem surprise having already visited the palace multiple times.

“Oh, well.” Damn. The younger Kiryū can only curse internally. He’s already dreading the trip back to the castle on foot, he didn’t want to think about completely exploring that amount of ground in his present condition or ever.

The genius noble, as if sensing his lover’s distress, assured him in a comforting tone, “We can go back to the castle already, Ichiru.” He just knew that their magnanimous king wouldn’t hold that against them.

“Indeed, Ichiru-kun. I believe it’s also time for an afternoon tea.” The vampire king assured, “Is there any other place you’d like to visit?” he then turned to their other companions. Almost everyone answered negatively and supported the idea of going to the castle except for his eldest child who seems to hesitate. “Is there somewhere you wish to be, my love?”

Quiet russets tangled with reluctant amethysts. She knew that most of her companions are already fatigued and are in great need of the castle’s many comforts, “Well, if it’s alright with you, father, I’d like to visit the small rose garden.” Then she added in a hurry before obligatory offers of company were made, “I shall be fine alone! It wouldn’t take me more than a few minutes. It’s just that I really missed the place. I promise to be back before the tea even grows cold.” She finished with a smile.

The pureblood king studied her only for a moment before nodding, “Very well then. We shall see you in the Emerald parlor.”
“Be careful.” Zero seriously added. “Go back immediately.”

“Hai, chichiue, otou-chan!” The royal princess beamed at her parents before sprinting with inhuman speed towards the direction of her late grandmother’s garden.

The brunette’s extraordinarily accelerated movements only halted upon reaching the small ornate bronze colored entrance of the small rose garden. She opened the gate, expecting the old creak that didn’t come which reminded her that she’s about 80 years in the past. The gate is relatively newer than the old one she’s used to.

Regardless of the realization, she continued on and found that the place is quite far from what she remembered. There are less vines clinging on the small pavilions, stone benches, bird baths and garden statues, it’s less cluttered and not just because of the season. Although she knows next to nothing when it comes to gardening and even with the knowledge that he chichiue ordered the garden to be left relatively untouched aside from tending to the plants, it felt like it’s a completely different place though at the same time, it felt like the exact same place as in her memories.

She walked slowly towards an old dome pavilion that is quite hidden by an extremely high hedge and rose bushes. She softly gasped as she beheld the place that would always be special to her. It’s newer in her eyes, with fewer cracks, chips and pearlier shine on its plastered columns and interior while the glass is clearer and more transparent than what she remembered. It might be hard for mortals to spot the difference but it’s clear as day to her. And yet, regardless, it still managed to be so captivatingly enigmatic. Mysterious and secretive. Like a mystical space is just right inside, detached from the real world and untouched by anything vile.

For her, it might always be that kind of place.

“I’ll wait for you.”

“Yeah, I promise.”

“I won’t forget, I promise.”

As she walked near the entrance, words spoken with tenderness and patience by a deep and gruff voice whispered in her ears. She sighed, a sad smile etching on her delicate features appeared without her permission. Her small butt found the hard, smooth surface of the marble seat, the multiple layers of her skirts protecting her body from the cold.

Lavender orbs drank every detail presented to her before they landed on a column behind her. She smiled ruefully at the smooth stone, suddenly feeling very foolish. She has not forgotten that the thing that made the pillar special to her doesn’t exist at that time so it’s only her fault for feeling unreasonably disappointed.

In spite of the absence of her ultimate goal, the little brunette still found herself lightly and carefully caressing the smooth and cold expanse of the large post, wishing for a certain time in the future to come to pass.

The bright light of the moon struggled to fight the darkness that enveloped the heavens. The chilling autumn winds viciously cut through the rustling leaves, forcing them to relinquish their homes and
descend on the ground to join their fallen comrades. Some of the unfortunate leaves that were carried by the freezing wind fell on the path of the vampires setting out to their next mission.

Determined rose-quartz fell on the stately mansion that stood in an easy distance from where they are. “Let’s quickly finish this.” The beautiful toffee haired vampire resolutely ordered to her companions. She can’t believe that Ichijou-san and Shiki accomplished more last night when there’s only two of them. She won’t be able to face her king if she’s unable to deliver the quality of work expected of her. This is only the second family for the night. They must act fast. After the first night’s success, she’s determined to hold her head up high in front of her liege.

“Shut up, Ruka. Don’t order me around.” Irritated sapphires fell on his haughty cousin. Her immense beauty did nothing to exempt her from his retaliation at her pompous tone. Building ire filled him because of the exhaustion from the recent battle and the heavy weight assailing his morality. He knew that necessity knows no law. In the first place, those families are traitors who would annihilate anyone to achieve their ambitions but their sneaky attacks are dealing heavy blows in his principles. Hanabusa reminded himself that they’re dealing with powerful aristocrats and even with the aid of their royal princes’ bloodstones, their lives could be in danger. More importantly, they’re after someone who’s more important than his very life. Right now, they do not have a luxury of time or the option of failure.

“Hmph. Don’t do anything that would ruin this for me, imp. If I fail Kaname-sama because of your idiocy, I will never forgive you.” Ruka warned, still in her usual demeaning tone, wearing the small ruby-red heart shape pendant necklace around her neck proudly.

“Huh? That’s my line, witch. If you screwed up and put my angel in danger, I’ll freeze you up to the next century.” Aido threatened, his heavenly features arranged in a severe and determined expression, the fingers of the hand wearing a silver bracelet embedded with a large red crystal twitching slightly in irritation.

“Can you two please calm down? There’s a whole household out there so you won’t have shortage of enemies. Don’t get too heated up.” The copper haired noble sighed, a lone red stud adorning his left ear shining through the darkness of the night. It’s just his luck to be teamed by two hot headed creatures. But then again, he didn’t think he would prefer the creepy stoniness of the apathetic trio and an overly cheerful member of the other groups. When his two cousins erupted in another exhausting and petty argument as they neared the estate, he amended his thoughts. Maybe, he’d rather just die of boredom than be subjected to this much aggravation. “Hey! Cut it out! Don’t lose your concentration!”

The only female vampire in the group delicately snorted in derision as if losing focus is well beneath her, “Unlike some, I won’t do something so stupid. Just look after that blond monkey.”

“Shut up, hag. You’re just lucky I’m feeling quite generous tonight. And don’t worry, Kat. They’re just insignificant beings undeserving of our attention. I’m enough to handle all of them. We don’t even need to take them seriously.”

They sensed four level-B auras which can only belong to high-ranking vampires inside a large room in the mansion. Three pairs of feet landed soundlessly on the terrace adjacent to the room which turned out to be a large study, careful to allow the darkness to conceal their positions. Sharp ears strained to listen to the serious conversation the family was having, a recorder in their hands, though any effort is unneeded given the family’s enthusiasm made their voices loud enough to be audible to even a normal mortal’s ears.

As luck would have it, the focus of their keen discussion seems to center on a plan that would give them all the evidence needed to incriminate them. While Seiren can be trusted to bring back accurate
and reliable information, they must have proof of the criminals’ treason to show anyone who would be brave enough to question the pureblood’s orders and a recording of them animatedly hatching a plot would be acceptable enough.

“Ken said the Hunter Association’s president is making plans with Rido-sama. We must make a move before Rido-sama gets hold of the twins!” an authoritative voice that can only belong to the head of the household declared.

“Father, why don’t we make Ken kill that old coot so Rido-sama can’t use the hunters anymore?” A high-pitched female voice asked.

“Unfortunately, that pet of ours isn’t that strong. Damn. Why didn’t we think of taking a hunter from a famous line? We won’t be having this trouble in the first place had we gotten hold of the orphaned Kiryū and all our plans would have been realized already.”

The middle-aged lady of the house reminded, “It’s that Yagari and that blond ex-hunter’s fault.”

“Tsk! If only we knew that that blood was in those children!”

“There, there, daddy, I’m sure we can still use our pet Ken. We also have that partner of his who’ll do anything for money.”

“Still, when do you reckon we can move in with our plans? The Winter Solstice will be upon us in a few days!” Another voice which belonged to the handsome heir spoke, impatience resounding loud and clear.

“Maybe we should have an alliance with the Yagami, daddy. There are two Kiryū after all.”

“Fool. The Yagami family has two sons as well. They’ll betray us for sure.”

The younger man suggested, “Father, Ken mentioned that the younger Kiryū is very sickly. Maybe we can get away luring him out first. It’s easier to kidnap just him.”

“That’s right, daddy! We can turn him to a vampire to rid him of that sickly body too and perhaps he can be bonded with brother. He likes blond, Ken told me.”

“Ah yes, dear. Let’s kidnap the younger Kiryū and make him bond with Seiichiro. A year drinking the Suzaku blood, added with his bond and a child will give us more power than is possible through any normal means. I’m sure that many others will set their eyes upon Zero-sama, but that weak twin of his might be overlooked.”

“Mother is right, father. I’m sure that I can make that Ichiru fall for me so we can create a bond. We can hide for a year and come back with more power than before. With Rido-sama fighting Kaname-sama, we’ll have many chances to attack them.”

“That right! Brother will surely be able to catch the silverette’s heart and we’ll have free access to all the Suzaku blood that we need. Also, conception will be easy enough since there are only two Suzakus in existence. It’s the perfect plan, father! Let the others fight and kill each other over Zero-sama and let’s set our sights on Kiryū Ichiru instead!” The young female blond gleefully imparted.

“Hmmmm… this is a sound plan indeed. However, what if-,” the head of the Mikoto household wasn’t able to finish his sentence for suddenly, the air dropped in an ungodly degree and ice enveloped the furniture in their study.

“What in the world?!” the young Mikoto heir exclaimed, watching the fire in the hearth die out.
All the glass panes of the floor to ceiling windows shattered and the whole family’s focus fell on the three well-known vampires standing on the veranda connected to the room. When did they get there?!

Wide eyes watched as the three nobles elegantly strode in headed by the Aido heir who’s sporting deep blood-red eyes. He was followed by a bored looking daughter of the Souen and the heir of the Kain family who was sighing deeply as if his peaceful night had officially run away.

“Y-you!!” the old vampire faltered, unable to comprehend how the three younger vampires were able to snuck in without his notice.

“Hana, your aura is leaking out.” Kain pointed out, waving a metaphorical goodbye to their planned stealth attack. Even though their presence had been discovered, he and Ruka didn’t think of cancelling their prince’s power and continued on to conceal their auras for they’d rather not advertise their presence there. However, it seems that their cousin is determined to make the Mikoto family know just how terribly angry he is by unleashing the deadliest aura he can muster.

As if the livid blond didn’t hear anything, he merely addressed the aristocrats still gaping at them with a voice that was as cold as the ice now covering every inch of the room, “Lord Mikoto, for the crime committed against the crown, by the authority vested upon us by the vampire king, you’re all sentence to die.”

There’s a clamor within the mansion as the whole household rose in response to the menacing aura released by an incensed noble and the defensive ones from their lords and ladies. Hurrying feet can be heard and soon, loud banging on the frozen double-doors permeated the arctic room.

“Mikoto-sama?! Mikoto-sama?! Are you alright?”

“Young master!? What’s going on there?”

“My lady!”

“Mikoto-sama!”

“Ojou-sama!”

“See? I told you he’ll do something stupid.” Ruka irritably huffed, feeling even more annoyed upon seeing a cold vapor form as she spoke. Damn this monkey. She was rescued from turning into an ice princess by her other cousin who immediately conjured fire for her comfort. She hummed in approval and leaned towards the warmth. She knew she won’t be able to enjoy the comfort for long however, for the aristocrats before them poised to attack.

Hmph! She’ll definitely relish the sensation later and watch his expression when she ask him just who in the world said something about insignificant beings undeserving of their attention.

-Burgundy orbs that were watching the fire dance merrily in the fireplace of the adjacent study in the grand bedchambers looked up upon sensing dark intent closing in to the palace. Without words, the pureblood calmly went out of the small office to glance at the peacefully slumbering silverette in the large canopy bed. The thick scent of sweet aromatic incense wafting inside the bedchamber ensuring-
his mate’s captivity in the land of dreams.

Within seconds, he was out of the room and on his way to the outer grounds where unwelcomed visitors were waiting for him.

Amidst the bright illumination of the high moon and numerous stars dotting the inky sky, a figure of a creature with heaven incarnate beauty stood behind the old palace he had coveted for so long. He knew that a chance had been presented to him and he’d be a fool not to take it.

“Aren’t you a bit too early for the festivities, lord Erikawa?” Kaname stepped from the shadows of the trees lining the extended castle grounds.

“Kuran-sama.” Acknowledged the newly arrived interloper, his cruel gray eyes displaying no hint of surprise at being found. After all, it’s as planned. It’s useless to try sneaking in inside a pureblood’s domain since traps are sure to welcome them. And though it’s far away from his character, he would rather not cause any harm to the object of his current obsession. “I thought I might catch you alone while your servants are out doing your dirty work for you. I must thank you for cleaning the filth for me. I must say those noble families trying to rise above their station are such sore sights.”

“My, you’re pretty knowledgeable about my affairs, duke.” The brunette responded with the same level of apathy. The intent is thick in the air but not even the scent of dark murderous intent was enough to perturb the vampire king.

“I must say that it didn’t come cheap, but anyone would provide precious information for the right price.” A smug smile appeared on thin lips.

“Right price. Like the younger Kiryū then? I knew that you’re not the kind to move without great encouragement, lord Saito.” Kaname responded, addressing another pureblood who wasn’t quite able to hide his aura from him.

“Heh, I knew that trying to pull one over you is all for naught, Kuran-sama. Well, what can I say? He made a bargain I cannot refuse.” Voiced another inhumanly stunning creature with golden hair, stepping somewhere on the king’s left.

“If you were promised, Ichiru-kun and this fool wishes to possess my mate, I wonder what you were promised, lord Ito.” The brunette remarked to the pureblood who he knew was standing somewhere behind him.

“Ah, Kuran-sama, I must confess that I’ve always found queen Juri absolutely stunning. I was told your sister looked just like her but I must say, I wouldn’t say no to having your daughter instead. She’s a beauty, isn’t she? Rest assured that I will take care of her and raise her to be my perfect bride.”

“How flattering. It’s rare that so many purebloods have gathered. If the council is here, I’m sure that they’ll fall all over themselves. A pity that no one will witness this ever again.” Kaname said in his quiet tone, his serene expression not faltering despite the formidable threats insisting to deliver him at death’s door.

Vaguely, a handful level C and level D vampires emerged from the shadow of their masters’ presence but just as they stepped towards the direction of the vampire king, two hunters stepped into the fray. Rounds of bullets were fired and the metallic sound of a blade against soft flesh filled the autumn gloom, imbuing ashes to the cold wind and accompanying the serenade of rustling leaves with cries of life’s end.
After ending the insincere exchange, four monstrous auras unleashed outside, delivering fear to the servants inside the castle. However, despite the dreadful storm that was the terrifying clash of those creatures with colossal power, a semblance of calm blanketed the inside of the palace for certain royal children’s presence filled the humongous expanse of the castle premises, a silent promise of protection. Three pairs of reddish-lavender orbs scrutinized the skirmish from a parlor which afforded the perfect view of that specific location outside.

The eldest of the Kuran children sat demurely on a high-back chesterfield armchair, near the lit fireplace while her two silver siblings silently stood on the window seat to clearly see the castle grounds, their hands holding one another. Warm tea was brewed and sweets were served. Anne took a sip of the Earl Grey, the loud chinking of china the only sound accompanying the crackling of fire inside the room. Their expression and mien were somber but calm while observing the normally frightening display outside as if they were merely critically viewing a recital. The only thing marring the otherwise pleasant display in the room was the presence of a long white katana on the young brunette’s lap.

“Kindly step away from the window, Sui-chan, Nao.” Anne ordered the two silverettes fully knowing what they will come to see should they continue to watch the proceedings outside. Despite not being a stranger to death and violence, she and her father wanted to shield the youngest angels from carnage as much as possible.

“But nee-chan…” the female silverette pouted but complied, tugging her twin’s hand and moving away from the window to sit at the couch in front of the fireplace. They turned in time to miss how their father’s hand passed through Ito’s body. The pale hand clutching his still beating heart closing viciously and the pureblood fell into a useless heap, his body at once turning to marble-like properties, once the brunette retracted his now bloodied arm.

“It’s chichiue’s order, Sui-chan. Please don’t worry. Kaito-san and grandpa are nearby. They’ll help if chichiue required it. Drink your tea now or it will get cold.” The brunette gently but firmly voiced. She was ordered to stay away from any melee that might break out but should her father need help, she’ll face her dear chichiue’s wrath and also enter the fight. However, given how her beloved chichiue was easily parrying the attacks and assailing the remaining enemies, it seems that no help will be needed.

“Oh, that blond pureblood fell.” Naoto impassively announced despite knowing that the commentary was unneeded for they can all feel another one of the adversaries’ aura instantly vanishing, a plate of blueberry cheesecake completely forgotten on his lap.

“Shouldn’t we help chichiue, onee-chan?” Sui-chan piped in, her lavender orbs intent on the glowing embers in front of her, small pale fingers stood motionless around the éclair that didn’t quite reach her bow-shaped lips.

“Chichiue ordered that we are not to join him, dearest. We’ll only get in the way.” Anne knew that the young silverettes are actually powerful enough to be able to lend a hand in a battle and it was just her who’ll likely hinder her treasured father’s movements and cause him worry but their chichiue didn’t want the youngest darlings to be involved in any altercation. Already, she can tell that he’s loath to send her adorable brothers to wipe out the few purebloods vying to get their hands on the Suzaku blood that the noble aunts and uncles won’t be able to touch.

Two dissatisfied childish pouts, one indiscernible and one blatant, graced the silverettes’ heavenly features. Despite the royal princess’ best efforts to take their minds off concerning issues with fragrant tea and luscious treats, the young seraphs were determined to sulk. Anne can only suffer their mild silent treatment and hoped that the conflict will soon be over so she can worm her way
back to their good graces.

Finally, after the last of the vile adversary’s aura vanished and the last rounds of her favorite hunter’s anti-vampire weapon were fired, the two moping silver cherubs ran back to the window. They were awarded the sight of their father meeting their purple regards with a small smile. They can’t quite make themselves care about the crystal-like remains of the powerful intruders as their mind focused on their cherished chichiue’s well-being. Seeing him unscathed despite his bloodied clothing, they expelled deep sighs of relief. Immediately, the silver pair tottered from the window and out of the room to their father, closely followed by their honorable sister.

Reddish-lavender gaze fell on the midnight view outside through the large windows they passed. It’s too early to call it a day for their race but hopefully, that’s the last attack for tonight. Unfortunately, she knew that its wishful thinking to believe that will be the last attack before the start of the Winter Solstice.

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“Let go, Hiromu-san!” An angry voice growled at the black haired hunter restraining him, preventing him from giving aid to his master who raised an orphaned hunter like him.

“Don’t be stupid! Those are not normal nobles! Those leeches are part of that bastard’s inner circle! Do you want to die?!” growled the older man as he tightened his hold on his impulsive partner. He learned of the circumstances of the creature struggling aggressively to aid the vampires who raised him since infancy. It’s a secret of course for hunters corroborating with vampires is practically unheard of but he really didn’t care about it. In fact, he took advantage of the kid’s connection to the wealthy family in order to live relatively comfortable.

Hunter ethics be damned. It’s not like he belonged to a famous hunter family like the Kiryūs. He doesn’t even have talents on par with the likes of Yagari nor did he have any strong motivation to hate vampires like Takamiya. He’s just the normal run in the mill hunter, one whose name will be forgotten the moment of his death. With a job as dangerous as theirs, the compensation isn’t nearly enough. It also doesn’t open any doors worth aspiring to. He really doesn’t get why he must stick to the proper hunter codes during the modern era just because he was born with the ability to kill vampires. Frankly, it’s troublesome.

He also wouldn’t mind relinquishing his hold around the stupid fool who’s still pathetically screaming after his master if only his death won’t bring more troublesome explanations and paperwork for him. While he’s sorry that his cash cows are being incinerated and frozen to death, he had earned enough to live comfortably for a while so he really doesn’t care that much.

“Let go of me! Mikoto-sama needs my help!” the younger hunter struggled even more forcefully. The beloved family who took him is being killed as he speak and his heart can’t take it. He knew for what purpose he was taken in by that family but he doesn’t mind playing the fool. For his beloved Mikoto-sama, he’ll do anything.

“It’s too late, Ken! All you’ll do is get yourself killed!” the older man irritably shouted. He was looking forward to a hearty meal and a hefty amount he can add to his measly pay check when he learned that the old vampire count had summoned them to his mansion. If this idiot thought that he’s having fun putting up stopping his suicidal attempts, he got another thing coming. And as if he heard his thoughts, the younger man finally slumped dazedly, his head hanging. He let him go and watch
as he slumped on the forest floor.

“B-but… Mikoto-sama… Seiichiro-sama… Risa-sama… Ojou-sama… They’re… They’re…”

The veteran hunter released a gruff sigh, “They’re dead, Ken. There’s nothing you can do.” He bluntly pointed out but not out of unkindness. It’s just that – the truth. In a different light, it’s a great thing that silencing a noble vampire family who could ruin their lives and hunter careers forever caused them nothing. This way they won’t have to worry about being found out and shot for their treachery. “Come on. Let’s go back to the association.”

Ken sobbed, his partner’s words falling on deaf ears, and continued on to look at the burning mansion which had been home to him for more than two decades. With his trembling hands viciously digging the dirt beneath him, he swore that he would return the favor to those nobles who took everything away from him. Having been a spy for the Mikoto family for a long time, he could recognize the aura of the monster who had earned his eternal wrath.

Aido Hanabusa…

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Hello everyone! ( ´• ̥̥̥ ω • ̥̥̥ ` ) Again, I've been a delinquent but this time, (ノ・∀・)ノ I have a perfectly good reason! (ノ>▽<。)ノ I promise! You see, I've been held prisoner! (°・▽・°) By Chinese novels! A few weeks ago, Fuyumi A, my bestfriend, introduced this super amazing BL novel!(ヘ(ヘ)=ヘノ The Legendary Master's Wife! O(≧∇≦)O I was caught, hook, line and sinker! It was that good! °˖✧◝(⁰▿⁰)◜°˖✧ So unable to take it any longer, we read the novel and ended up dying once more (´×ω×`) only to be resurrected then murdered again!  воп X Δ воп I don't know how many times I've been reincarnated because of this novel.

In short, Σ(∩﹏@﹏@☆)/” we're both unable to get away (・∀・)/\Σ(∫ Ψ ∫) with our own power. ℓ⊙□⊙ℓ And thus, we're currently unable to function like normal human beings.

So, minna-sama, (ो•°抵抗力°•౪) please forgive this me who's currently unable to get out of AU ancient China (ノ°▽°ノ) and is currently a useless, useless bug on the Earth (γΣΔΟΛΛ) I am truly ashamed because of my incompetence. But really, if you feel that this is an unacceptable excuse, I would advise you all to read the novels. I'm SURE you'll then forgive me. And thus, I declare that(■☆ОС■) Lan Wangji is the seme of the year and ゥ*ε*goo I'm totally in love with Exiled Rebels translators.

Again, (■ ゜° A "")enefit I'm profoundly sorry about this. I'll definitely try not to repeat this but I know that given my past offences(" Δ") °”, you'll find it hard to have confidence in my word Σ(∫ Ψ ∫) (I also do not have confidence in me, thh (°・°*)) so in case that I wasn't able to update on the 11th of next month, m(¬¬−¬)m please note that I'll try again on the 11th of the following month. I'll only upload in the 11th so if you didn't see an update, please feel free to curse my soul and please try again on the 11th of next month. m (°≥¬≤°)m

Please FORGIVE ME! (cimiento)

(∫ Ψ ∫) And as usual, thank you for waiting! I love you all! (∫≥∀≤)∫

(№°) It's only mid-morning but already, the day of the Winter Solstice found the Kuran castle abuzz with giddy excitement and lively bustle as every attendant seem to work overtime to arrange everything and make sure that nothing will go wrong with the most awaited celebration of their race. Even the vampire king found himself surrounded by several nobles, his butler and the head of the household.
for several last minute confirmations. He was so busy that his consort even had to reluctantly help him.

He didn’t allow himself and his consort to be detained however, when the shipment of a very important gift has finally been delivered to the palace. The vampire king himself carried the large package to their lovely daughter’s chambers and found her fussing about what she would wear for her gown has yet to be delivered.

“Don’t worry about it anymore, my darling.” Kaname graced her with a small serene smile before presenting the big parcel.

“Chichiue! Otou-chan!” the little princess’ expression turned bright at the sight of both her parents.

The silver hunter was about done with all the fuss about the ridiculous event but found that he can probably forgive the pureblood for all his nonsense if he’s to be rewarded by the most welcome sight of their happy child. He watched as their eldest open the wrapped up package with much zeal that didn’t quite erase the refinement that is always present in her.

“Oh!” the royal princess exclaimed at spotting a very familiar burgundy gown. She remembered that she fell in love with it at first sight after discovering it in one of the old garment boxes in the castle but since there was already a horrible, irreparable cut in the middle during that time, she wasn’t able to wear it. So that’s why chichiue said that it’s the first ball gown she wore in the Winter Solstice. She whirled and adoringly beamed at her father, “May I try it on?”

“By all means.” The pureblood indulgently smiled in the face of childish excitement.

Lavender eyes watched as his eldest run to the small changing room adjoined to her wardrobe, smilingly followed by two maids who were carrying different undergarments, accessories and jewelries. His small smile completely fell, however, when his contemplative gaze fell back on his mate who was busy talking to the head steward who came forward with another concern.

He reined all the bitterness that bubbled at the pit of his stomach as someone who was left in the dark. He can still remember the slight feeling of betrayal that slipped inside his heart, barely managing to shield his own thoughts from his prying mate, upon discovering the special incense that a maid tried to inconspicuously take way from their room one morning. It’s only by chance that he saw it being taken out from under their humongous bed when he forgot something from the room. That the ceramic lidded jar has his Akira’s bloodstone made it all the more suspicious.

There was no need for him to be suspicious of anyone inside the castle, for while they’re all vampires, Kaname had assured him that his entire household is full of trustworthy creatures who had served his family for centuries. Still, the tiny seed of doubt at the dubious acts of some vampires around him can’t help but sprout inside him. He knew that his mate and children would not do anything to harm him or anyone close to his heart but he’s not one to be satisfied by incomplete information and reassurances alone. If there’s something going on around him that involves him and his family, he must know about it. He’s not a breakable China unlike what that damn vampire seems to think.

Damn it. He already told that bastard not to do anything idiotic.

The only thing that held him back from confronting the pureblood bastard after his amethyst orbs watched his mate parry attacks from two purebloods he had never seen before that night (the incense jar put far away by him after he feigned unconsciousness for a while) was the flutter of the creature inside him. It reminded him of the possible reason why his mate would stupidly wish to keep the serious fact that they’re being attack every night (if he’s right) from him and why the Night class
seems strangely absent as were his identical sons.

He knew that Kaname and the chairman would make plans to make sure that they’ll be safe especially after Rido made his threat of coming back. He should have known that they would keep whatever plans they made from him.

“Stupid bastard.”

He knew of course. He knows why his lover would try to keep him away from all of the chaos in their life. Zero also knows his own temper better and was not blinded to what his normal reaction would be had Kaname said something in the line of them being under attack. Yet, nothing can seem to console him and ease the feeling of restlessness filling his whole being.

His children went out to no doubt fight the enemies that he should be protecting them from. Yet, he can’t even make his own mate trust him that he won’t do anything rash that would put himself and their unborn child in danger.

“Damn it.” The silver hunter muttered bitterly under his breath.

“Is something wrong, Zero?” The brunette asked, having spied that irate expression on his lover’s gorgeous features simultaneously awakening dissatisfaction towards his mate who has grown accustomed to controlling their bond. If only his lover is slow to learn. He tried to teach him slowly but his little spitfire has now mastered how to keep the state of their bond to his liking.

The silverette met the vampire king’s tender gaze. He tried for an honest answer but his mouth refused to work. He could only close his mouth before mutely shaking his head. There’s nothing for it. Even if he confronted his mate about his dastardly ways, he knew that he won’t be able to do anything to reverse his own situation. He knew that he won’t be allowed to join in anyway and while he’ll maim Kaname first before being allowed to be treated like a hothouse flower, he would never try to bring harm to his own child.

If Kaname tried to do the same thing while he’s not pregnant though, he’s sure to throw a punch or ten on the bastard’s pretty face. The thought somehow calmed Zero down. He knew that his mate was not convinced, however, before he could ask more, the door to their daughter’s changing room opened and their little princess emerged with her nose proudly up in the air to let her parents see how wonderful the attire fit her, her exquisite face alight with happiness. The crimson dress was indeed a gorgeous one with a sweetheart neckline. The area across the chest and around the Basque waistline were embellished with pearls, golden shadowed Swarovski crystals and embroidered lace crimson rose blossoms of various sizes while cape-like tulle sweeps over the arms to expose the shoulders from the matching Chantilly laced bolero. The maids have arranged her long hair in a simple braided bun adorned by a gorgeous red roses hairvine.

Amethyst pools trailed down the ballooned full length skirt that was bedecked by golden laces with a delicate cathedral golden lace trail. He knew that it would been quite difficult to walk around with that heavy looking gown and had she been just a simple mortal child, she would be struggling just to move, let alone plaster such a charming smile on her pretty face while parading around and crossing such extensive distance. As it is though, the silverette can see that she has no trouble lugging around that huge skirt and was feeling comfortable enough to twirl around for their benefit. He’s also happy with the long trail since it would mean that she won’t be able to dance with Kaito. Well, there’s really no danger there since their children will be attending in their normal forms and that oaf of a senpai won’t dance in a vampire’s ball anyway.

The silverette’s thoughts were put to an end at the arrival of a valet who announced that their early ‘breakfast’ is about to be served. He sighed one last time before allowing his mate to herd him out of
their daughter’s room after reminding her to be down in time for the meal.

He supposed that he had forgiven Kaname for a lot of things. He’ll endure a few more.

Not that he won’t throw that punch at him after everything is finished.

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There’s still an hour or so before their guests begin to arrive but a pissed off royal consort already found himself even more annoyed after fighting off several handmaidens and valets from trying to bathe and dress him like he’s three years old.

A silver-lavender glare pierced the owner of the quiet chuckle that resounded behind him and found amused auburn orbs smiling back at him.

“Forgive me, Zero. It quite escaped me to let Katsuragi know that we won’t need any help preparing ourselves for the ball.” The pureblood who’s behind the large bathtub where his lover is currently taking a bath apologized as he began unbuttoning his black shirt.

Zero merely huffed in irritation. If he didn’t know that the bastard behind him is actually possessive enough that he’ll rather face Rido than let anyone else see his naked body, he’d think that the vampire is simply having fun messing with him. As if there’s anything to see. Kaname is being stupid.

He was pulled out from his reverie when his mate joined him in the large tub and felt the gentle caress of loofa lathered by the rich fragrance of lavender scented soap over his body. The hunter fought hard to keep a straight face and to keep himself from blushing madly. After all, it’s not an uncommon occurrence and he didn’t think that it will be the last.

When amethyst orbs caught the now very prominent mating symbol on the creamy skin of the brunette’s chest, long pale fingers traced the mark. He did notice how the exact same mark on his own chest kept on getting darker by the day, “It’s completely black now.”

“Indeed, the bond is now complete.” Kaname hummed with evident contentment, still continuously washing his lover with something simply akin to reverence.

Zero frowned at the smiling pureblood, “What does that even mean? Because I’m pretty sure that it’s your freaking voice I’ve been hearing inside my head since months ago.” He hopes that won’t mean more privacy invading abilities.

Kaname smiled at his mate, “The mating bond doesn’t only mean sharing of thoughts and emotions. Even power.” When his adorable lover’s frown merely deepened, he added, “You’ll know more about it once you’ve tried using Bloody Rose again.”

Worry shot through his spine at the mention of his beloved gun. Nothing had better affect his Rose for the worse or there’ll be hell to pay! “Hey, what do y-,”

Sensing that a long tirade is coming, the vampire king felt the need to impede anymore questions with the most effective way he knows. He moved his lips expertly against soft pliant ones until he felt his defeated reciprocation. “I also do not know how it will take shape, only I know that you’ll feel it once you tried using Rose once again from here on.” He finally said after breaking the kiss.
“Asshole.” Zero can only mutter before gravity took over his body again and he fell against Kaname’s embrace.

After almost spending their remaining hour in the bath, a pair of amethyst eyes found themselves narrowing upon inspecting the stunning vision on the full length mirror. The fine material of the hunter’s suit hugged his body perfectly, accentuating all the curves that he didn’t know his lithe form possesses at just the right places. Creepy. How can it fit him this perfectly when no one even attempted to take his measurements?

He glared more fiercely at the pureblood standing behind him, wearing a mysterious smile that he didn’t want to challenge. For sure, he’ll only be disturbed by the answer. Damn pervert. He only hopes that Ichiru’s garments, which he knows Kaname also prepared, suits him just fine. He’s worried since he knows he’s more muscular than his twin.

The pureblood felt compelled to ease the worry that echoed in their bond. “Don’t concern yourself over it, Zero. I’m sure that Ichiru-kun’s suit fits just as perfectly. After all, Hanabusa himself supplied his measurements.”

Suddenly, the overwhelming urge to release Bloody Rose from its confines after so long bubbled viciously inside the hunter. He’s wondering if he could test this new and unknown change in his weapon on his brother’s boyfriend. Damn perverts.

“There now, I do not think Ichiru-kun would appreciate you turning his lover into a target for practice.” The brunette chuckled.

Damn Kaname for reading his thoughts, the silverette internally huffed. He took a deep breath and let the cool air ease some of his irritation. He knew that the evening will be a long one and he didn’t need to be annoyed now when he’s sure to be surrounded by obnoxious vampires throughout the entire event. He’ll need all the respite he can get.

“Your majesties, forgive me for troubling you but it’s almost time.” The voice of Katsuragi resounded from the antechamber, after a short gentle knock on the large double-doors of the main bedchambers.

“We’re ready. We’ll go to the waiting room in a moment.” Kaname answered without opening the doors, silently dismissing the butler. Then turning to his lover, smiled serenely in an attempt to ease the trepidation hiding behind a pair of beautiful lavender eyes and whispered, “All shall be well, Zero. He won’t get to you.”

“I’m not worried about him getting to me, Kaname.” Zero grounded, dark silver eyebrows drawing together over worry-filled amethysts. He’s not afraid for himself but everyone else. He’s afraid for his brother, for Yuki, for the chairman, for his brothers in arms despite their current animosity… mostly, he’s afraid for his children and Kaname. Damn it. Why can’t that bastard simply rest in peace? And why are their idiots in this world willing to follow a psycho like him?

“I know, my love, but have faith in our family.” Kaname whispered, his auburn orbs not losing their serene lights though insurmountable determination filled its depths.

“They’re just children. And what about Yuki? She still can’t control her powers well. And Ichiru? He-,”

“Shhh… I know, but have faith.” His voice was so soft that it was almost a whisper as he held his lover’s pale face between his hands. The sight of a concern Zero was so foreign in his eyes but perhaps it’s the expression of a man who’s simply afraid to lose the people that he loves. A proof of
how their family has become important to him. The happiness that he felt that is inappropriate given the time and situation must have unconsciously overflowed through their bond for his mate colored becomeingly as a weak punch found his shoulder.

“Damn it, Kaname! I’m being serious here!” the silverette growled, his blush turning a shade deeper. He would have added that it’s because of his damn hormones if only that would not make him sound more like a stupid girl.

“Forgive me, my love, but I assure you so am I.” the brunette smiled as he wound his arms around his lover’s slim waist before voicing more soberly, “No matter when, we’re ready for him.”

One Kiryū Ichiru was wondering through the dozen hallways of the gigantic palace after being informed the need to gather inside the Yellow chamber to await the time when he’ll enter with his brother and everyone else to the Grand Hall. He felt extremely stupid not asking the servant who informed him to wait for him and guide him to the said room but as he was still in the middle of preparing himself after profusely refusing the maids and his valet from dressing him like an invalid, he felt bad about making him wait.

And so the gentle silverette can only rely on himself as he traversed the large halls. Fortunately, he was able to sense a large group of vampires with oddly familiar and comforting auras inside a room. With the intention of asking for directions, he made way for the said room.

After a courtesy knock, thoughtlessly opening the door even without first hearing a response as he was wont to do in the chairman’s house, the young prefect’s sight got filled with glittering gold and almost got blinded by the radiance of the beautiful creatures inside the room whose curious scrutiny were all turned to him.

It’s not their inhumanly gorgeous features that made him freeze for after being in the presence of hundreds of heaven-sent dreamboats his entire teenage life and not to mention, going out with the handsomest man he’ll ever care to look at, he has more or less developed a resistance to abnormally beautiful faces. But what put him in an absolute trance was the familiar angel-like features that every vampire in the room possesses. From their crystal like sapphire orbs to their glittering golden hair, all resembles his one and only’s own perfection.

After receiving a shock of accidentally opening heaven’s door and stepping into paradise, he wasn’t able to hear a familiar voice from the hall that’s calling for his name nor register the curious expressions of all the occupants of the room morphing into shock and speechlessness as if they’re the ones presented by an unbelievable sight.

“Ichiru?” One Aido Hanabusa called out again. His earlier happiness of stumbling upon his lover when he’s about to call for his family got immediately replaced by worry upon seeing his silverette’s statue-like appearance that he wasn’t able to acknowledge his father who seems to have received a shock upon seeing who just knocked upon the door.

Inside the silver prefect’s extremely battered mind, he was able to piece the link of the possible relationship of his lover to the vampires currently looking at him with wonder. He had already thought of the probability that he’ll meet his lover’s family that night given the givens. He knew that it’s a very special event and of course, the entire nobility will likely be present. Yet, nothing seems to
have completely prepared him. Not the mantras, planning, daydreams nor the embarrassing practices
he made in front of the mirror had prepared him for that moment.

And embarrassingly enough, Ichiru could only whimper in reply after being asked for his wellbeing
for the nth time. Like a fluffy bunny trapped inside a wolves’ den. He didn’t know what to do. Fuck!
What was he supposed to do? How should he introduce himself again? He even practiced it! Shit!
He just made a pitiable sound of a dying monkey. How was that for first impressions? He grimaced,
not knowing where he put his tongue as he frantically tried to remember how to make his vocal
work. He was brutally murdering himself that he didn’t quite catch the concerned look of his lover
and the astonished ones from his family.

“K-Kiryū… sama?” Nagahisa Aido unconsciously uttered, staring hard at the new arrival. He
distractedly watched his heir fuss about the frozen teen and the sight jarred him out of his
bewilderment, “It can’t be… Hana… he… he… that…” He had already received news of his son
dating another man and was anxiously awaiting his heir’s explanation. He can barely hear the call
and feel the nudge of his daughters on his coat, no doubt, feeling the same awe at the wondrous
visitor who graced them.

Hanabusa sighed. This was not how he imagined Ichiru’s first meeting with his family will be. Plans
about five-star hotels and a whole luxury cruise shattered inside his mind. He had so much things
planned to impress his lover! Argh! He sighed, “Yes, papa,” he relented. “This is Kiryū Ichiru, your
excellent son’s lover and no doubt future husband.”

“Kyaa~!”

All the male in the room were startled at several loud female exclamations that even Nagahisa forgot
what he was about to say in reply to his son’s startling news. The two men from the Aido household
both panicked when the frozen silverette immediately got surrounded by their fawning female
relations.

“Kiryū-sama!”

“Oh my goodness! He’s incredibly beautiful!”

“Such gorgeous silver hair!”

“Oh my gosh, Hana. How did you even manage to–…”

“Are you absolutely sure about our brother? Perhaps, my sisters and I can entice you instead.”

“Nee-chan!” Hanabusa scolded his sister who actually dared suggest such a thing in his presence,
“He’s mine!” he boldly declared as he snatched his still muted lover from the swarm of blond
beauties, his arms possessively and protectively around him.

“Really now, all of you. You should be ashamed of your conduct! You’re troubling Kiryū-sama!”
Nagahisa stepped in after pulling himself together, “I apologize for the unsightly behavior of my
children, Kiryū-sama.” He politely regarded the silverette who, if possible, became even more
flustered at being addressed so highly.

“P-please, I… ah… it’s… uhm… ano,” shit! Speak properly Ichiru! “P-please c-call me Ichiru. A-and
it’s nothing… uhm… it… it was no trouble at all.” He let out quivering smile. Then he untangled
himself from his lover. After calming himself and gathering his remaining wits, he was finally, finally
able to give a decent introduction, “My name is Kiryū Ichiru and I’m… I’m seriously going out with
your son. I-I’ll be in your care.” He bowed in respect, partly to hide his furiously blushing face.
The genius heir stood still, unmoving and his expression as serene as a peaceful ocean in a windless afternoon though in actuality, he was suffering a very violent mental meltdown. He should really look into the possibility of cuteness being able to cause death for his life might just get extinguished by the morrow with the rate his angel is throwing off his pheromones. Geez, his Ichiru is just too adorable for words.

Hanabusa dreamily watched his beautiful silverette, feeling immense happiness and pride surge the core of his being. Ah, he really is too perfect and he lamented that he wasn’t able to introduce him in a grand manner befitting his precious angel.

In contrast to the bright and animated scene inside, one hate-filled pair of eyes surveyed the cheerful group inside the room with distaste. He can’t help but clench his teeth at the look of unadulterated joy in their faces, especially on the features of a certain vampire noble. It’s not right for him to wear that expression. Not when he had just taken the happiness and lives of other people not long ago.

However, despite the hatred filling his whole being, there was still delight to be had when his gaze fell on the loving expression so apparent on the abominable vampire’s face. Hearing their conversation, he finally knew how to exact his revenge.

A cold smile flashed as nimble fingers closed around the few bullets of its kind inside his coat’s pocket.

“Enjoy it while it lasts, Aido Hanabusa-sama.”

The royal couple was already on their way to the Yellow chamber when the silver consort suddenly halted his steps upon seeing the unwelcomed sight of his senpai. Geh. Of all the people, why must he see Kaito? It doesn’t take a genius to know that monkey’s reaction upon seeing him. For sure, he won’t waste a second before teasing him mercilessly.

As if hearing his thoughts, the brunette hunter turned and upon seeing his kohai’s disgruntled expression while wearing obviously expensive clothing that probably costs half of their association’s yearly budget, smirked before calling in an obnoxiously loud voice, “Oh? If it isn’t the consort, Kuran Zero-sama!”

A vein popped in Zero’s head. He tried and endured the bastard’s taunting, unconsciously gathering comfort from the hand supporting his back and the ever so calm expression on his lover’s bewitching face. The silver hunter tried to copy his Zen-like mien and took a deep breath. Feeling much better, he felt like it will be a hundred years before Kaito would be able to break his calm.

Upon seeing his ire being obviously calmed, Kaito turned to leave, fast losing interest in the disgustingly lovey-dovey royal couple. This kohai of his really is getting boring lately. Throwing one last provocation, he turned back and started to walk again, “I’ll be going first, Kuran Zero-sama. I’ll have someone send your palanquin over. You might break your royal feet given how delicate you are.”

A hundred years swiftly passed by in the blink of an eye; Zero used inhuman speed to run and jump to land a kick on the back of the older hunter’s head who was taken off guard, “Well, what do you know? Seems like the back of your head was made for the arch of my foot.” Zero smirked after
landing gracefully. His entire appearance still unrumpled.

“Bastard.” Kaito growled as he held the back of his head. Damn, that hurts. He didn’t think the silverette would finally retaliate in this manner.

The vampire king only watched the whole scene unfold with mild amusement before he resumed his place by his lover’s side. Instead of berating the silverette for his reckless behavior, he merely commented in a mild tone and expression that didn’t fit his words, “My, doesn’t he just have the qualities of a cockroach?”

Zero responded with a straight tone, “Yeah, gives you infinite pleasure squashing him with a slipper.”

Ever so indulgent, Kaname smiled at his lover and agreed, “Precisely my thoughts.”

Tired of being the butt of the lover’s joke, Kaito gritted his teeth and hissed, “What did you s-,” he wasn’t able to continue his speech however, when in the next second, the cold night wind carried over the enticingly sweet scent and melodious voice of a certain chibi princess.

“Otou-chan! Chichiue! So you’re already here!” Anne immediately acknowledged her parents before she eagerly turned her attention to the hunter standing beside them and greeting shyly while short, pale fingers nervously minded the lace on her crimson fan, “Kaito-san! Good evening.”

Shifting his attention to the vision that neared, the ash browned hair hunter was momentarily taken aback. He really shouldn’t be given that the place was swarming with dreamboats since forever ago and another pretty face, not to mention one that he’s already familiar with, shouldn’t be capable to shrinking his sharp tongue like this. Yet, he found himself still unable to respond and merely keep his hazel orbs trained on the heavenly creature in red whose beauty refused to be impaired no matter her form.

Damn it, Kaito. She’s just a brat!

Letting out a harsh breath, he forcefully arranged his features to one that is more like himself and asked, “Why are you wearing a piñata?”

Anne was frozen in shock, “P-P-P,” she stuttered unable to form the word. Oh my gosh, I knew it! I must have put on too many pearls! Or is it my earrings? The accessories? The laces? Perhaps, her golden tiara has too many diamonds and precious stones? Maybe she wore too many petticoats? Or maybe the fingerless gloves and this fan are too ostentatious! Her poor mind spin as she thought of all the things that made her appearance ridiculous. She was so worried that she didn’t quite catch the darkening expressions of her parents.

Genuinely pissed off, the silverette prepared to bellow, “Oi!” Zero’s tirade was impeded however, when the sound of the chairman’s cheerful voice asking for the brunette hunter resounded in the hall.

“Yes, yes, I’m coming!” Kaito yelled back before quickly walking away from the royal family without another word, as if he’s fleeing.

“I-,” Anne tried to say something but being given only the sight of his broad back, she wasn’t able to continue and merely sadly looked at the departing figure, unable to catch his disturbed expression. She crestfallenly looked at the red fan on her hand, her head hanging spiritlessly. She knew he’s very busy. Suddenly, the heavy weight of her garments fell on her small body.

Suddenly, a gentle hand on her chin had her looking up. Heartbroken reddish-lavender orbs met encouraging and tender auburn orbs.
“You’re absolutely beautiful, my child. Not one detail is out of place.” Kaname sincerely praised.

“Don’t take what that bas— that Kaito said seriously. He has terrible taste anyway.” Zero added in a harsh voice before huffing and kneeling on one knee and softly patting her eldest child’s cheek. “You’re cute.”

“Thank you, otou-chan, chichiue.” The princess smiled at her parents yet no cheer was reflected in her eyes.

The dull light didn’t escape the silver hunter’s notice and he swore that he wouldn’t be satisfied until he had kicked his senpai until there’s a deep imprint of his foot on his stupid head. He was still thinking how he can keep his daughter’s attention from that offending creature called Takamiya Kaito when his lover heralded them towards the Yellow chamber where they’re supposed to gather before marching on to the Grand Hall.

Damn it. Cheering other people up was definitely not his forte. He was still contemplating who to sacrifice in order to enliven his beloved daughter once again even after reaching and entering the majestic Yellow chamber when the familiar voices of their identical twins filled the hall outside, bickering pettily.

“Please at least try to look sharp, Akira.” Came the listless voice of the Kuran heir, “It pains me to look at you sometimes as I see a vacant expression on the face of our handsome father. Don’t disgrace our father’s beautiful features.”

Loud squawks of indignation from the younger twin soon followed. When the couple heard the small chuckle of their beloved daughter, they exchanged a small private smile.

“Ugh, I hate balls, and parties, and events.” Akira continued to groan. The maids just finished preparing them so they are now on their way to the room their parents, siblings, aunt Yuki and uncle Ichiru are waiting in.

Kohaku sighed once more, his strained expression clearly reflecting the current state of his patience, “Enough Akira. There’s nothing that can be done regarding it so just be silent about the matter.”

He clicked his tongue, “I wish they wouldn’t shower us with perfume every time,” he groaned again as if he didn’t hear his twin’s admonition, “I smell like a flower. I feel like a flower. I probably look like a flower too.” He slouched, “Hey Haku, do I look like a flower to you?”

He gave his twin a look, his normally impassive expression giving way to ire, “Please Akira, I don’t believe there’s yet a flower discovered that whines,” He answered exasperatedly to which his mirror image pouted, “My nose is already suffering, please don’t offend my ears as well.”

“Worry not Akira, my dearest brother, you still look like a caterpillar to me,” Anne’s answered the younger twin’s question. Her voice came up front, through the open door which they’re heading to, where her head appeared to peer at them, “You should know that we can hear your petty complaints very clearly and it’s very unbecoming of a young gentleman like you.” She finished when the twins reached her.

Kohaku gave her a smile, as if seeing his savior from annoyingly noisy twin brothers, “Nee-chan, chichiue, otou-cham, forgive us for making you wait.” He genially greeted, mirrored by his twin in a livelier tone, before turning back to their sister and gallantly offered, “As per usual, you look lovely tonight, nee-chan.”

An odd expression passed through her ethereal face but before the two can discern the meaning of it,
it vanished, replaced by a charming smile, “Thank you, Haku! You’re very handsome tonight as well. And surprisingly, Akira too!”

“How can it be surprising when we look exactly the same?!” Akira asked in a tone more boisterous than normal. Somehow, he had the feeling that there’s a great need of liveliness in the present time. Exchanging a quick look with his twin, Aki loudly professed, “And compared to Haku’s deathly boring expression, my charming smile is infinitely more adorable!”

“Haku has a listless expression most of the time and he still manages to be more attractive, don’t you feel sad living?” Anne teased, her cheerful expression slowly turning genuine in the face of her beloved siblings.

Aki let out a shocked expression and whined, “Nee-chan!!”

The royal princess gaily laughed at his mock hurt expression, “Oh little brother, but of course I’m joking with you. The people of the world could only hope to have half of your handsome looks.”

As if his hurt expression never appeared, the younger brunette immediately took on an embarrassed look and replied, “Oh stop it, nee-chan, you’re making me blush.”

Soon, the fraternal twins donned by expensive and elegant apparel also reached the room accompanied by the head of the household. Suiren, like Anne, was also gifted an incredibly detailed crimson gown with gold accents, her long hair arranged in a meticulous and elegant up-do and adorned by large red rose hairvine and a golden tiara with a large tear-shape ruby and studded with diamonds. Zero reckoned that her overall garment must weigh a ton yet it was left unfelt for Suiren still managed to run to him with natural grace and poise throwing her arms around him in a passionate greeting.

Her twin, on the other hand, favored a three-piece black tuxedo and red bow tie like his brothers. All of them are wearing fashionable crimson rose lapel pins and cuff links bearing the Kuran insignia.

The children’s necklaces holding Kaname’s small, elongated hexagonal blood stone, normally hidden under the folds of their clothes, are currently in full view, as if their appearances, features, aura, scent and power are not enough to prove their identity.

With just Yuki and Ichiru missing, it’s only a matter of time before someone from the Night class or Katsuragi comes to let them know that the Winter Solstice has officially begun.

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In one of the corridors outside the colossal doors of the Grand Hall, a brunette whose perfect features seem to have been carved in white jade made his way to the group of four equally handsome men, the sight of which will cause the Day class students to scream their hearts in delight. The man was with gentle aura that completely betrays his good nature and is a great contrast with the haughty and proud looks of the other four he had just joined in. One would normally think that he’s far too gentle to be with the arrogant bunch but as they all share some relations with a council member, they all spent quite a lot of time together despite the fact that each and every one lives in different countries. He went over to greet them just as one of the more energetic in group was professing his feelings about the ever so popular topic of conversation which is Zero-sama - though still without the formality and proper ceremony is nevertheless, without a doubt, their royal consort - and the
subsequent lucky change in the engagement of their royalties. As if this topic has not been numerously exploited and debated upon, the voice spoke with zeal and excitement.

“Do you know what this mean? Yuki-sama is free! Just think! Another vampire can get the name Kuran. I know I won’t mind abandoning my family name.”

“As if they’d let someone like you be part of the Kuran family. Moron.”

“You’ll never know unless you try. She was raise as a human. For sure she didn’t have much resistance to handsome guys like me.”

“Idiot. You know that there’s a Night Class in Cross Academy, right? Not to mention she grew up with Kuran-sama and Kiryū-sama.”

“Whatsoever. Really. It’s such a nice prospect. Just thinking the possibility of it becoming reality makes me all pumped up! Right, Sakamoto?”

The young brunette with pleasing features softly sighed. Instead of talking about the big elephant in the room which all the guests in the ball seem adamant to ignore, like the annihilation of several noble families and the shockingly numerous deaths of some purebloods (some of which he thought were still in their slumber), his friends just have to choose the most frivolous topic to pass the time. He’s sincerely worried about their future. However, rather than voicing this and dampening their spirits with dire subjects, he decided to enlighten them about something they’re clearly unaware of,

“Forgive me for shattering your dreams, Aditya-kun, but if I’m not wrong, Yuki-sama is already wi-,” He froze at the sight of the vampire who he didn’t sense had already come nearer, his expression turned absolutely distressed at once, “I-Ichijou-sama!”

One Ichijou Takuma smiled at the nobles even though it felt brittle on his face. The dark feelings infesting his heart, making it heavier, is not making the tough task of genially acknowledging the gentlemen in front any easier. However, being his grandfather’s representative and them being relatives of some council members, he can only receive them with nothing less than perfect civility.

“Good evening, everyone. It’s been quite a while.” He internally flinched at the tone of his voice. He honestly didn’t mean it to sound so cold and hollow. Was that really his voice?

The poor young brunette’s honest green eyes widened for a while and stammering in fright, he apologized, “F-forgive these four, Ichijou-sama. They must not have known that you’re already together with Yuki-himesama.”

As if seeing a ghost, the others paled incredibly fast as they too stuttered an apology, “E-eh?! I-we’re so sorry for our impudence, Ichijou-sama!”

“We’re sorry, Ichijou-sama!”

“We really didn’t mean any of those, Ichijou-sama!”

Takuma was quite taken aback when continuous strings of apologies and excuses were thrown his way. His voice might have sounded a bit odd but he didn’t even look angry. Still, the harried group profusely apologized before they sloppily gave lame excuses and promptly ran away before he was able to utter a word.

The blond was still dazedly blinking at the space where the nobles were standing when the form of one Kain Akatsuki strode from the corner of the hallway. Based on his appearance, he must have witnessed what happened.
“While I know that you’re not really all sunshine and rainbow, I think you went overboard with those five, Ichijou-san.” The fire-user said, a large hand scratching the back of his head as his quietly pitying gaze followed the retreating aristocrats.

“Eh? But I didn’t…” the Moon dorm vice-president faltered when Kain looked at him with an odd expression.

It’s funny that while one would often spy an incredibly exhausted expression etched on the ruggedly handsome vampire no doubt from restraining troublesome cousins and would give anyone the idea that the only wish he has in life is to sleep for a year or forever, no one was able to see that kind of expression he was currently sporting until now. It’s rare to see Akatsuki obviously sympathetic after all. Mercifully, he didn’t say anything and merely gestured with his head for him to look behind.

The blond whirled, his green-eyes barely noticing his silent dorm roommate who’s still right by his side, and found the hallway oddly different just from moments ago. It took him a moment to realize that the lavish flower arrangements in all the decorative porcelain vases were missing. When he noticed black ashes around the vases, he grimaced. He must have unconsciously unleashed his powers which rotted the poor blossoms.

And like a slap on top of the mortification filling his lithe body from his golden head to his pale toes, there was even an encouraging pat bestowed upon his still shaking shoulder by the silent red head who thought he was being comforting with the gesture. As it is, the only thing it managed to do was make him realize how utterly childish he was during the whole affair. “I know.”

Blank blue-grey eyes found the blond immersed in self-hate, “I didn’t say anything…” he voiced apathetically, feeling the need to point that out.

“Yes, but… just… I know.”

“Filthy creatures.” Hissed one of the siren-like creatures who are staring outside one of the large window in the hall, icy gray eyes viciously glaring at the hunters patrolling the courtyard around the Grand Hall.

“Now, now, Risa. They’re not all that bad. I daresay most of them are good-looking.” Purred one gorgeous blond with cat-like blue eyes which are surveying the men outside with vested interest. One caught her fancy and she smirked, “Very good-looking.”

“Oh dear, here we go again.” Tiredly sighed one dark-haired beauty. She can’t help but be exasperated at this particular friend’s taste. She knew that the noble likes to play around and not just with vampires, even with humans and hunters. As long as it gives her the thrill. She looked outside and tried to pinpoint who’s the unfortunate creature who’s being bestowed the hungry sapphire gaze and is sure to be treated like a toy for the week.

Another noble, a petite blond who only came to warn them to go gather inside the Grand Hall to welcome to royal family, also came beside the black haired vampire upon catching part of the conversation to look for their friend’s new designated toy and tutted, “Oh no, my dear lady Anne. I think you need to give up this once. That man is Takamiya Kaito.” Her words, quiet as they maybe, still managed to be caught by ears of the royal princess who was with her family two corridors away.
“If you didn’t know my dear, let me tell you now that that one is known for his immense hate for vampires.”

The snobby brunette smirked as she started after her friend who’s already walking towards the entrance of the Grand Hall, “My, my lady Anne, I think that you’ll have a problem with this one.”

“Oh girls. Do you remember the bloke who said he’s not interested in blonds but ended up begging for me?” the blond chuckled seductively before straightening her posture and with confidence added, “That’s all part of the game.” She fixed the front of her dress that barely concealed her large bosoms and left very little to the imagination, “You may thank me once he comes to love vampires.”

A few rooms away, two russets peered worriedly at their silent sister who they were following before they were halted when that unwelcomed conversation flowed sinisterly to their ears. Damn it. There are hundreds of conversation currently going on inside the Grand Hall but why did that particular conversation seemed to be singularly heard with crystal clarity?

Why oh why didn’t they listen to their parents when they said that they should stay inside the waiting room for five more minutes? They might have just averted having to explain to said parents why their honorable older sister is now standing stiffly in front of them. The frightening silence was only broken when several elegant strides came nearer.

“Your royal highnesses? Is something the matter?” Katsuragi, whose sharp eyes immediately perceived the stiffness in their little princess’ shoulders, asked as he momentarily halted from leading his liege to the Grand Hall.

“What are you still doing here? I thought you three said that you want to wait in front of the Grand Hall?” came the confused question of their beloved otou-chan whose each hand got captured by the fraternal twins.

The vampire king immediately took note of his eldest child’s frozen stature, “Are you quite alright, Anne?”

“What’s wrong?” Yuki asked when their entourage stopped shortly, making her younger adopted-brother, whose arm she’s currently clinging to, look forward curiously as well.

“Err… We… This… I mean…” Akira tried for an excuse but failed. Concerned auburn orbs met equally perturbed auburn orbs.

They were saved from answering when the floor lit up with a familiar sigil indicating Anne’s power and a kotatsu appeared with a bowl of mandarin placed on top of it. Zero was still contemplating why Anne would summon a table out of nowhere when she suddenly flipped it without words in a showy demonstration of rage. Quietly surprised lilac eyes watched as the innocent table flew over to the brunette twins which they easily avoided by sidestepping.

It took the silverette awhile to ask - it’s the first time he saw an actual table flipping, “Err, are you alright, Anne?” finally noting the unnatural air around her.

It took a full 10 seconds and a lot of harsh breaths before the little lady turned to him with a look of innocence that deceived no one, “Oh my, of course, otou-chan. Why wouldn’t I be?”

“My love, if there’s any problem, please let me know.” The vampire king gently imparted, truly concerned behind the reason why his daughter would lose her composure like that.

“Oh Father, please, it’s nothing.” Anne reassured rather tensely, the hand holding the close crimson fan that partly hides her brittle smile slightly trembling, before adding very seriously, “However, I’m
honestly curious if a certain lady Anne is considered an important noble to you.”

“Why do you ask, my love?” Kaname inquired, internally wondering which of the nobles named Anne his daughter is pertaining to.

“Oh, I was just wondering if there’ll be any dire consequences if she were to suddenly disappear.” Her fake smile fell as she somberly answered, her tone very hollow indeed.

Three male brunettes were suddenly banished to silence at the declaration of the seemingly serious female relation. Their father’s dark auburn orbs displayed a complex mix of worry and amusement, Kohaku wore a perturbed expression while his twin looked absolutely petrified. The little rogue remembered all too well the most horrendous type of places his sister’s seriously hated one could disappear to. Zero frowned in confusion especially when the silver twins’ grip around his hand tightened while Yuki and Ichiru’s hold around each other’s arms clenched. Katsuragi stood frozen, paling rapidly.

“Oh c-come on, nee-chan. It’s always scary when you joke about things like that with a straight face.”

“Oh, but I’m in earnest.”

Before Zero could utter one more sound, one Aido Hanabusa has already come near, only belatedly reading the heavy atmosphere and noticing the broken kotatsu with bewilderment. He hesitated before moving forward, “Is everything alright? Kaname-sama?”

Instead of answering, the vampire king merely turned to his eldest daughter and softly inquired, “Are you quite alright now, Anne?”

Anne, with barely diminished ire turned to the newly arrived noble. Glancing at his bright golden head and remembering that horrendous voice and poisonous words, her lavender orbs narrowed dangerously, making Hanabusa flinched. ‘D-did I do something to Anne-sama?’ But before the noble can beg for forgiveness for any transgression he had unknowingly made to earn such a fearsome gaze or for simply having existed at all and breathing the same air as her, the royal princess turned and sighed, completely deflating.

“Quite so, chichiue. Forgive me for delaying the Winter Solstice’s commencement.” Anne gloomily answered, unable to put on the usual energetic mask in the face of unknown obstacles and faceless rivals. She thought it’s that hunter Anne… but maybe, it’s this noble Anne… Both are blondes. Should she consider dyeing her hair blond? But she likes her chestnut colored hair… She sighed once again.

The pureblood gave her daughter a contemplating look but upon another confused inquiry from the blond noble, he decided to put it off for the moment. Facing Hanabusa, he responded, “Very well then, let’s proceed to the Grand Hall.”

The large group then continued on their way, led by Katsuragi and followed by the royal couple, the children then Yuki and Ichiru. Even though there’s still quite a way from the Grand Hall, they can still already hear the excited buzz of all the attendees currently awaiting their entrance. With the exception of Ichiru, the colorful and excited, some more hushed than the others as if they’re discussing someone’s illicit love affair, conversations flowed into their ears with exceptional hearing with crystal clarity.

Once the large double doors of the hall came to view, the voices also quietened, no doubt they were able to feel their growing presence. And yet, despite the absence of the annoying chatters, the
excitement is still in the air as if the tension is injected in the very atmosphere and is felt even outside of the large, thick doors separating them from the hungry crowd.

As they slowly walk nearer, Katsuragi nodded to a vampire outside the door who whispered a command in his wireless microphone headset. It must have been the cue to announce their arrival, even though it’s unneeded as everyone inside must have already known if the extremely heavy air was any indication. The old steward stepped aside upon reaching the doors, nodded once just as an imposing voice unnecessarily announced to the crowd the arrival of their sovereigns just as two valets opened the doors.

With exasperation burning his toes to the tips of his silver hair, with his unseeing glare stubbornly trained forward, resolutely ignoring hundreds of bowing individuals around them and the judging gazes of the hunters screaming at him, unconsciously focusing on the scalding heat from the hand on the small of his back and the rare and odd excitement pulsing from his shared bond, Zero stepped forward.

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It’s well into the night and the hunter found himself introduced to so many vampires than he’d care to remember. Not that Kaname really needed to introduce them. As a hunter, he knows most of the important family, specially the pureblood families. He’s getting more and more uncomfortable as he kept on getting fawned and flattered but he thought that at least, it’s relatively peaceful. After all, he cannot forget that there’s a large possibility that the king of all bastards named Rido may likely attack at any moment. His hand went to the simple red stud adorning his right ear, feeling more at ease with the notion that he can summon Bloody Rose at any time.

Just as he was thinking that the ball (geh) will continue without any issue, he learned that he thought far too soon. The universe is such a bitch after all and trouble came in the abominable form of a drunken vampire with a high status.

He slurred a bit, clearly already drunk and seething, “A hunter as your mate? And an ex-human at that? Your majesty, please think about it clearly first. Do not let this whore dirty your pure royal blood. He’s not even supposed to conceive. This is clearly a hoax! He’s trying to poison you with these children, my lord. Do not let these abominations ruin you!” he breathed harshly, deep anger consuming him, clouding all sense of danger and possible repercussion. He doesn’t care about that ancient blood if it’s in the veins of a hunter. Murderer. Enemy. He raged at the thought of a filthy hunter and even a monster who was about to turn to a disgusting level E be exalted to a royal consort, a position many of the nobles can only dream of. It’s unacceptable!

There was silence throughout the whole room as the nobleman’s words carried out to every nook and cranny. The other nobles sported a shocked and scandalized look as they fearfully glanced to see their king’s reaction. They scampered away from the duke to avoid getting caught in the pureblood’s anger.

Kaname clenched his fists while his body tensed as he attempted to rein the furry that bubbled at the old noble’s insult. His face was still calm and collected though his eyes burned with rage and he was hard put not to let his seething aura break lose lest he completely ruined the event and destroy the whole place. He just took a step forward. The other aristocrats immediately took another step back while Takuma instantly came beside him to put a hand on his shoulder.
“Kaname,” he whispered, tone asking for restraint.

The king didn’t even spare him a glance. He looked unfalteringly at the brazen noble, who was already a bit sober at the look of quiet anger or chilling coldness in his liege’s eyes. He ignored the visibly shaking and sweating noble whose pride allowed him to steadfastly hold his ground, and in a chillingly smooth voice articulated, “Duke Ozutsuki, if the news has somehow escaped your knowledge, let me clearly tell you now, Zero is my mate and as such already makes him my consort and your lord.” His burgundy eyes then morphed to scorching blood red as he continued, “It seems like the long pompous life as a noble has made you forget that a crime against the royal family is punishable by death.”

There was another frightened silence and though he didn’t unleash even a bit of his raging aura, the aristocrats still trembled. He was about to take another step towards the frozen duke, who blanched at the realization of the charges and consequences of his actions, when he felt a little hand held his arm.

“There now chichiue,” Anne’s sweet voice successfully stopped him, “There’s no need for these cumbersome affairs. Please do not bloody your hands in this happy occasion and let us not ruin the merrymaking.”

Kaname and pretty much everyone was surprised to see her having a deceptively genuine smile. The Night class thought that she’ll be one of the first to provide a dark icy smile, or scowl like the two little silverette vampires with them, and so they were quite startled when she even turned to sweetly regard the audacious noble, “Isn’t that right?”

“Onee-chan is right chichiue.” Kohaku conceded as he appeared almost instantly to hold and apparently intercept the little fraternal twins who moved to attack, clearly not agreeing and are openly glaring at the nobleman, “Come now Sui-chan, Nao. Let us not ruin the festivities for tonight and let us pardon the duke for now. He’s clearly intoxicated. I’m sure that once he’s lucid, he’ll come to his senses,” he added to their fuming youngest siblings, whose abilities he also thwarted using his negation to avoid chaotic suffering which will lead to the certain bloody murder of the surprised elder.

Anne nodded to Kohaku with pride then returned her gaze to the baffled vampire, “Koushaku, I do understand that the circumstances of our family might be hard to fathom for some and we will definitely not use our authority to force you to accept it though I do wish for it to be respected. Even enemies can show as much, even more so for us in the same society and court, do you agree? I know that an educated and wise elder such as yourself can see the sense in that.” She waited and watch as the vampire slowly lower his head in assent, “Ah, there now, isn’t this the most logical conclusion for this dispute? Isn’t that right chichiue?” she cajoled as she cheerfully clapped her hands together then turned to her father who eyed both her and Kohaku quite suspiciously.

Kohaku also looked up to their father, imitating his older sister’s smile while still arresting the movements and abilities of their youngest siblings, “You don’t need dirty your hands for this chichiue,” he coaxed, his voice silky as a glint passed right through his darkened wine orbs.

We will do it for you.

Kaname looked at the two children who met his gaze and he inwardly smile as he shrewdly understood the hidden message that was completely undetectable to everyone else but him who shared such vindictive and macabre tendencies though he knew his can be a lot more gruesome. He shook his head to further calm his head. He’s not providing them a good example.

Well, perhaps he can let it go this time. Surely, turning someone into dust will not be the best way to go through the celebration. It will be moot to even try to recover the exuberance once he incinerated
the arrogant aristocrat so he declared coldly instead, “Ozutsuki-koushaku, this is more than you deserve. Remember that you were only able to keep your breath because my children, the same ones you claimed as ‘abomination’,;” he uttered the word with distaste, “are kind enough to let it go for now but do not think that this will go unpunished. Any ill words and actions directed to Zero and my children are insults and disrespect towards me, remember that.” Everyone knew that the warning was directed not only towards the duke but to all and so they briefly bowed to show acknowledgement.

The humiliated vampire only nodded before storming out of the hall while Takuma promptly step in to give a few lively words to the silent crowd, the music started to play again and the dancing took place to recover the earlier cheer.

“Geez, the temper,” Akira grinned as he looked at his older sister and twin. He stayed behind to hold his silverette father’s hand for comfort, who was admittedly exasperated at being called a whore and also livid at hearing their children be called an abomination, not worried because he knew exactly what will happen and what the two intended to do as it was not the first time it occurred. It can’t be helped that many abuse the privilege of stupidity.

Zero sighed, “And whose are you referring to? Nao, Suiren, Kaname or that jackass?” he asked though not really looking for an answer. He was just fucking tired of all these faux cheer, rehearsed congratulations and phony smiles. It’s like attending a masquerade ball though no one was wearing a mask. It’s not lost to him how those nobles interact with them with deceptive amiability even though they all know it’s fake. What a farce. How hypocritical. Like a big joke that he can’t laugh at.

“No otou-chan, I’m talking about nee-chan and Kohaku,” Akira answered, sniggering a bit as Zero frowned at him, this also caught Yuki’s, who’s been holding the silverette’s arm for support, attention.

“Huh? I think they maturely handled the situation.” He looked down on Akira who’s covering his mouth with his free hand to hide his glee.

“Ah otou-chan, don’t be fooled by their act. We might be mature sometimes but to be honest, we’re very, very, very childish inside,” he looked up to give his daddy a toothy grin, “thankfully they’re normally kind and reasonable…” he paused then added as an afterthought, “enough, as long as one stay on their good side.” he chortled.

Yuki giggled, “So what will happen if someone strayed from their ‘good side’?” she playfully asked to forget the enraging commotion.

“Oh, they’ll still be the same you know. Like always, they’ll acknowledge your existence, smile at you, talk to you and even politely offer you things,” the little brunette devil smirked, “but then you’ll suddenly wonder where all your luck run off to.” He gently shook his head as if fondly remembering some good memories of certain incidents when someone’s luck did run away.

“Eh?” Yuki’s smile turned lopsided at that.

“For Haku, it’s really just petty little things like sudden power failures or signal lost while watching television or talking through the phone. Appliances going haywire or computer data for important matters erased. Sometimes, you’ll be pushed down the stairs though no one was behind you. Your car being jump started naturally when it’s in perfect condition, or awakening with an amusing spooked hairstyle which refuses to abate,” the little boy enumerated with animation and amusement, “but if he’s really angry, you’ll find yourself struck square by lightning on a sunny day. Don’t worry, no one died just yet since they’re all vampires. They just spent a significant amount of time in bed for recuperation and sometimes, with absolutely no memory of what happened or their own identity.” He added nonchalantly though he’s inwardly relieved. Thank goodness for his barriers! As someone
who holds the most record of irritating his twin, he knew those occurrences by heart already.

The two adults were silent for a while before Yuki can ask again, “How about Anne-chan?”

“Oh, nee-chan’s harmless enough,” Akira nodded as if trying to convince himself, “you’ll just walk out of your door or into a room to find yourself in the middle of Sahara, or Antarctic, or an inhabited island, or perhaps a million miles away,” He shrugged. It’s what their older sister loves to do as punishment. Open up a dimension to a faraway place to transport the unknowing victim, “so you’ll only need to fend for yourself until you reach home which is only sometimes hard when no one is around or if you’re still in your pajamas or worst, in your birthday suit,” he tragically shook his head though still wearing mischievous smirk, “so afterwards all is well, though if what you did was really bad then you might go home in a dilapidated house ruined by a freak tornado or be caught by that freak tornado on the way home or both.” He sniffed unconvincingly.

The pureblood princess gaped. Zero recovered first, “And you?”

“Oh otou-chan, you’ll be surprised to know that I’m the most lenient one,” Akira proudly puffed his chest, “I do not torment those poor vampires!” He added with righteousness on his face, “I merely burn down their favorite mansion to ashes and I’m done with them,” He shook his head with a ‘oh-how-sickeningly-soft-I-am’ expression, “Though if they do step out of line then I burn pretty much all their estates but I leave a car or something so there’s somewhere they could sleep in.”

“Oh he sends out a tent if he by chance conveniently forgot to spare even one vehicle,” Anne supplied, frowning at her brother. She was followed by their father and other siblings, “What are you telling otou-chan and Yuki-bachan?” They just came back because it took a while to convince the twins to let Duke Ozutsuki go even after they promise a better retribution later on. She studied her father and aunt’s expression of disbelief and terror.

“Nothing much, just what you often do when someone gets to your… err, not so gentle side,” Akira answered carefully, not wanting to have a firsthand experience of his sister’s bad side again.

“What do you mean?” The eldest narrowed her eyes on the little troublemaker. She didn’t want him slandering her impeccable reputation now. “I don’t remember doing anything unjustifiable or wholly improper.”

“Well, I guess opening one’s bathroom door to find the North Pole instead was the earless robotic cat’s dokodemo door’s fault, eh?” Akira mockingly speculated while wriggling an eyebrow.

But Anne merely turned her head, still guiltless, and in a cool voice defended, “That fool dared attack otou-chan. He’s lucky to be able to leave with his life.” He was about to be annihilated by their father but she stopped it as it was during their cousin’s birthday celebration. “He wouldn’t die with such little cold and he’s lucky to have his sister’s house intact when he arrived back in the country.” Though his didn’t survive. He’s already lucky to have gotten the help of the vampire association through the researchers situated there. And she did send him a coat, a pair of boots and a bottle of water every day until he reached a facility there. So what was a few weeks of wondering in freezing snow? At least he gets to live and still feel the cold. It’s infinitely much better than turning to ash and not feel at all.

“Though I dare say that you need not waste your energy for such buffoons, the law should be sufficient enough,” Kaname quietly offered.

“Oh but father, I believe death is such a lenient sentence!” Anne sincerely disagreed, her true intentions surfacing, to which Zero and Yuki both choked.
“That’s right, father,” Kohaku conceded with a serious expression, “For such pains and humiliation, I shan’t be remotely satisfied unless they felt the same.” Tenfold. For no one hurts their family, especially their parents, be it physically or emotionally and get away with it unscathed.

Akira looked at his aunt and father rather smugly at being proven correctly while Yuki swallowed in fear, Zero groaned in exasperation and Kaname nodded thoughtfully as if finally seeing logical reasons.

Zero sighed, peeved, “Look here now, you three,” He started in an admonishing tone, “it’s not right to be so deviously vengeful, got that?”

“You’re absolutely right, otou-chan,” Anne innocently smiled up at him when she answered, “That’s why we make sure it’s only bestowed upon those who dearly deserve it. Please worry not. Unjustified punishments are unforgivable to us.” Kohaku and Akira both nodded in full assentation.

The silverette groaned and closed his eyes, Yuki managed a giggle at the stubborn display and Kaname finally managed a smile, his irritation completely vanishing at the sight of adorable obstinacy born from familial love and care.

The pureblood king turned to his mate when he felt him nudge his arm, a sign for him to try to persuade the hardheaded children. Zero gave him a fierce look that clearly ordered him to provide a mild scolding. He replied with a smile then turned to the expectant little angels, “Just as long as it’s reasonable and only towards the most unpardonable.” He said instead, betraying his lover’s expectation who looked at him with exasperated disbelief.

The frightening little royals returned their father’s smile, already predicting such a reply, “Of course chichiue. No innocent soul shall ever suffer in our hands,” Kohaku promised.

The only receivers of such torments were the foolish vampires who sometimes become too haughty or foolishly get caught up in a moment’s heat. The hunters never aggravated them though some might have a word or two in mind but they wisely never voiced it for they were already taught never to test the monstrous power that lies within them. Such was not the case for some prideful and ambitious noble vampires who grew up spoiled with wealth and power. It was rather easy to feel superior in the face of children and ex-humans. Most unfortunately for them, that reason was never enough to contain the royalties’ anger.

All the while, in the Aido’s circle, there were grumbles of exasperation from the noble family.

Nagamichi sighed, “That old fool.” He shook his head then turned to his son’s lover who was now paler with mortification and anxiousness, “Are you alright, Ichiru-kun?” he asked worryingly. He didn’t want the teen to suddenly be afraid of vampires or nobles because of that detestable imbecile. “He has a dark past with the hunters. Please believe me that what he said was something no one else will agree upon.” He immediately explained to ease the shamed silverette.

“Papa’s right, Ichiru-sama,” Tsukiko eagerly joined in to comfort her, hopefully, soon-to-be brother-in-law, elbowing her brother in the process and hindering him from saying anything which mightily irritated the genius heir. “Zero-sama has been a great favorite among the aristocrats, especially the ladies! We’ve all been daydreaming and anticipating this ball for months just to have the chance to gaze at him!” Then she caught herself, “Oh, but please keep it from Kaname-sama.” She added shyly while blushing.

After assuring her that he’ll protect her secret with his life, knowing only too well how displease Kaname-senpai would be upon hearing it and not wishing trouble to court his lover’s family’s door, they quickly tried to return to the animated discourse they were having before. Having been used to
remedying awkward situations caused by his own clumsiness or his brother’s gruff attitude, their exchange turned enjoyable once more.

Fervently, Kiryū Ichiru wished that no more abominable creatures will darken their door for the evening. However, as if the heavens have turned blind for a moment, this wish is fated to be unheard.

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Outside the Grand Hall, unaware of all the drama that transpired, one diligent hunter patrolled around the area. Entering the Glass House to make sure no bloodsucker was on to something sinister like say, slipping in a human for a simple sip like a bunch of teenagers smuggling contrabands or secretly drinking alcohol in a party like some delinquents.

“Huh?” Kaito sniffed the air some more when he caught the scent of a familiar irritating vampire though he’s sure that she’s not inside that large greenhouse.

He searched for the source of the heavenly scent and found it in the form of white flowers growing abundantly among other colorful plants. Lily of the Valley.

Of course, she’s not here. What was he thinking when he just saw her surrounded by those aristocratic leeches? He sighed. He didn’t know why but he’s feeling conflicted whenever the thought of that brat treacherously sneaks in his mind. He was so distracted that he didn’t realize that he’s in the act of reaching out to one of the fragrant flowers.

“Be careful with that,” he heard his fellow hunter warned behind him which stopped his movements, “they smell sweet but they’re poisonous.”


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Hello everyone! \ \elahs( ‘ω’ )‌y / / Sorry for the two-month late update Σ( J ө∩ө ) J but even then, I cannot vouch for the quality of this chapter (Was it rushed? ( J ө≥ө≤ ) J was it rushed?!). I was thinking of uploading this chapter this coming April 11 but since I promise someone σ(≥ε≤ 0 ) that I’ll be updating as soon as I finished this chapter….ϕ( v ө v ) I’m giving it now. However, I won’t be able to update this coming April 11 Σ ( ‘ đ ’ ll ) . It would be great if I can finish the next chapter before May 11._-(_□ j ө j)_- If no update came then that mean that I failed which is sadly not unlikely…Σ( ‘ đ ’ Đ’ ; )ū

Still, (■□■ ө १) I want to thank everyone who’s still supporting this fanfic despite the sporadic update. Forgive me for being so useless. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate your patience. (J ө∩ө)‌y Thanks so much!

٩( ’ω’ )۶ Some of you might think that Anne was overreacting but it made so much sense when I was thinking of this angle. ==============ϕ( ‘ V ^ ’ ) Meh. J ( ө V ө ) That’s me anyway. Please forgive this creature’s way of thinking and I hope that you’ll learn to keep some matters aside and simply enjoy the story.≡≡≡≡φ( ө ^ ^ *) Yes, I’m a useless and irresponsible person. ٠(‘ V ’ ^ *) /

( J ө≥ө≤ ) J I hope you’ll find it in your heart to forgive me and ϕ ( > ω < . ) still manage to enjoy the fic! \ (*≥ω≤) J Muah! (((@ J ө 3` ) J ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ө ১)

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“Are you really sure about him?”

The young lady smiled as she glanced behind her, knowing she’ll find the familiar troubled look of her otou-chan blatantly showing his mild disapproval. She didn’t provide him any answer and merely waited for him to join her where she stands by the railing of the grand balcony where there’s a clear view of a certain ash-brown haired hunter giving instructions to younger hunters and is diligently patrolling around the perimeter.

“You know he’ll only break your heart since he’s a notorious womanizer.” Zero caught himself. Damn, what was he saying? Shit, he’s feeling lightheaded. Was he accidentally given alcohol? He looked at the drink that a footman handed to him on his way out to the balcony. He feared what he will see but still, he glanced at his daughter to ascertain if he hurt her with his careless words but instead of crying, he was surprise to see a wistful smile on her young face.

“It’s fine, otou-chan,” Anne replied in a soft voice, “whether it be my first love or heart break, I want to give it all to Kaito-san.” She looked up at her young father and continued, “If someone will break my heart, I want it to be only him.”

The silverette stared at the young woman in his child, feeling a complex mix of sadness and pride,
“You like him that much, huh?” he was awarded with a beatific smile in return. Why? He wanted to ask but didn’t know if he should. He knew he wasn’t able to voice his question but his bafflement must have been apparent on his face for his daughter answered nonetheless.

Anne smiled when she saw the ultimate question on her dear father’s face. Indeed, why? She hummed while searching for an answer. She turned back her attention to Kaito’s direction. Ah, of course, “Because he embraced my fears and gave me courage, because he provided me a reason to look forward to in the future, because of him I no longer fear my long life,” she met her father’s eyes again, “In simple words, he made me want to live.”

He sighed in defeat, “I think I’ll regret asking about the story behind that.”

Anne gave her beloved father another blinding smile, “It’s one of the most unforgettable memories I treasure.”

Despite the early morning glare, the vampire society’s most prestigious brats can already be found wandering the halls of the enormous Kuran Castle. Even though around that particular time, these precious little young masters and little lady would still be normally tucked in bed and peacefully wading their way through colorful childish dreams, except for the youngest two in the group, there’s no trace of sleepiness that can be found on their extremely angelic features. As evident by the great excitement lighting up their huge eyes, it seems that not even the siren-like call of comfortable and warm beds would be able to persuade them to go back to sleep.

“Hurry! They could be here at any minute!” excitedly piped the vampire king’s only daughter and eldest child, her reddish-lavender orbs falling on her two younger brothers and their youngest cousins who are both still sleepily yawning. Upon examining their small band of cherubs, she found that their group is currently missing a particular rascal, “Where in the world is Fuji?” she asked, turning to Akira who was tasked to hunt the troublesome runt.

“We haven’t seen him since dinner, onee-himesama.” one Mamoru Kain offered while dragging their sleepy cousin, the grey-eyed brunette Riku Shiki. He yawned. His toffee locks in complete disarray while rose quartz eyes still dark with interrupted sleep. He looks rumpled in his blue pajamas and surely, his mother would be horrified if she knew that he went to greet the pureblood princess and her family in such attire. He’s confident that he’ll be able to breeze it over though, since it’s their royal prince, Aki-niisama, who woke him and Riku to meet their aunt and uncle. That or he’ll insist that there’s no such thing as formality when it comes to family. He heard it from Aki-niisama once when he greeted Ichiji while wrapped in nothing but a towel.

“I couldn’t find Fuu-nii anywhere, nee-chan. He was not in his bedchambers nor in his make-shift lab.” The youngest prince shrugged.

“What? Oh dear… I hope he’s not making troubles yet again… He didn’t finish another one of those monstrosities, did he?” the young brunette asked, pertaining to those abominations their blood-related cousin fondly calls ‘inventions’. He better not be spreading his creations inside the castle!!!

“After his last epic fail? I honestly don’t know, nee-chan.” Akira loudly wondered, surreptitiously glancing at his twin brother who was greatly traumatized by the said last-epic-fail of an invention.
Young Kohaku can be heard letting out a derisive snort that still managed to be elegant, “If only Fuu-nii’s confidence would take a hit every once in a while, we might be able to get some respite.”

“That’s wishful thinking, dearest brother.” The royal princess heaved a mournful sigh. As someone who has been with that particular devil since his birth, she knew just how resilient his spirit is. “His self-confidence is as high as the heavens above and his face is tougher than titanium.”

“Yes, yes, you may praise my name right up to the heavens.” A cheerful voice suddenly came out of nowhere, greatly flattered at the praises he received the moment he graced his fans with his presence.

“Fuu!” the little children all cried in surprise, even the youngest two in their group who were slightly jarred out of their sleep-muddled brains, their loud voices echoing in the wide hall.

“Or, you may gloriously scream my name like that. I’m not really picky.” One Aido Fuji magnanimously offered, elegantly flipping his curly silver locks in a way that closely resembled his father’s.

“What is that?” the young Kuran heir quickly recovered while internally cursing their cousin’s teleporting abilities and asked upon spying the extremely large spherical stone being closely examined by the chibi silverette.

“What is that?” the young Kuran heir quickly recovered while internally cursing their cousin’s teleporting abilities and asked upon spying the extremely large spherical stone being closely examined by the chibi silverette.

“Obviously, a dragon egg.” Fuu answered nonchalantly.

“More like it’s obviously a stone.” Akira quipped.

“It’s a dragon egg!” the silverette insisted.

“It’s a stone.” The royal princess joined.

“Dragon egg!”

“It also looks like stone to me.” Kohaku said, deadpan, eyeing the youngest two who are now calm enough to yawn and blink sleepily again.

“Hmph! I shall prove that it’s a dragon egg and all of you will apologize to me.”

“And how exactly will you prove that?” Young Akira asked.

“My incubator was just finished.” Fuu concluded with satisfaction.

“Oh dear.” And she thought that they just finished sweeping the Kuran Castle off any rogue invention from the silverette. She reckoned she must double-check before troubles courted their gigantic double-doors. Well, unless Fuu failed somehow and actually ended up with something useful once again.

Before she could inquire further about this prospective instrument of destruction, she heard a most welcomed comment from her little brother.

“Nee-chan, I think they’ve just entered the castle premises. They should arrive at any minute.” Kohaku announced, his head turning to the direction of the castle gates, his attention intent on the sound of tires hitting the road leading to the castle grounds from miles away.

The princess, having perceived the same once she concentrated, said with elation, “They would indeed. Thank goodness! I’m sick and tired of looking at Fuu’s silly face.”

“Why is it my fault?!” the silver cherub squawked in indignation, finally sending his latest conquest
inside his earring’s dimension, “And I beg your pardon, honorable cousin of mine, my daddy had assured me that I’m the cutest child in the world!”

“Well, if you ask someone if you’re good-looking every five minutes, I’m sure they’ll also assure you that you’re the most adorable creature in the world just to get you off their back.”

“I can’t believe I’m hearing this blasphemy from the lips of my own relation!” Fuu gasped in shock.

“Dearest cousin of mine, remember this: familiarity breeds contempt.” The female brunette chuckled as she once again resumed leading their small group of adorable children to the palace entrance. It was unneeded, of course. They need not get out of their way to greet their aunt and uncle. Such things can be done during breakfast later but she can’t help but want to personally welcome them. After all, they’re their beloved family and with the absence of the king and his consort due to a sudden emergency with the association, she’s currently the highest figure of authority in the palace. She’ll be very ashamed indeed should their beloved aunt Yuki feel unwelcomed!

Not to mention, she’s been greatly looking forward to meeting her beloved cousins. It’s been years since she last laid eyes on young Takuma. Also, she last saw baby Yukina when she was only a few months old. Unfortunately, her genial uncle and cousin weren’t there to accompany her aunt Yuki to show the newborn to her parents. It would be the first time that she’ll see the whole family complete!

“Oh! It’s been too long! I wonder how those sweet children are. My, why did Taku-ji and Yuki-bachan choose to live abroad for eleven years!” the royal princess voiced, her tone turning high in her excitement.

“Well, if there’s only this midget mad genius for company, even I would want to go abroad.” Akira offered.

“Sound logic, dear brother.”

“Hey! You’re just as tall as me!” Fuu indignantly exclaimed.

“Fuu-niichan, is that all you took in from that comment? Won’t you even comment on the ‘mad genius’ part?” Mamoru asked.

The silverette turned to the brunette, his voice at once turned softer, “Mamoru, that’s a compliment.”

“I’m pretty sure it’s not, brother.” He sincerely offered, stifling another yawn.

“They phrase it like that because they’re envious of me.” Fuu phrased with his nose in the air.

“Just leave this insane big brother alone. He hasn’t slept for three days so I’m pretty sure his brain functions are not working well.” Kohaku imparted, smiling at the youngest two in the group.

“That is if he has any brains left.” Their eldest sister quipped. “I’m pretty sure that it has already melted during his last experiment.”

“My honorable cousin, I assure you that my brains are still intact,” then turning to the oldest of the brunette twin, he corrected, “and it’s been four days, Haku-sama.”

No wonder you’re more hopeless than normal, the royal princess scoffed, “How could any sane person create an alive walking nightmare of a doll still be with any brains left?”

“Hey! It was perfect!”
“Did you forget it made your father cry?”

“Err, there was just a slight flaw with the design.”

Kohaku can’t help but crease his forehead in disbelief, catching his twin brother mouth ‘slight flaw?’ with equal incredulousness. My, talk about the understatement of the century. He just successfully created something dreadful that manage to traumatize someone as powerful as him. His hands twitched with electricity at the horrible reminder.

“Why in the world did you even bring your creations here?” Lavender eyes narrowed irately. The castle has now turned into a danger zone as was always the case whenever this silver demon is in the premises.

“I just happen to finish several of my most recent creations while staying here.” The blue-eyed noble hummed in satisfaction at having accomplished so many things in such a short amount of time.

“I’m pretty sure you’re the one who made the toilet bowl in one of the private apartments in the east wing talk.” The eldest princess merely continued. Their cousin is impossible to argue with and the percentage of making him see his own error, without some tête-à-tête with his genial silver father, is slim to none.

“Isn’t it ingenious?” the oldest silverette in the group beamed, convinced of his own brilliance.

At this, she can’t help but whirl back to face bright cerulean eyes with a disgusted expression, “It’s spitting out its contents and is causing the servants immeasurable grief!”

“Err, did anyone try to talk to it politely?”

The rest of the children can only look at the young inventor in disbelief while shaking their little heads in harmony. Exasperated mumbling of ‘you’re impossible’ and ‘really now, nii-chan’ escaped from multiple pouty lips.

“I bet you’re also the loon who turned the large landscape painting in the south wing into a portal.” Akira said in a would-be nonchalant tone, a grin on his devilishly cute face.

“But it was brilliant!”

“Your victims were transported to the large royal bathhouse, you oaf!” the royal princess admonished, her voice much louder than intended. If it was not unsightly and unbecoming, she would have already lectured their moron of a cousin while shouting. Goodness, she could still remember the trembling boot boy who unfortunately lost his footing and hurriedly grabbed the said painting for support only to be transported to the bath which was then occupied by her aunt Ruka, aunt Rima and aunt Seiren. The poor boy was shaking like a leaf while explaining himself to her chichiue. He was still lucky however because just before her aunts, it was her dearest otou-chan and brothers together with uncle Ichiru who were bathing there. Her pureblood father wouldn’t have given him the chance to explain himself had he experience that misfortune much earlier.

“A simple recalibration will do the trick, I’m sure.” The only silverette in the group said, unperturbed. It was still a genius idea.

“Fuu-nii, were you also the one who made that rug looking thing in the north wing actually suck and bury anyone who steps on it like a quicksand?”

“Don’t be silly, Aki-sama. I won’t create something so dangerous like that. It doesn’t bury them. I assure you that they’ll find themselves quite safe in the castle dungeons. Well, of course, their
landing will play a big part but as long they land on their feet, they’ll be good as new.” He wanted to snort. For what that they’re vampires with inhuman reflexes? And even if they can be caught off guard, they still have their fast regenerative abilities.

“Fuu-nii, you do know that the castle dungeons are about four meters high, right?” Kohaku asked, suddenly remembering a footman limping out from the direction of the underground castle prisons earlier this week.

“Really? I didn’t know. How fascinating. I’ll be sure to remember it.” Fuu nodded, thinking that the older twin was merely sharing a fact. His path, however, was blocked by their royal princess who he didn’t notice stopped her tracks and turned to him with a genuinely disapproving look on her pretty face.

“Remove that thing at once, Fuu!” she ordered, finally giving in to the temptation of shouting at the oblivious little rascal.

The silverette blinked at her as if she spoke in a language he has yet to study and master. But of course he misheard her. Why would anyone want to part with his inventions? “Hai?”

“Otou-chan is expecting! If anything happens to him and our unborn siblings, there would be hell to pay!” the happy news was only confirmed a few hours earlier. He was only six weeks along now but they must provide the utmost care and comfort to their beloved otou-chan.

“Oh! Zero-ojisama is pregnant? I must say my most sincere congratulations!” Wait, siblings? Twins again? Triplets? But how did they know so early?

“Fuu!” the little princess hissed rather ferociously, forgetting her good manners, at her distracted cousin but before he can provide a response, the younger of the twin interfered.

“It’s alright, nee-chan. I already did it.” Akira sighed sadly as if robbed of his personal entertainment. Well, amusing as the device may be, the safety of their household is still of the utmost importance, especially since there are children currently staying in the castle. At his cousin’s squawk of protest, he added while pointing to his ear adorned with several earrings, “Don’t worry, Fuu-nii, I put it somewhere safe.”

The princess sighed in relief, “Oh, thank goodness for you, Akira.” It was such a rare phrase coming from her that it sounded like a joke. She knew she spends more time admonishing her youngest brother than actually praising him. The younger brunette grinned boyishly while muttering a ‘no problem, nee-chan’ and after one more warning to the silverette not to spread his creations of terror inside the castle premises, they continued once more.

“Why do you insist on creating such worthless devices?” the royal princess asked with barely concealed ire.

The silverette gasped at the insult, “They’re ingenious!”

“They’re useless.” Akira commented frankly.

“That’s blasphemy!” Fuu cried in shock.

“Tell me, Fuu-nii, can you even remember recently inventing anything that doesn’t harm other people or causes others to want to destroy them?” Kohaku asked, sincerely wondering.

“Of course!” Of all the silly questions! Aren’t all of his creations?
“Like what?” The brunette asked doubtfully.

“The necklace of invisibility!” he announced proudly.

“An accessory that makes the wearer invisible? How original.” Kohaku drawled sarcastically.

At that, the blue-eyed silverette snickered in a decidedly maniacal way, befitting evil geniuses seen in sci-fi movies that goes horribly in contrast with his heavenly beauty and delicate features, “You’re wrong, Haku-sama. It’s a trinket that would make everything invisible to the wearer!” he imparted importantly and even paused to give the others time to marvel at his creativity.

The children exchanged looks amongst each other to ascertain if they missed something crucial that will shed light to how this item became such an amazing creation. Based on their furrowed eyebrows, no one managed to ascertain its value.

“What is it used for? A pleasant sleep?”

They all waited while watching the still smiling silverette shake his head as if he can’t quite believe that such foolish people exist, his hand on his forehead, “Of course, I’m sure I’ll find a use for it some- ack!” he wasn’t able to finish talking for his cruel, disrespectful younger cousin hit him behind the head. “That hurts, Aki-sama!” What would he do if that shook his brilliant brain?! He looked up to find their small band already marching forward. He jogged to catch up to them.

The eldest of the brunettes sighed and wondered, “Why, if you’re intelligent enough to be able to find a way to artificially create bloodstones containing any vampire’s abilities and invent a mirror that can reflect another person’s memories, can’t you make any other decent inventions?” Though to be fair, he wasn’t really trying to create those. He was in the process of trying to create clones of himself (as if the world needed more headaches) and a talking mirror when his research just turned to that direction. Maybe if he failed to make a sleeping serum, it would turn out to be an elixir for eternal youth instead. The only inventions going as intended are the useless ones. She once seriously considered the possibility of their cousin doing it on purpose to irritate everyone and cause general havoc. However, after seeing his aquamarine eyes shine with genuine excitement and pride, she’s convince that he was just truly persuaded that his ideas are simply brilliant. But seriously, why would anyone try creating a large throwing shuriken that would throw the user instead?

Having enough of their cousin’s nonsensical antics, she proceeded to ignore the imp. The entrance was still quite far away when they clearly heard the smooth halt of a vehicle and the opening of car doors. Soon, the loud chorus of the maids and manservants welcoming their dear pureblood princess rang in the early morning shine. Unable to take it anymore, she hurried further. With her inhuman speed, what would normally take a normal mortal at least five more minutes of walk only took her a second. In a blink of an eye, together with her brothers and cousins who copied her, they all arrived at the entrance just as two silhouettes were escorted out of a luxurious vehicle.

The royal princess who was expecting a rosy cheeked blond barely taller than his brothers like how he was the last time she saw him and a cute brunette who, given who her parents are, would be surely seen cutely clutching her brother’s hand for support, can’t help but blink multiple times as her expectations were betrayed. The sincere and enthusiastic greeting that she was about to shout stayed trapped in her throat.

The royal children and their other three cousins completely halted at the startling sight before them. The eldest of them wondered if she’s somehow mistaken but those scents and familiar auras are just as she remembered. Amethyst orbs darkened in confusion as they beheld the glittering golden hair and the responsible light in emerald orbs which is reflected in the kind smile of the young teenager before them. She averted her eyes from her cousin and instead focused on the beauty beside him. She
can recognize the familiar rich mahogany locks and jolly green eyes of their aunt and uncle on the eight-year-old little girl, a shy smile on her lovely face. She examined them further and found that their presence and impression are indeed of their two much missed cousins. Yet, the two creatures standing before her are mere strangers in her eyes.

“Hime-sama?” a stranger’s voice excitedly called her, jarring her out of her confusion. She still wasn’t able to acknowledge him before he pleasantly greeted her brothers and cousins, “Akira-niisama, Haku-niisama, Fuu-niisama! It’s been a while! Ah! Are those Riku and Mamoru?” the energetic blond charmingly smiled.

Akira was the first one to recover. He asked cautiously though he knew he could always depend upon his exemplary senses, “Err… Taku?”

“Hai! It’s indeed me, Takumi.” The teenager pleasantly confirmed, “Yukina-chan, come greet the royal princess and princes.” He then nudged the blushing brunette.

Before the young man can further bully his sister into actually saying something in greeting, the melodious voice of their mother rang.

“Oh! If it isn’t my beautiful niece and handsome nephews! Shouldn’t you all still be in bed?” One Ichijou Yuki happily clambered out of the car following her children’s, without waiting for a servant to escort her out, closely followed by her husband. She of course knew that the little children made the special trip just to welcome them. How very sweet!

“Yuki-bachan! Taku-ji!” the royal princess finally managed to utter something, unconsciously expelling the breath she didn’t know she was holding at the familiar sight of their aunt and uncle. For some reason, she felt elated and relieved to find them unchanged unlike their children.

Abandoning all notions of grace and poise expected from the pureblood princess, Yuki ran to her darling niece and nephews to lift them all at once in one giant bear hug, “Oh, you’re still as cute as ever! Wait for the presents I have for you!”

“Oh! Oh! Oh! Did you bring me a Synchrotron?” Fuu immediately asked, not at all perturbed even though he’s being squished against Akira, his aquamarine eyes sparkling with eagerness.

“Eh? What’s that?” Yuki asked after a pause, seriously clueless.

“Hubble Space Telescope?” Fuu asked again, not giving up.

“Can we even buy that?” The vampire princess asked, slowly putting them down. The eagerness in the silverette’s child hurting her a bit.

“Large Hadron Collider?” Fuu’s bright eyes still trained excitedly on his beloved aunt.

“………” somehow, Yuki had the urge to apologize. Clearly she should have called the couple for advice on what to buy for their darling, eccentric child.

All the while, the brunette princess’ attention was stolen by another sleek black car that arrived. Already, she can tell who are inside the vehicle. She loudly called out as she run towards the car that just parked, for some unknown reason, feeling as if her saviors have come, “Chichiue! Otou-chan! Welcome home!”

A valet opened the door to reveal the handsome smiling face of one Kaname Kuran, followed by the equally gorgeous silverette. “We’re home, my love.” He greeted back as he gathered her in his arms. He then acknowledged their visitors, “Yuki, Takuma, welcome back. I trust that you’ve both been
The silver haired hunter merely nodded to the couple, giving them a rare, small half-smile. One silver eyebrows rose upon spying the little vampires who all should still be asleep by that time, “Why are you all awake already? It’s still too early.”

“They must have wanted to welcome their aunt and uncle.” The vampire king said, approval of his children’s kind and considerate intentions evident in his voice. Then, turning to acknowledge his niece and nephew, he said, “Welcome to the Kuran Castle, Takumi, Yukina. You may treat this place like home.”

Startled at being acknowledge so suddenly when it’s been a while since they’ve last met, the two children were flustered and stuttered at expressing their gratitude. After a few more polite and warm exchanges were made, the gorgeous group of adults and children were then led to a receiving room to await their breakfast while the two youngest were carried back to their beds after falling asleep on their feet.

As the vampire princess animatedly recounted the recent years and their family’s colorful experiences abroad, no one was able to perceive the subdued air surrounding the royal princess who quietly looked at her newly returned cousins who are spiritedly talking with her brothers and Fuu. The sweet and fragrant tea that a maid handed to her completely forgotten and left untouched.

She was so absorbed in her confusion as she kept on looking at the teenager calling her small brother ‘niisama’ that she wasn’t able to notice the arrival of another visitor until her aunt joyfully exclaimed.

“Yori-chan!” she smiled brightly, her youthful face at once becoming brighter. Her feet carried her out of the room to personally welcome her lifelong best friend, the fond smiles of her husband and brothers followed her departing figure. They didn’t dare intrude the two females’ reunion and merely continued their discussion.

The royal princess also went to greet their guest. It’s been a few decades since she last saw her aunt Sayori since she’s a human and without their aunt Yuki who’s closer to her than anyone in her family, there doesn’t seem to be enough reason for frequent visits. However, in the brief time that she’s been with her, as she lived in Cross Academy for more than two years as a child until her otou-chan graduated, and the few times that she saw her afterwards, she’s always left a favorable review of her kind and calm disposition. She’s always been gentle and quiet and cared for her and her brothers though the princess knew that aunt Sayori is not as close to her fathers as she is to aunt Yuki. After being reminded of her soft gaze and gentle aura, the royal princess decided to also personally welcome her.

She went to the entrance, following the sweet scent of her aunt Yuki mingled with the familiar scent of aunt Sayori. Bow-shaped lips opened to offer a greeting but the small voice didn’t quite make it out of her lips when her gaze fell on an old woman with white hair being warmly hugged by a brunette beauty.

The royal princess naturally knew that humans aged much faster than vampires. Perhaps, it’s the fact that aunt Sayori is the only human that her family is closed with so she’s not around many humans her entire life therefore easily forgetting about their mortality and that it’s been about 30 years since she last saw her that she was so shock about her change. Gone was the beautiful middle-aged woman in her memories, replaced by a kind-looking elder with gentle air and patient eyes who merely resembles a certain beauty in the princess’ memories.

The young brunette knew that she’s foolish to be feeling surprised when the fact about humans was something she had already studied repeatedly, yet no reason seems to be enough to quell the
turbulence that bubbled deep inside her nor calm the steadily racing beat of her heart. Thankfully, her aunt Yuki was preoccupied by her friend’s arrival that she didn’t notice her niece’s presence nor her rabid heartbeat.

Before her presence was exposed, the little princess retreated. Unable to take being in their visitors’ presence any longer, the brunette didn’t return to the receiving room and instead escaped to the gardens. Perhaps the flowers will ease the unreasonable heavy feelings that settled deep in her heart. She frowned at the indescribable fear inside her as if she’s facing a mad beast that is only moments from breaking away from its gilded cage. The awareness of something quite terrifying nagged at the back of her mind.

With undetectable speed, her blurred image traveled through the halls and corridors. In no time at all, she arrived at the entrance of the Wisteria Tunnel. Her steps slowed as she traversed the winding path under the majestic sky filled with white, blue, purple, violet-blue and pink Wisteria. The spellbinding and enchanting path twisted and turned, giving the creatures traversing the tunnel an idea of another world waiting at the end of their journey. Aromatic fragrance and the mythical air helped calm the princess’ turbulent emotions.

As dazed lavender orbs continued to gaze at a few falling petals, a sound of sweeping intruded in her thoughts and the little princess finally noticed the presence of a level C vampire who must be one of the groundskeepers. She noted the familiar presence and remembered him as one of the children in the line of family of servants that had long since served the Kuran family. She vaguely remembered that he’s close in age with her but given the difference in status, other than the occasional warm greetings and very few exchanges, they’ve never been that close despite them being close in age. Additionally, there are about 300 servants in their employment and she can’t remember all of them. Other than the few personal maids under her care and her siblings as well at Katsu-jiichan and Kobayashi-obachan, the other servants only have vaguely familiar faces.

Soon, the path turned and instead of the young boy that he’s expecting to see, what she saw instead was a middle-aged vampire sweeping the fallen leaves and petals. Little feet halted and dark chestnut eyebrows rose then furrowed in confusion. She slowly stepped closer and in an uncertain voice called what she remembered was his name, her eyes focused on a distinct birthmark on his neck that she vaguely recognized, “Nakamura-kun?”

The servant who wasn’t able to detect their princess who hid her aura was surprised at suddenly being addressed. He bowed and apologized, “P-princess! Forgive me for not perceiving you.”

“N-no, it’s quite alright…” a small voice spoke and as if she can’t reconcile with what she can see, tried again, “A-ano… Nakamura Shou-kun?”

“Yes, princess?”

Having the name she uttered acknowledged, she became even more confused, “N-no, it’s nothing. Please have a good day.” She then immediately turned back. So fast that one would think the groundskeeper caused her some grievance. With inhuman speed, she made her way back to the castle and without stopping to breathe, made her way to the Gallery. Her little feet only stopped hurrying upon reaching the enormous portrait of the whole Kuran household that occupied a large part of the wall. reddish lavender orbs roam and examined each faces in the picture until it finally fell on the small face of the boy standing in front of a couple bearing a resemblance to Nakamura Shou. She can’t be wrong and indeed, upon closer inspection, the older man’s face in the photo is different from the servant she just saw. Instead, the small boy bore more similarities with him including the birthmark that she was eyeing just minutes ago.

A soft gasp escaped her lips, a slight tremor coursed through her small body. How is it possible that
he grew up so fast? They’re both vampires and yet, why was she stuck in the same appearance for the last 4 decades? Then again remembering the same change occur in her beloved cousins, she further frowned. Violent stirring caused her heart to beat without respite. Unconsciously, her feet had already carried her several steps back, further away from the large portrait as if it holds a certain detrimental effect on her. Without meaning to, she bumped to a long, narrow antique mahogany table. Different sized antique picture frames toppled and fell on the floor and despite the carpet, some of the glass covers still cracked. Further flustered at the mess she just made, she wasn’t able to detect the arrival of their butler who immediately went to investigate the cause of the noise and seeing the situation and her agitated state, knelt before her to assist.

“Princess, please let me handle it. There’s no need for you to trouble yourself.”

The sound of her racing heartbeat filled the brunette’s ears that it took her a moment to acknowledge their old servant. Since when was Kat-jiichan here? Lavender eyes looked up and found an aged face with features that she’s sure were once handsome and youthful. It feels like it’s been a while since she last got a good look at their most trusted servant.

She made no move to stand up and instead continued on to help clear the mess that she made. She felt bad when she realized that the pictures were of their household servants and their families. The apology that she would have uttered, however, died in her throat after becoming aware of the photo that she’s was going to rescue amidst the sea of broken glasses and frames. One would think that nothing is wrong with the innocent photo of the Kuran Castle’s head steward and head housekeeper that was taken about 20 years ago yet it still made the young princess froze.

“Princess, what’s the matter?” Katsuragi inquired upon noting the pale complexion and deep frown marring their young royal’s beauty.

The old, familiar raspy voice snatched the little girl’s attention. She looked up once more, her little hands had long been frozen from picking up the shards. Lavender eyes widen when they fell on their old butler as if she’s seeing him for the first time. Why hasn’t she noticed the increasing number of wrinkles on his face? The aging body that was getting smaller as the days passed? The bony hands that looked even more delicate and breakable now? A deep voice that is raspier than several decades ago? Why hadn’t she notice it?

Everything is moving forward. Even vampires.

Except them.

Except her.

“Kat-ji-chan… when did you get this old?” a small, trembling voice so soft that it was almost left unheard asked. In her agitation, she didn’t even realize she was being tactless and rude.

Though initially taken aback, the old butler was not offended. He understood their princess’ nature and know that she’s not one to insult just to be cruel. With her tone, he could tell her anxiousness as if she’s worried that his old age would claim his life at any second. He smiled and replied, “Ah, your highness, please don’t worry about me.” Then looking at her small, ethereal face exhibiting a rare display of distress, he continued, “I understand that my time will come soon but I believe that I’ll still be able to accompany you for a century more.”

“W-what do you mean?”

“But while vampires possess an immensely long life, power dictates how long we’ll be able to keep it.” Katsuragi explained, his voice warm and patient, “Unlike your noble self, I’m but a lowly vampire...
and so I wasn’t able to keep my youthful appearance but I daresay I held out pretty well considering my status. I shall be content if I could see you grow up to a magnificent adult.” Despite his own circumstances not being particularly good, his voice didn’t hold any resentment towards the creature of power in front of him that had such agreeable affairs merely because of her parents. In fact, his voice held so much pride as if the one experiencing such good fortune was him or his own granddaughter.

Yet, despite all this, the princess was unable to appreciate her good fortune. Her mind was completely occupied by what the old steward had said. In a voice that’s barely audible, she asked herself, “But when would that be?”

More importantly, would there be anyone in their present household present to witness that?

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The sunset that she saw that day was a deep crimson. It’s like the color of blood and it made her timeless body shiver as an unknown feeling started budding inside her. Just like when she started to know what fear was like. Yet nothing else scorched the eternal princess’ heart as horribly as the reality that was forced upon her.

Thousands of days will end but she will remain unchanged. Everything else will move forward but her and her family. The thought that she’s somehow not alone should have relieved her but everything else in the world, her grandfather, her friends, her other aunts and uncles, their children who she treats like her own cousins, the hunters they have become acquainted with, the few noblemen she can tolerate, Yagari-jichan and all their servants will someday leave them alone.

Even Kaito-san…

God, Kaito-san will not last the test of time…

All will be replaced by new faces and would soon be forgotten by those who would come after. They would become a mere faded face and name after a few centuries. All that would remain is a barely familiar name engraved on white marble stones and a forgotten face on old photographs.

A startled gasp escaped her, the realization hitting her far heavier than anything ever did. Suddenly, panic seized her heart, causing tremors to travel throughout her tiny body. Small feet carried her to her vanity dresser and frantic hands searched blindly for the cosmetics that rarely touched her delicate skin except for very special occasions.

Pale white hands found several lacquered boxes which she opened to reveal rich and expensive beauty products of varying shades and colors. While she only had a vague idea on how to apply the products on her face, a large brush held by a trembling hand already found its way to a container holding bright red powder. Without any thought of what she should really do, she continued on to apply the products on her face, disregarding their actual purpose or use.

After what felt like an eternity, purplish regards found the poor, ruined reflection of a sad creature breathing heavily on the large three-sided mirrors. She can’t even spare a thought to care about the ruined products that seemed to have exploded all over her pristine white dresser or the colorful powders that now mar her beautiful dress. She’s sure that the overall ridiculous appearance would have been funny in different circumstances but she found no humor at all.
She looked grotesque.

Everything is wrong.

Ladies her age would have been able to expertly put on these products by themselves. Should have been putting it on by themselves for years. And it would have suited them greatly. While it could have been due to the misshapen way she put on the make-up, she knew that such products really do not suit her face.

For she has the anatomy of a child.

And so it would remain for several decades more.

Monstrously, she felt the floor tilt beneath her so suddenly that she can’t help that horrified scream that escaped her lips nor the enormous aura that broke all the windows in her room.

She had barely time to collect herself, feeling the worried commotion of the whole palace as several feet from miles away travelled towards her room with astonishing speed to no doubt ascertain her well-being. When she caught the aura of her beloved parents, siblings and extended family march near her chambers, she immediately gathered herself and fled.

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One Takamiya Kaito was just on his way to the target shooting range specifically built for the silver consort to kill time when the agitated crowd of the royal household snatched his attention. It seems like a certain distressed princess hurriedly fled the castle for some unknown reason and is nowhere to be found. She has likely taken one of the princes’ bloodstone for they couldn’t feel her aura or sense her anywhere. And of course, this was enough to set everyone in a panic and in no time at all, the whole place was thrown into different levels of chaos.

Even without being asked to help look for the eldest princess, his legs carried him to search for the troublesome brat while still carrying his things for the forgotten training. He didn’t know why, he immediately run to the old, almost forgotten, rose garden that belonged to the late queen. He jumped over the old, vine covered low gate at the entrance and passed by several well-tended roses. As far as he knows, in memory of his mother who tended the garden herself, the pureblood king ordered for this particular garden to be left alone for the most part. The gardener only comes to water and trim the plants but otherwise did nothing to keep unruly vines from climbing up and covering the walls and other infrastructure inside the garden. He finally stopped at an old garden pavilion hidden from the entrance by towering rose bushes. It was incredibly old but the vine crawling up to the white wash columns and glass roof only added to the enchanting, almost mysterious, air of the place, like it holds some secret entrance to another world. He finally stepped towards the entrance and finally heard stifled cries that seem to be magically screened so that no one will be able to hear it unless they’re trying very hard to specifically find it.

Finally arriving at the very entrance of the pavilion, hazel-eyes fell upon the small royal huddled behind the round stone table, with her face on the stone seat. She turned to him, clearly having sense his arrival and he started at her appearance. It seems their princess unfortunately got her hands on some make-up but the badly applied cosmetics looked even more horrible after being further ruined by the continuous flow of tears from heartbroken and melancholic lavender eyes. Under different circumstances, he would have snorted at the hilarious appearance of the normally regal and elegant
little princess since it looks like a paint palette exploded on her face. She looks like a very sad clown but instead of rolling on the floor with laughter, he found himself nursing the sudden agonizing twinge in his guts as if a bullet from a sinister sniper shot hit him at the mournful display of the sorrowful brunette.

He took a deep breath before wetting the clean towel in his hand with water from the drinking bottle he’s carrying for his break. “Hey brat, wha’cha doing there?” he spoke in an uncharacteristically soft voice as he cautiously stepped closer.

“K-Kaito-s-san?” the little brunette sniffed, quite forgetting her unsightly appearance therefore not giving thought to shielding her hideous face.

The hunter nonchalantly sat on the stone bench and looked down on her pitiful condition. Normally, upon seeing such an appearance, he would have already tactlessly asked something along the line of ‘did you trip on your vanity dresser?’ or ‘are you disguising as a clown today?’ but unlike what some people, like his disrespectful kohais, like to think, he does know when to keep his trap shut. Instead, he just kept a straight face and ask in an incredibly gentle tone that he would deny ever making later on, “You okay?”

The creature before him pitifully sobbed and honestly shook her head. Once more, as if being reminded why she was crying in the first place, tormented and heavy sobs permeated the small space of the garden pavilion. The tall hunter, contrary to expectation, remained calm and patiently waited for the princess to finish another round of heartbreaking cries as if he’s used to dealing with emotionally challenge brats his whole life.

While he didn’t fawn over her to coax her tears away nor gather her in his arms while patting her back like what adults normally do to a crying child, the little brunette found more comfort in his silence and the way he silently sat beside her as if in silent promise that he’ll wait for her and that she can take her time in pouring out her heart. And magically, she felt the burden in her heart lessen somehow until the heart-breaking sobs turned to mere sniffles. When she felt a callous and heavy hand pat her head once, the little head finally managed to turn and face her only companion in the garden.

Deep brown eyes studied the angelic appearance before him for a while and instead of insisting for an answer to his earlier question, he merely asked, “What’s worrying you, brat?”

A fragile hush prevailed in their world for a long while. While the pitiful cries were completely silenced, the princess didn’t speak but the hunter didn’t demand for an immediate answer. He waited patiently, retracted his hand and changed his sitting position in a more comfortable and carefree posture as if he’s there to simply enjoy the majestic view of the garden and the scent of roses in the air.

It was only a few minutes but it felt like forever before the young brunette finally spoke. However, it was not to answer his question but to ask one of her own, “How do you think the world would look like by the time your life ended, Kaito-san?”

Caught off guard, he eloquently responded, “Huh?”

“How many years do you think you still have to live?” she continued to ask.

Raising an eyebrow, he carelessly asked back, “You want me to die already, brat?”

Surprised that her words would be misconstrued as such, the young princess turned her head so fast that the hunter thought she would have hurt her neck, she exclaimed, “No!”
“Then why are you asking this?” Kaito really can’t understand her sometimes. Inconspicuously, he took his water bottle and wetted his towel, waiting for the right opportunity to wipe off the remaining ridiculous cosmetics that her tears weren’t able to wash away.

“I… I…” she stammered before turning quiet once more. A minute has passed before she once more continued, “I will live on for a long, long time, unchanging, and I’m afraid that I’ll face the end of the world alone.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

The princess blushed, aware that she’s speaking nonsense, but before she could say more, Kaito callously continued, “Aren’t you overestimating yourself too much and underestimating the world? There’s no way that you’ll live that long.”

Her small head once again turned to face the hunter to refute, “But-!” However, she wasn’t able to continue for a cold, wet towel touched her face. She looked up and stopped. The helpless expression she had never seen on the hunter’s face, as if he didn’t know how to handle a troublesome brat that he’s inexplicably fond of, completely muddled her brain.

“And did you forget that you have two pain-in-the-ass fathers, pain-in-the-ass brothers, and even more pain-in-the-ass relatives? How was that being alone?” he asked as he not-so-gently wiped away the blown away colors on her porcelain-like skin. Damn, how strong and long-lasting were the products that she used? Are make-ups supposed to be this hard to take off? Why are women to fond of using it then?

“But…” she began again, unflinching even with such a crude speech for she has long been used to his foul tongue and found it naturally a part of him. She must have been used to being served by servants or completely unaware of the wet towel that’s almost rubbing her skin raw for she made no attempt to escape from the hunter’s clutches. “I’m not changing… I’m not growing up…”

“What, brat, are you high? Did you think that Zero popped you out like that?” What is that Aido teaching these kids? He hasn’t even taught them about hybrids or whatever? Wasn’t he supposed to be their teacher? In his mind, Kaito wanted to curse the research-loving vampire.

“Kaito-san…” the young brunette pursed her lips, now starting to feel foolish and indignant as her words can’t seem to come across.

“Of course, you’ll grow brat. Don’t worry about it. It’s just that you’re too damn powerful that it will take a while. But it’s not that long that everyone around you would have already turned to bones.” He nonchalantly explained as he rubbed her forehead.

“How long then?” Serious amethyst orbs met calm hazel ones.

As far as he knows, it’s about ten years to a year but instead of honestly saying it, seeing how serious she is, he heartlessly teased, “Maybe a few thousand years?”

“But you’ll also be gone after a few thousand years.” soft, pink lips pursed and her mood sank deeper again, the joke completely lost on her.

“Are you underestimating me, brat? I won’t. I’ll be here even after you’ve managed to finally turn to a cranky old woman.”

The brunette smiled, albeit sadly, at the absurd and unlikely picture. She knew that the world will change, countries will rise and fall, a family line will end and start and through it all, she’ll remain as youthful as ever while the hunter before her would have long since turned to ashes.
“Why you, you don’t believe me? I’ll have you know that I’m the strongest hunter there is.” of course that’s an exaggeration since there’s his kohai, Zero, but he’s mated to the damn pureblood king, sharing his power, and that’s cheating. Soberly, he continued in a serious tone, “You won’t be getting rid of me anytime soon. Don’t worry brat, you’re not going to be left behind.” He then smiled his rare genuine smile and continued on to wipe her dirty face with the wet towel. “I’ll wait for you.” He added in a quieter voice which the princess almost didn’t catch.

The younger brunette knew of his irresponsible nature and dishonest character, but despite the countless lies he gave her, she found herself trusting his words. Perhaps it’s because instead of the normally mischievous and devilish glint in those familiar pools of dark amber, she found them lit by tender and affectionate lights. She doesn’t know how in the world Kaito-san would be able to hold on to his words but somehow, she caught herself nodding, fresh tears fell and revisited the old tracks. “Will you promise me?”

“Yeah.” He answered while wiping way the offending tears.

“Really?”

“Yeah.” The hunter repeated with uncharacteristic patience, half smiling at the look of childish doubt on her cherubic face.

“Do you really?” she asked again, her tone more persistent than before.

“Yeah, I promise.” Kaito answered with more determination and laughed at her skeptical expression. Grinning, he added while briefly pinching her cheek, “What do you think of me? A con artist?”

“But you might forget.” She whispered worriedly.

“I won’t.”

The young brunette smiled ruefully and mumbled, “Eternity is a long time, Kaito-san.”

Kaito sighed and said, “I won’t forget, I promise.” And when resolved brown orbs met still concerned and weary amethyst ones, he added, “Have I ever lied to you?”

At that question, several memories intruded upon the princess’ mind like the time when he told her that a telling mark would appear on her forehead the moment she tells a lie that’s why she would always cover her forehead when she lies and he would always call her out on her lie. He also told her when she’s only three-years-old that her parents only got her out of cow dung. It made her cry for weeks and pissed her otou-chan greatly. There was also a time when she gifted her uncle Ichiru a dress because he told her that her uncle is really a woman forced to dress up as a man. She could still recall the frozen expression on her fair uncle’s face and the loud laugh from Kaito-san when he saw his expression. There was also a time when he told her to call her grandpa a psycho because it’s a respectful endearment. She remembered that it made her poor grandpa cry. And those were only a few of the million lies he told her.

As if the hunter can clearly see the memories displayed on her pale forehead, he hastily withdrew his statement, “Never mind, don’t answer that.” He fell silent briefly as if looking for ways to make the suspicious little girl believe him before standing up and taking out a sharp knife. With a knee on the stone bench, using his superior strength and sturdy weapon, he engraved a few words on the smooth and solid surface of one of the marble columns of the Grecian styled garden pavilion.

Lavender eyes could only watch as the hunter work on. The thought of stopping him from vandalizing the poor, old column completely escaped her exhausted mind.
“There. Now stop crying, you brat. You look even uglier now.”

And despite the hunter’s words, tears flowed even more heavily from darkened lilac eyes as the small pale finger traced the newly formed, jagged letters on the pillar. It’s a horrible penmanship and a definite disgrace to the old standing structure which will certainly make their old kind gardener cry in lamentation but it still filled the tiny princess’ heart with so much relief and euphoria.

And as if the words alone were a spell to ease her fears and insecurities, she finally managed a smile. She turned to find the hunter with his cheek leaning on his fisted hand, his body fully facing her as he sat there, patiently waiting for her to gather herself and believe in his promise. His air speaks of brusqueness and laziness that she knew is common to him but the hazel orbs intently watching her is uncharacteristically soft with affection.

At that moment, when her lavender orbs met the stunningly serene expression of the hunter, she came to another realization. Her eyes widened as if she’s seeing him for the first time. She had always known that the hunter was special to her and someone who’ll always be part of her life but she never understood why. Why she refused to call him uncle while her siblings’ do so, why her eyes would always search for him first every time hunters come to the palace, why she’s the first person she wants to show any new achievement she attains or discovers with her power, why she misses him the very moment he leaves her sight and why a single promise from him, despite all his previous lies and offences, made her feel that living forever might not be so bad after all.

She’s so stupid to not have figured it out much sooner and to think that she can see daily proof of it in the form of her parents’ marriage and their happy household. How could she have missed it all this time?

Ah, so this is what it’s like to fall in love.

The understanding hit her like a runaway truck carrying a thousand noisy chicken which came out of nowhere. She was instantly breathless, numbly noting that she must be burning scarlet. The princess averted her eyes and they fell on the hunter’s promise immortalized on her grandmother’s private garden. Despite the newly identified affection weighing her heart like ten tons of pure gold, she still managed an exhilarated smile.

She’s extremely glad it was him who stole her heart.

“Hey, brat, you okay?” Kaito finally asked after minutes of watching numerous expressions dance on the little princess’ inhumanly ethereal face. Her beautiful expressions conjuring out nostalgic memories from several decades twisted his heart almost painfully. After playing this game with himself for many years, he can’t help but want to save himself from recollections that might put him in danger. “Ya think you can face his majesty already?”

A sweet smile graced the brunette’s face when she turned to the hunter. After gently caressing the messy engraving on the marble, she stood and unceremoniously took the older man’s hand in hers, making him freeze for a minute before shrugging slightly and leading her out of the place.

She must speak to their gardener to make sure he doesn’t do anything that might damage or erase the words that just became one of her most prized treasure. They were already a few feet away from the small pavilion when the small princess can’t help the temptation and looked back at the hunter’s promise. Internally, she read it again and smiled.

‘I’ll wait no matter what. – Kaito’
Several days have passed after that particular incident wherein the little princess of the Kuran Castle got fussed about and repeatedly asked for any issues or problems plaguing her little heart. After a heartfelt answer that everything is fine with her, even though she gave no explanation whatsoever, seeing her genuine expression of calm as if she had just achieved redemption and enlightenment, the matter was closed and all is well in the Kuran Castle once again.

Said princess was leisurely walking through the Sakura garden after spending some time with her younger cousins and getting more familiar with them. After accepting herself somewhat, she was able to look pass their differences and get over her fear. She knew she was being foolish. It’s not like her beloved relatives will fall over and die on her just like that. Her mood got even better as the days passed and the realization that her troublesome cousin Fuu is in the same boat as her and her siblings thereby ensuring that she won’t be rid of him and his antics her whole life didn’t dampen her high spirits.

The little brunette was about to return to the castle when her sharp lavender orbs caught sight of a familiar figure that seems to be slumbering under a large Cherry Blossom tree. The blossoms have started to fall, painting a beautiful pink world but the falling flowers didn’t seem to bother him since his face is protected by the book covering his handsome face. The princess giggled at the contrast for she knew how rough and ruggedly Kaito-san can be, but now he’s surrounded by all the pinkness and with a book she didn’t think he read in earnest to boot.

She would have loved to enjoy the view but seeing that the sun is about to set and with the wind starting to chill, she’s afraid of her dear hunter falling sick though it would be unlikely given the givens. Still, not wanting him to spend the night in the garden, she opted to disturbing his peaceful sleep. She was just about to pick the book on his face when a strong hand gripped her wrist, halting her movements.

He half got up on his elbow and turned to her, letting the book fall on his chest and in a voice that’s hoarse from sleep, whisper confusedly, “Anne?”

The princess froze. That single word knifing through her heart as if it’s a declaration of her own death. When her lavender orbs fell on deep hazel orbs, still dark from interrupted sleep, she felt the knife in her heart sink even deeper.

What? Anne? Who is she?

Looking at the expression on his handsome face that she saw for the first time, she felt the knife stabbing her multiplied.

Who is she that you would show her such an expression, Kaito-san?

Before she could even blurt out the question that she was dreading to ask, the hunter in front of her was finally able to shake off the remaining drowsiness and made sense of his surroundings. He let go of her hand to cover his face with both hands to wipe away any traces of sleep. The princess didn’t know why, but he looked a bit rueful but she wasn’t able to confirm if he is for he then addressed her.

“Nanda, it’s just you, brat. What are you doing here?” he asked without looking at her as he removed the fallen blossoms on his body.
The little brunette thought that he looked a bit somber and wistful but she refused the very idea and convinced herself that it’s simply because he had just awakened. However, that didn’t fully convince her heart that adamantly tries to beat itself to death. With a shaky smile, she replied with a cheer that she didn’t presently feel, “I was just taking a walk, Kaito-san. I saw you and since it’s about to get dark, I thought it’d be best if I wake you up. Forgive me for interrupting your sleep. Let’s go back to the castle.”

“Are you okay?” Kaito asked upon noticing her racing heartbeat and insincere smile. He frowned and was about to pat her head and remove the blossoms that fell on her hair but stopped. He didn’t think it would be good for him especially after his heart just received a shock at a reminder of those beautiful memories from several decades back. He’d rather spare himself any unnecessary heartache, thank you very much.

Not noticing his struggles, she fought for a more genuine smile and responded, “But of course I am. I am merely tired from all the exercise. Also, the wind has gotten colder.”

“Yeah?” the hunter considered her answer for a minute and after observing there was indeed a drop in the temperature, decided that she might be saying the truth. “Then let’s go back, brat.” He stood up but contrary to what he would normally do, didn’t offer his hand to her. His mind argued that she’s no longer a child and could only hope that she would not think that he’s acting odd.

Unfortunately, the princess did notice that he didn’t take her hand like he normally does when it’s just the two of them. Well, it’s not like it always happens but whenever her parents or brothers are not there to hold her hand, it’s almost natural for her to hold his when going home. It’s even more natural for her than holding her grandpa’s. She didn’t insist despite her desire as she’s not that thick-skinned.

Later, that entire episode and exchange kept her awake the whole morning. She can’t seem to forget his voice and expression when he had mistaken her for some unknown woman. Why would he use that voice to call her name? Why would he look for her with such gaze? Why would he have that expression when thinking of her? Why would he long for her?

Whenever she asked herself these questions, her heart would constrict and tears fought to be let out. She curled into a ball, rejecting the likely ideas that twisted her heart to an unimaginable shape.

When morning came, her complexion was so pale and her eyes were full of unshed tears that her lady’s maids were in a panic. She was barely able to stop them from informing the head steward and her parents of a likely ailment. How can she even explain that it’s a sickness of the heart?

After multiple reassurances and a lot of worried glances from her faithful maids, she was finally able to go through her ‘morning’ routine. Having reached a decision to question the person who’ll most likely know the answer, she set out to find where her beloved otou-chan is. Since her father grew up with Kaito-san, he would know who that nefarious vixen is.

Fortunately, the heavens seem to be on her side and was willing to put her out of her misery since her beloved otou-chan wouldn’t be out for the day. When Kat-jichan informed her that he’s currently in the library, it’s as if she’s being told that all her favorite authors will be updating her favorite novels and mangas at the same time with added epilogues and extras as bonus.

She hurried to the library and only resumed normal speed upon reaching the large double-doors. The brunette stepped inside, trying to appear nonchalant and even took on a look of surprise upon seeing the gorgeous figure of her silver father by the shelves dedicated to books about ancient spells and
“Oh my, good morning, otou-chan! I didn’t know you would be here as well!” she lively greeted as she hugged his legs and tip-toed to offer a kiss which he smilingly received by bending down. “What are you looking for, otou-chan?”

“Nothing much. Just thought that there might be a spell that could be used against some idiotic vampires to make life easier.” He answered untruthfully. He didn’t want to involve his daughter with serious and depressing hunter business.

The princess merely chuckled at his response for she is aware of this. She didn’t insist on knowing and instead, also randomly picked an old book and without looking at the title, opened it as she too tried to appear carefree and untroubled. Acting as if the thought has just crossed her mind, she asked, “Oh, now that I think about it, do you know anyone by the name Anne, otou-chan?”

“Huh? Anne?” Zero asked back, not knowing why that familiar name would pop out now of all times. He turned to his daughter and found the little angel holding an old book with a barely discernible frown.

“Uhm… I was just curious since Kaito-san whispered her name once.” She explained in a casual tone but silver-lavender eyes were able to detect the hidden unrest deep in her amethyst orbs.

“Ah.” Zero hummed in recognition before smiling, “Her.”

Seeing his father mysteriously smile, the little brunette got even more curious and jealous. Who in the world is she? “Who is she, otou-chan?” Unintentionally, her soft pouty lips have already formed a frown. Her expression obviously betraying her agitation which made Zero want to smile wider and cry at the same time.

‘This child… your crush is showing!’

Silver lavender gaze fell on her small frame, considering her for a minute. An odd expression passed through his handsome features before straightening back to his normal somber look. Zero hummed for a minute before finally answering her, “Maybe… I think his first love?”

There was white mist in front of her eyes and an annoying buzzing sound in her ears. Irritated, she gripped the book she didn’t know she was still holding and viciously glared at the ancient text on the page she’s in as if it did her a personal offense by merely existing. She can’t even remember how she left the library or if she was able to politely excused herself from her beloved otou-chan. Before she knows it, she’s already in her room, fighting off furious tears and the overwhelming urge to throw a massive temper tantrum.

She raised her hand and head to throw the poor ancient book of spells away when reddish-lavender eyes fell on the unsightly creature reflected on the large vanity mirror facing her. Her actions froze, unable to believe that the small child wearing that ugly expression is her. Like cold water soaking her to the bones, realization of her foolishness hit her.

There’s no point in wreaking havoc because of this, she thought. It’s not like it can be helped, after all, Kaito-san is more than two decades older than her. He’s bound to have been in contact with numerous women specially given how naturally handsome he is. As someone that’s close to perfection itself, it’s stranger if he didn’t attract one or a hundred flies. She was not even born during that time. What’s important is the time and chapter of his life from there on. It’s not like he al…ready has a g-girlfriend… right? Ah, yes, he doesn’t have one. She can rely on his crass attitude that would have surely drove blind flowers away. And… and he’s not pursuing anyone at the moment… right?
Of course, because if he is then he wouldn’t have much time to spend in their castle and he spends most of his time here whenever he had no mission. Also, he’s busy being such a gallant hunter! With the missions and all, romance certainly wouldn’t have time to intrude in his life. It’s been years and she’s heard no rumors about his romantic affairs so it’s only logical to think that all is not yet too late.

Yes, that’s right, she told herself. However, despite the sensible voice of reason echoing such words inside her head, she still can’t seem to get rid of that ugly and heavy feeling weighing her heart down.

Just as the poor old book that’s still in her hands was about to give up and split into two, amethyst orbs finally made sense of the chapter she accidentally opened. A time spell? Like an old grandfather clock, little gears started turning inside her head and just like that, a ridiculous idea was formed.

Huh.

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A rueful laugh escaped from the princess, “So maybe, that’s why I-,” the little brunette halted her words when she spied the extremely pale complexion of her father and the sheen of sweat covering his handsome face, “What wrong, otou-chan? You look-,” the princess’ words faltered upon the sound of guns being fired up front, vaguely feeling her dear father doing the same despite his obviously awful condition. “K-Kaito-san!” she can’t help but exclaimed when horrified lavender orbs fell on the struggling silhouette of the hunter parrying the attacks from about seven hunters surrounding him.

“Shit!” Zero growled weakly and tremulously, cursing the sudden pain that shrouded his body, unable to comprehend its origin. Damn it. Was he poisoned? Instinctively, his amethyst glare fell on the glass loosely enclosed in his hand. He threw it and cursed his stupid self who accepted a drink from an attendant serving drinks outside when its practically empty. Fucking idiot. When another round of bullets was fired, sluggish feet immediately strove to aid his senpai.

“Otou-chan!” Anne shouted after the hunter and followed him with the intention of bringing him back. They’ll be outside her father’s sphere of power. But the immense worry eating her heart at the thought of the ash-brown haired hunter facing all those adversaries alone impeded any other notion.

They almost reached the part of the courtyard where the battle was taking place when the pair promptly ceased all movements. Anne gasped and turned, as did her father, to the faltering lights of the outdoor garden lamps around and to the darkness that finally consumed their surroundings.

“Fufufu, you held out quite well. I was already getting tired of waiting, Zero-kun.” A sinister voice filled the void, smooth and velvety but no less frightening.

“Rido.” The hunter hissed through his gritted teeth, a trembling hand placed above his sprinting heart. A lavender glower still fiercely pierced the handsome smiling visage that stepped out of the darkness, not quite willing to show the sudden tremors and throbbing aches robbing him of his strength.

“Hello, Zero-kun. I’ve come for you as promised.”
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