Summary

Gakushu Asano was known by many to be the perfect student, he was a student in Class 3-A and the leader of the Five Virtuosos. He is the perfect student of Class-A but Gakushu has a little secret he has hidden from the school and his father. A secret that the living cannot know. After being sent to Class E and finding out their secret, he must hide his secret from them. But this is Class-E we are talking about.

Warning: May have some triggering topics.

Beta readers: Teddygirl105 and Crazyrabbit2

New beta-reader: xYAOIBOYx

Notes

Hi and I am just transferring this story from Fanfiction.com
By the way insert shameless plug here; check out my artwork on my DeviantART page; account is sommerannie.

I made a profile picture for this story *wink wink.

I have the idea for a while ever since I heard some scenario of Gakushu transferring into Class-E and wanted to add my own twist to this. I'm not to sure if I should count this as a crossover with Black Butler because I only used the concept of Grim Reapers from the series. (Either way I do not own Assassination Classroom or Black Butler.)

By the way check out Crazy. rabbit 2, she was the beta-reader for this story. Many eternal hugs and kisses to you my saviour.

See the end of the work for more notes.
His Secret

His secret.

Gakushu Asano was known by many to be the perfect student, he was a student in Class 3-A in Kunugigaoka Junior High School and the leader of the Five Virtuosos. On top of that, he is the Student Council President and the son of the Board Chairman of his school. He was handsome, with his neatly cut strawberry-blond hair and eyes violet that resembled amethyst. Many say that he resembles his father.

To the main school building, he was number one ace and was admired by many and to Class-E he was an 'arrogant bastard'. Parents wanted him as their own child and many were desperate to be his 'friend'.

He was able to do feats that no normal human can do, his acts looks to be almost 'defying gravity'.

His endurance was better than professional athletes.

Others yearn to have even a small part of his intelligence.

He can speak many languages fluently: French, Korean, English and Portuguese.

He won tournaments with little effort, he is first in everything whether if it a contest or school ranking.

He is the perfect student of Class-A both physically and academically. He is perfect model pupil…

He is the product of his father's education system.

Oh how wrong they are… Gakushu Asano as a little secret.

A secret that the living cannot know.

It was school day and he walks down the streets towards his school, his violet eyes shine in the morning sunlight and his short strawberry-blond hair bounces from every step he takes.

On the way to school, a woman sightly taller than the boy accidently bumped into him, both quickly muttered an apology and Gakushu quickly quicken his walking paced. He arrived at school, avoiding the gazes of admiration from nearby students hastily yet gracefully went to the council room.

He opened the door and seeing that there is no-one in the room, he closed it and locked the door behind him. Carefully he took off his contract lenses as he stood in front of the window. Once they were taken off he can barely see anything around him, the world became a blur. His extreme near-slightness is not his biggest secret of course.

His eyes no longer have a beautiful violet colour similar to amethysts. His true colours are reveal, now revealing his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes reflection on the window.

He hates wearing contacts, they always irritated his eyes but he has no choice due if he didn't want to arise suspicion. He pulled out a pair of black-framed glasses from his bag and put them on. The world around him has become clear again. He got out a letter from his bag with 'Japanese Branch'
labelled across the front in a neat front, and opened it cleanly and swiftly.

Reading the contents of the letter, he let out a heavy sigh because he was thinking of his father.

*But it doesn't matter anymore, I have committed the most unforgivable act...*

*And I will work until the day I am forgiven... This is my punishment...*

The boy smile bitterly as he again read his letter,

'Gakushu Asano, you are to join Class-E or known as Class End. Do anything deemed necessary to join the class, further information of the task will be sent by Senior Rilliane later in the day.

-Grim Reaper Japanese Branch.'

This was his darkest secret; Gakushu Asano is a Grim Reaper, whose duty to review and collect souls. To pass them onto the afterlife, to judge to see if they go to heaven or hell.

The secret is that Gakushu years ago committed suicide and as punishment became a Grim Reaper. Nobody even knew he was dead, not even his own father, fortunately. Now, acting as if he never died, he was dispatch in his hometown fulfilling the role of he was expected to. Until the day he is forgiven, he must work hard and continuously observe people's deaths.

*This was his ultimate crime.*

Even in death, he was top in his classes of the Grim Reaper ways and passed his class in under a month with flying colours. He was still prideful of his accomplishments after and before his demise, it is hard to change that aspect of his especially after years of being taught that way. However it felt different from when he was alive, it is something that he can't explain.

'The exams should be in a couple of days' he thought and places his contacts back in, his eyes regaining their violet colour. He already knew what to do to demote himself to Class-E, unfortunately enough. *God damned my pride!*

But he knew something strange was going on in that class especially with the rumours he was hearing. 'I've always wonder how the students for that class manage to suddenly increase their physical abilities ever since the Sport Festival. Their sudden improvement in grades and academic ability is a mystery as well.

Checking his watch seeing that there is only a few minutes until the bell rings, he review his retrieval list for tonight's shift.

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**His story;**

Before Junior High started, Gakushu spotted many differences of himself from the other students around him. Because that he has to be number one in everything, he found it so alien when parents praised their children for passing a test or a subject.

"You can do better next time but good job."

"I'm proud of you."

"You did your very best, I know that you studied hard for that test."

These were some of the examples he heard from parents. If he gets one mark off from perfection then
he was be subjected to ridiculed by his father. And no matter how 'perfect' he was, he would never be praised by that man.

He had to do best in cram school, volunteer work, council meetings and outside classes from school. He was so tired, he envied the children his age who hang out with their friends without too much care while he was stuck in his room studying.

I have to be perfect. I have to be number one. I have to get 100%.

On his way to school, he spotted a family of three playing in the local park. When a boy about the aged of four scrapped his knee and started to cry. His father and mother rushed to him and comforting him, he envied that small boy when he was hugged by his father.

His father would have never done such a thing, he was never comforted but instead he was criticised for being so weak.

What's it like to be hugged? To be comforted? To be loved unconditionally?

Why I am not allow that?

Eventually he snapped, such pressure would break a young child.

Why do I have be to perfect? Why do I have to be number one? Why do I have to get 100% at everything? Why…?

Why am I the only one that has to do this?

This conflicted the young boy, his teachers say that grades are not everything while his father say the opposite.

He wanted to escape this confliction battling inside of him … However he knew that his father would never allow such as thing, it would mean that his son is weak.

So he hid behind a mask of formality, he never talked to anyone and especially his father of how he felt. This feeling of his…

Even at such a young age, his life ahead of him looked so bleak. His father was too strong! Gakushu could never escape him, he was for certain, forever as a display to show off for his father, forever in his shadow. He was facing a life-time of work and fake politeness all while feeling empty inside. The boy couldn’t bare living such a meaningless life devoid of any joy or love.

This feeling inside of him grew, he did what he was expected to do until the long school holidays came and then his ultimate plan will be completed.

He always loved nature, months before the holidays came he planned to have a small camp in the forest alone. He packed everything he needed and without a secret thought from his father thankfully, so he set off to the rural side of Japan.

On the way to the bus stop, he forged a medical note and went to the pharmacy far from his father's prying eyes. The pharmacy thought nothing of it, they thought that he was on an errand for his parents. Three bottles of sleeping pills were brought and he went to his final destination.

As he walks deeper into the forest, he spotted the perfect spot to sit at. He felt no fear or apprehension, just a dull sense of relief that he be leading this meaningless life behind. Who know? Maybe he would have a better chance in the next life? He didn't care about anyone here and nobody
cared about him, not truly…

With a bottle of water to help swallow, he consumed the pills that was enough to kill an adult while he watches the blue sky slowly turn to a brilliant golden orange as the sun set.

Before the effect of the pills kicked in, he thought back at any happy memories he can find other than his achievements. Nothing, he felt no happiness in his life…

His brain slowly becomes numb, his eyes became heavy, he felt as if he was floating away from the world outside.

This is probably the happiest he felt in a long time if ever, slowly Gakushu drifted away and accepting of his eternal slumber.

At age 10, he committed suicide by overdose of sleeping pills as he laid in the forest surrounded by small animals. At least he wouldn't be so alone he thought before his last breath came.

He would never expect that the next time he would ever open his eyes but he did. He would wake in a white room in bed. Too confused to be scared but quickly afterwards the fear kicks in, did his father caught him? His eyes can't seem to focus properly with his blurred and terrible vision. He certainly doesn't remember of having terrible eyesight.

He would never expect of a woman in black next to him saying, "Hello Gakushu Asano, you are our youngest Grim Reaper I have seen yet."

"I will be teaching you the rope of your new life now."

"I am your senior, the names Rilliane."

He would never imagine that his senior Rilliane would become the paternal figure he always wanted…
Strange days

Chapter Summary

When Gakushu finds out that he is transferring to Class-E from his father as ordered by the Department.

Strange days

"There is something going on in that class Asano-kun. The students there, their fate has changed and the superiors want you in record of their activities." Rilliane's works echoes in the young boy's mind.

This day cannot possibly become stranger than it is now. After arriving at his father's or rather the Chairman's office. The man of course took the chance to belittle his son for losing his number one spot. The results of the exam had been released and Gakushu Asano was placed in the second spot. 'Really' Gakushu thought, he should get use to the 'strangeness' and stop expecting anything to be normal anymore because;

One he is a Grim Reaper.

Two his… Colleagues are an interesting bunch.

Even after Gakushu Asano had died years ago, his personality stayed the same, he is a very competitive person. He was prideful as many would agree, but unlike the lead-up to his suicide where his life felt empty, and he felt as though he had nothing but his accomplishments. He at least has some moral support from his peers in the Grim Reaper department. Although Gakushu can be stubborn when it came to making bonds- it took him 6 months to even call Rilliane his friend instead of senior after being taught by her and her eccentric colleagues.

One was a Stasi officer with a love for whiskey and another was a KGB officer vodka who was always drinking vodka. The two have some interesting hobbies which Rilliane also took part. But no matter their eccentricities, they were intelligent so Gakushu found them interesting to talk to.

"You will go join Class E tomorrow." The Chairman said to him and without and once of sympathy. As soon as those words were uttered to him, 'Task one completed' Gakushu thought to himself. He would have to tell the other reapers of his story but first, he had to act as pissed off as his father expected to be.

"You can't be serious!" Gakuhu yelled, his violet eyes lit ablaze while he clenched his fist in attempt to control his anger. He wasn't entirely acting and he was genuinely annoyed, just a little, that he would be thrown into the E class by his own father for such a petty reason. Even if he had been trying to get there purposefully.

"When am I ever anything but serious, Asano? You are going to be our new Class-E student." He replied coldly with a cruel smile. Before Gakushu can make any remark, his father added cruelly "You have been lose more in this year than I have in a decade, I thought you would be better suited in a class for hopeless cases." Even after Gakushu's death, his father always seem to get the best of him, he always knew how to inflame the boy's temper.
Gakushu Asano tried his hardest to maintain his façade of professionalism and appear relatively calm as his father ridicule him. Which is difficult when he wanted to punch the nearest wall.

"At least now you will be in on the secret of Class-E" His father lightly spoke, Gakushu felt a shiver going down from his spine of his father acting so… fatherly? As much as he wanted his father to act what they are supposed to do, it feels so wrong with this man…

"So you are hiding something Chairman." He said and with a smirk, "And what makes you think that I won’t use this against you?"

The Chairman chuckled, "Because then you would be committing a serious crime by spreading international secrets, of course." This secret must be huge if it was considered an international secret! What one earth could it be? Gakushu was going to tell his superiors anyway, of course. This was Grim Reaper matter and not human matter. What had he and his father gotten themselves into?

Not that anyone else knows but Gakushu's watch is actually a voice recorder and transmitter. Thank you for Grim Reaper's fast developing and convenient technology.

But enough about that, a government personal of what Gakushu knew as the assistant teacher and PE teacher of Class-E. Mr Karasuma entered the office to escort him to a 'secret' facility to explain the situation at the End Class. Yes… This was a very strange day.

Gakushu took one last quick glance at his father as if he was waiting for something but he quickly exited the room. What did he expected from his father?

Some words of condolences? Comfort? Gakushu knew he should know better by now than to expect something other than indifference from his father. It is normal for an adolescent to long for recognition and especially from his only real family he had, his father. The admiration of his classmates and the affections from his fellow reapers was never enough. He always tried to deny it to himself but Gakushu still wanted his father to love him.

However, walking alongside Mr Karasuma to the secret meeting, none of this internal conflict brewing inside him was portrayed. He kept his appearance of calmness and false politeness while he was internally screaming.

What has he gotten himself into? Rilliane has not tell him this situation was like… this!

Gakushu sat in on the meeting, where he was sworn to secrecy and was finally made privy to the secret of Class-E. Does he need to have his ear's check? Because his eye-sight was already terrible as it is, he could hardly believe his ears.

This couldn't be real, right?

None of the other reapers has told him of a yellow octopus alien creature who just happened to be the old behind the destruction of the moon, do Grim Reapers even judge aliens? Not only that but the reason why Class-E’s grades and skills improved because the yellow octopus is their classroom teacher who also happens will destroy all life on Earth before the year ends.

Gakushu had to sign a confidentiality agreement which he intended to break as soon as he met up with the other reapers.

He held a blank face for the entirely of a slide-show explaining about the monster who is mascaraing as a teacher. He felt his eyes twitching of the absurdity of all of this, he knew that this isn't a joke but this is ridiculous! He hadn't ever thought too much about the moon situation because going through a
logical route, he just assumed it was some sort of meteor and left it at that. Even Rilliane told him that the moon is going to be fixed, in her words "If the moon is gone than that is more work for us."

He just scratched it off from his list as he was on his nightly shift of collecting souls with his senior whenever he looked up at the night sky.

Gakushu wondered what would happen to him and the other reapers if the world was destroyed. With no more souls to collect, what would they do? What happens to the ghost when the earth is no more? Forgiven by default? The ultimate break?

He was then given a rubber green knife and pellet that can somehow harm the octopus monster teacher whom other Class-E students call dubbed at 'Korosensei'. 'Don't question too much or I be in with a painful headache.' He thought as he continue to absorb the newly found information.

Unfortunately however, for this task, he must act like a normal human and observe and not reveal that he is a reaper. Or in turns of Rilliane's words, that he has been dead for almost four years.

This means that he can't just outright just kill the creature and save the planet. But in this case, does it count? Unless it is some sort of scientific experiment that went extremely wrong.

Now he is a part of Class-E who are being trained to be assassins to kill a yellow octopus monster dubbed as Korosensei with green rubber weapons. Gakushu was sure this day cannot become even stranger.

Exiting the meeting room to the outside world, his head was spinning with information and he let out a heavy sigh. He was in the End Class, the world could be destroyed by graduation by a yellow octopus thing who happens going to be his teacher.

Looking around to see no prying eyes or security cameras, Gakushu kicked the nearest thing in frustration which was unfortunately was a tree. Its' trunk shattered from the impact, bits of bark flew everywhere and collapsed to the ground.

He then receives a text from Rilliane. 'Lyrics Karaoke Bar.' God he really needs a drink.

It is tradition since the day of his unforgivable act and when he graduated from his Grim Reaper classes that he goes to a Grim Reaper run karaoke bar to tell of what's been happening lately or for mission reports whenever he receives the text.

Why have a karaoke bar in the first place? Gakushu doesn't really know why but it's a good place to vent when you're frustrated a bit. Rest in peace tree number 101. Being a reaper can take an emotional toll, after all. Although he remembered a story to decrease the number of 'seceders' or something like that after a case dated back to the Victorian Era. I think his name was Undertaker?

He arrives at the bar and to the counter, today running the counter is Arthur who committed suicide after 'failing' his duties when his master Gretel took her life by the noose in attempts to reunite with her brother. Gretel was taking a nap by the desk. Both are experienced being in the departure for over 200 years, you can easily mistake them as siblings as both have golden blonde hair. For the eyes, every Grim Reaper has the chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. The time the two told him before their deaths was that both had green eyes, green as emeralds and the English plains.

Both are from the English Department who transferred here to train the newcomers which have increased dramatically in parts of Asia. Gakushu enjoys talking to them compared to the students where he goes to school at, who are mostly incredibly repetitive and vapid. Maybe not Ren, he was
interesting to talk with especially when it came to poetry and the arts.

"Hi Asano-kun, they're in room 5." Arthur politely said and Gakushu gave his thanks.

Arriving at the door of room 5, he was mentally preparing himself of he is going to be subjected to… Deliberated horrible singing.

Opening the door, "I don't want to close my eyes!" These voices was from the whiskey lover and vodka lover. He can hear the banging of tambourines going along with the horrid singing out of beat.

"Hi Gakushu-chan~" Rilliane called out from the noise waving her arm, she was a woman in a black suit with almond brown hair and the same eyes that every Grim Reaper possesses. Her glasses only had the upper half with thick frames. "They wanted to start without you, I know you don't mind that."

Gakushu shook his head, "Not really." As terrible as they were at singing, it was very amusing. He takes off his watch with the recordings and gives it to his senior.

"I am sorry that you had be in Class-E, I know how difficult it was for you." Rilliane was from his department, the Japanese Department although she took her life back in America. It was the same reason of why he did it, educational and family problems. She gives him a box of cake knowing that the young boy has bit of a sweet-tooth that is one of the things that reminded her and Gakushu of what makes him a kid.

"It is best from France with a side of macaroons." Gakushu's violet eyes started to sparkle and his cheek turn pink like cherry blossoms as he was given the box of sweets.

"So, how did you manage to get yourself thrown in the End Class?" The singing came at a stop as Lucia the once Stasi officer asked in a heavy accent, she wore a military uniform consisting of black and glasses were rectangular shaped. She had hair blond as the sun, she was from the German department. She told the boy that she took her life because her fiancée took his life after being blacklisted back before the Berlin Wall fell. Feeling that she no longer had a purpose of life, she too took her life to reunite with her lover.

"Did you bomb the exam?" The vodka lover named Ivan was from the Russian Department asked, wearing the same uniform as Lucia. He had black curly hair and wore black thick-framed glasses. He told the boy that he committed suicide after being disillusioned of the Soviet Party during his time as a KGB officer after seeing the corruption in the government.

The three: Rilliane, Lucia and Ivan stared at the boy waiting for his answer of how he transferred himself in the class.

He pulled a polite smile and said, "I got second place overall in the school."

"…." It became silent for the next couple of seconds…

"WHAT!" The voice did not came from the three but instead from outside the room. The door quickly opens and slamming the wall to reveal Gretel alongside with Arthur holding some drinks. "What kind of logic is that!? Your father threw you in Class-E just for coming second, that is beyond harsh!"

"You get used to it after a while." Gakushu gave a shrug while eating his slice of cake, it reminded him of how he used to be human. He remember the days of how he was ridicule by his father for getting one mark off or even half a mark off from perfection. Or even recently when his father was trying to outclass the lowest class. Gretel gave Gakushu a sceptical look, knowing of his story.
Gretel and Arthur went back to the counter with Gretel huffing in anger, Lucia and Ivan was busy hugging the boy covering him in tears and snot. Rilliane meanwhile was taking a picture of the scene for the Gakushu diary.

After a while, being a Grim Reaper isn't so bad you just get used to it sooner or later. Like how eventually I got used to my father's education system although it eventually broke me. This time, it is a lot different now.

On the plus side of this, at least Gakushu no longer have to be Student Council president or do extra-classes at school now. More time to focus on other important things, he already memorised the entire Japanese education curriculum anyway. This assassination class can help for his Grim Reaper work and it would be more interesting challenge than school work anyway.

"Rilliane, do you have more cake?" Luckily his father does not know about Gakushu's cake obsession.
Short Story: The Gakushu Diary

Chapter Summary

Remember is what mentioned that there is a Gakushu Diary? This is sort of the beginning of that book's creation.

The Gakushu Diary

Remember when it was mention that there was a Gakushu Asano diary, this story is sort of the beginning of that book's creation.

Four years ago; in the Japanese Grim Reaper Branch.

"Why did you even have a Gakushu Asano diary?" Rilliane asked to Gretel and Arthur as they worked their book in her office. Just after was Gakushu's reborn as a reaper, Gretel and Arthur transfers from the English Branch and had a fateful encounter with then 10 year old strawberry-blonde haired boy.

"The kid is utterly adorable." Gretel said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. "It's a good time-waster as well." She shrugged and went back to sticking in photos she and Arthur took of Gakushu Asano as well as annotating them.

Is that a photo of Gakushu sleeping I saw?

Back when Gakushu recently became a Grim Reaper and almost finishing his classes, Gretel met the boy directly after hearing rumours of his story. Gakushu was surprised because Gretel at the time retain a much youthful appearance of a 15 year old girl than a 200-year old experienced Grim Reaper.

"I preferred this form, much easier to move around." Gretel said, she wore clothing much difference from the other reapers Gakushu see around as well.

Gretel wore a simple black and white in a horizontal strips Sailor-Lolita dress where it reaches to her knees. A belt that is the same material as the dress but white is wrapped around and tied in a ribbon on her right to highlight her waist. High dark navy socks possibly strapped by sock garters matching with her polished black low-heel shoes. Finally a large white and almost bouncy ribbon on her head band, her glasses were rectangle-shaped and the arms where white.

When Gakushu later met Arthur who had the appearance of a 17 year old male, Arthur was wearing the usual Grim Reaper suit with some modification to look more sophisticated like an aristocrat and sporting the same glasses as Gretel.

What Gakushu thinks what stand out the most from these two blondes in which both Arthur and Gretel's are short is there… slight large eyebrows.

Gretel told him that Grim Reapers with enough years of experience can return to a youthful or mature appearance whenever they want. The clothes that the Grim Reaper wears can easily shrink or grow to what size the user wants. As she was a senior, she told him how once you become a
profession reaper that you can modify both your uniform and Death Scythe (with applications of course on the weapons department).

Now Asano is not only following Rilliane but also to the two veterans Gretel and Arthur like a duckling.

Gretel and Arthur was shock when they learnt about his childhood. Shock is an understatement of the fucking century because of the work he was subjected before his suicide. He does more work than adults for crying out loud!

Gretel acted more of as the older sister to the boy while Arthur played the role as the elder brother although they wanted to be the paternal roles but Rilliane stole them first. The father role is taken by Gakushu Asano's father obviously, now if only that man acts like one in the first place.

"I know." Rilliane stared at the veterans "Do you think I can't see that?", she thought as some sort of coping mechanism for the two as the Grim Reaper job can be quite depressing after a while. To be forced to watch people's regrets and attachments to life every-day when they are on their shifts, these two has done much longer than she has.

"I heard he is getting his glasses today." Arthur said in deep thought,

"I thought that he wanted coloured contacts instead because of his dispatch in his hometown?" Gretel spoke, the two clearly ignored Rilliane.

"You still haven't properly answered my question." Rilliane blankly stared at the two, Gretel sighed and suggest the three to go to the cafeteria.

After they arrived the cafeteria and Gretel already ordered some cake while Arthur texted the young boy to come to the cafeteria. 'Meet at the cafeteria now, Arthur.'

A few minutes passed by and Gakushu came wearing his new contacts, giving him his old appearance back when he was alive. The three noticed that he had a pair of his own customised glasses in his chest pocket. Gakushu wore a much simpler uniform, white collared shirt and black pants. He has yet to modify his uniform, Gretel and Arthur in their mind cannot wait to design his uniform.

"You wanted something seniors?" Gakushu politely asked as he looks to the group of three. Already he and Rilliane smells something fishy about this and before the air becomes thick with tension Gretel spoke.

"We thought that we celebrate as you are now a professional Grim Reaper." Gretel said while giving a cutely smile and she held a plate of a slice of strawberry shortcake in one hand. "I'm going to buy more gifts later but here's your first gift."

Rilliane cannot believe her eyes, is she wearing her glasses right?

Gakushu had sparkles in his eyes and the sparkles floated around him. His cuteness level are going through the roof, his puppy-like eyes glitter and his cheeks became pink like cotton candy.

That is when Rilliane has discovered Gakushu one of cutest traits, his love for sweets that only recently surfaced because he was never really allowed such things as a child. To be denied of such goodness!

Luckily Arthur took a photo of this moment and promise to give Rilliane a copy, she is going to apart of the diary now. Somehow Lucia and Ivan as gotten involved in this later on. By the way Lucia
took on the role of aunt and Ivan took the role of uncle.

Later on after that discovered trait, they found another trait which is his skills in soccer and it was adorable as well. When they (just Gretel and Arthur) often 'checked' on him as he went undercover as a student at his Father's school and saw him practicing on his own bouncing the ball with his head. They could see the determination he put and found it was one of the few things he enjoyed. And that sport uniform was cute as well.

They were also happy when Gakushu made a friend his age, Ren Sakakibara when he started his first year at Junior High. Dare I say his first real friend although in terms of human relationships of course.

The two quickly took a photo of this moment and it is their prized secret, they don't have to share every photo with Rilliane now do they?

"Now this is a photo when he just got his beginner glasses." The two blondes said as they show that photo to Rilliane of his first day while Gakushu was eating his cake.

Now back to the present day to the karaoke bar and room 5.

Rilliane was pondering of how to get more accurate information because Gakushu's voice recording watch won't cut it. They are going to need some visual insight as like Gakushu, Rilliane was having a hard time of swallowing the idea of the yellow octopus alien who may kill all life on Earth. Even when she was give the report, she sent in Gakushu just to confirm it.

Gakushu was onto his third slice of cake while the other two Lucia and Ivan went back to their horrible singing. This time, the song is 'The Hero! Set Fire to the Furious Fist'.

"Gakushu, do you think you can record every single detail of what does on in that classroom." Gakushu didn't bother to explain the details of the government in on the class since the watch has the information anyway. He just want to enjoy his cake in peace and avoid an irritating headache.

"I can try but I have to code it to avoid suspicious since it is supposed to be an international secret apparently." Gakushu suggested but the singing suddenly stopped, Lucia and Ivan turned their heads to their peers.

"You do know we're here right you know?" Lucia said with a blank look and Ivan had the same face as well.

Ivan continued, "We were a part of the secret police who also specialised in secret surveillance in our day."

"Have you not seen the film The 'Lives of Others' with the bugging scene?" Of course since the film was German that Lucia mentioned it.

"Well that is one thing scratched off the list." Rilliane cheered, the two alcoholics went back to sing "One punch!" While Gakushu continued to eat his cake in thought.

'Can the octopus even spot the wiring and tabs?' However quickly he remember seeing the technology built by Gretel on her spare time. 'But he is against Grim Reaper technology where they are wristwatch back in the Victorian era.' He remembered being told that someone from the Gretel and Arthur's Branch had modified their Death Scythe as a Chainsaw during said Victorian era.

'Didn't I see a functional replicate of that Marvel character's equipment in Gretel's room? Falcon was
Chapter Summary

It is both a sad and humorous chapter this time and Gakushu's love for sweets.

Class-E

Today's the day, today is the day that Gakushu is now a new student of Class-E.

Gakushu woke up early in the morning, 7:00 AM to not get to school early but to get himself calm before the humiliation he would be subjected to. Also to avoid his father too.

He just need that slice of cake or any sort of sweets for the morning to jumpstart a very long day. And spending time with Gretel and Arthur later after school can help as well. Rilliane is on her shift today.

He wears his school uniform neatly and precise with his school bag in his hand, inside the bag are his books and glasses protected in a case. Just in case when he ever wanted to disguised himself whenever he is out somewhere.

His phone beeped, he received an email by Ivan. He turns on his smartphone which is customised to his liking like his clothing, Death Scythe and glasses.

'We have completed the bugging at 1:00 AM in under 20 minutes. Here is the where the wiring, cameras and tabs are placed. I and Lucia Mühe will be in charge of this surveillance don't worry.

-Ivan Ivanov.'

If by any chance that anyone questions why his phone is more advanced, he can give the excuse of being a prodigy. It is half true as he is taking a course in the Technology department with Rilliane always exceeding in it. Not as good as Gretel's or Arthur's but in their words, "We have 200 years of experience" in attempts to make the boy feel better.

By the way, he watched the film The Lives of Others mentioned by Lucia yesterday and it was good. He found it cool when Wiesler and a team of Stasi members bugs Dreyman's apartment in under 20 minutes. He can already imagine Ivan and Lucia acting out from that very scene but in a two-person team instead.

Gakushu changed the locking system of his room that only being that it can only be opened from the inside to prevent his father from entering not that man has tried. So the only way to exit the room is by the window and his room is on the second floor, too easy. The strawberry-blonde boy has jumped off a skyscraper during an exercise period when he was ten before, this is nothing because he is a reaper after all.

We are immortal beings of course.... That is our punishment.

Anyway, Gakushu leaped off from his room and walked down the streets to find the nearest café which is not too far from the school. What he didn't notice was that Nagisa was in that café eating his breakfast and was at a position where he can see Gakushu side but Gakushu can't see the blue-haired
'Is that Asano-san?' Nagisa thought he was seeing things but then again it is early in the morning which is kind of expected for the perfect student. He already imagined of the strawberry-blonde boy ordering something like a black coffee on its own with no sugar similar to his father.

"Can I have a mocha with five sugars and a strawberry macaroon please?" Apparently Nagisa was wrong, you do learn something every day? What surprised him next was the shock expression of the male cashier taking in the order and the manager who he just came to the front.

'Is he using his persuasive powers like his father?' It is what they say, like father like son Nagisa thought worriedly.

When Gakushu receives his order, he found that instead of one macaroon that he has set of six. He tried to pay for the extra sweets but the manager said it was free of charge. As soon as the boy left the café, Nagisa overhears the conversation of the two workers.

"So cute… so cute…" Eh…?

"It's a good thing that we gave him the extra macaroons, I hope he comes again…"

'I guess I can't really judge a book of its appearance or who the father is.' Nagisa thought as he finishes his breakfast.

Now back to Gakushu as he arrived at Kunugigaoka Junior High-school, he couldn't tell Class-A that he was now transferred to the End Class even if he was getting to get purposefully. Especially to Ren, his first friend. The human part inside of him feels shame for losing but his reaper side knows that it was for the mission.

The news travel fast to the Virtuosos and the four has been texting Gakushu like mad and Ren was the one who texted and to call him the most. For now, Gakushu will cut ties from the four because eventually they will leave him behind alone because he can never die.

Grim Reapers are immortal beings, Gretel and Arthur is a prime example of it who continuously worked after 200 years after their suicide.

Until the day I am forgiven, I must work hard and continuously observe people's death. That was what I was taught the moment I became a Grim Reaper when I work up in that room.

This mean eventually he has to judge Ren Sakakibara and see his regrets as he dies. Forever separated as Ren is a human and can be reincarnated while Gakushu is a Grim Reaper who will work until his forgiveness is given by God. He too will eventually will see his father's memories and maybe find why he turn out the way he is.

It is best to distance from everyone else that is human of course… He snacked on his sweets to fill in the guilt building up inside of him.

You will leave me, eventually… Everyone one will one day…

As he walked up the mountain steps, he never felt tired on bit even with the weather that can make anyone else collapsed. He looks around and seeing many trees on the mountain, maybe the nature aspect would help him to 'fit in' as he always loves nature. That is where he chosen to die after all…

Awaiting on top is the assistant and PE teacher Mr Karasuma who escorted the boy into the building that was housing Class-E. Gakushu held in small green knife in his sleeves for some safety measures,
he was escorted into the Teacher's lounge and sitting on the old sofa. There he was given his timetable and some extra information about his alien teacher, then the bell ring to signal the start of the day.

He stayed in the room long enough that everyone had settle in their class before heading out in the hallway, Mr Karasuma first went inside of the class to announcing a new student transferring and Gakushu stayed outside until he is called in.

He receives a text from Gretel, 'You will do fine.' The two blondes must be in the surveillance room to which he has yet knows of its location with the once members of the secret police.

\textit{I have to be fine anyway because that what everyone else expects of the Chairman's son.}

Gakushu bitterly smiled before having his face retain an emotionless mask.

'I am a human and not a Grim Reaper in this class.' Gakushu gave himself one last reminder.

\textit{There is no place for me to fit in.}

"We have a new student transferring here." Once those words left from Mr Karasuma's mouth, Class-E went into a frenzy.

"We are getting a new student! Is he sent by the government?"

"Why do you think it's a he!? It could be a she!"

"Another assassin?"

The class excitedly discussed on their new student with Nagisa having an odd feeling outside of the class and Karma just stay silent with a cheeky grin.

"He is not an assassin but a student like you." Karasuma said, "Please come in." That was the signal for Gakushu Asano to enter the room. Immediately the expected reaction occurred.

Karma was laughing his ass off while Nagisa was more terrified of Gakushu's father, to be sent here just because Gakushu got three marks off from the exams overall. That is beyond harsh!

Gakushu ignoring the rest of cries of the students and focused on Karma who is still laughing with a glare. 'Even if I'm dead, people like you always get on my nerves.'

After catching his breath, "Welcome to Class E Second-place, I never thought that the Chairman would see in his precious son in a class of hopeless cases." Then the room went silent once more as the students were fearing for the possibility of World War Three.

'Stop provoking me Karma.' Gakushu really wanted to punch the nearest wall or tree.

"Now, now Karma-kun." Korosensei has finally entered the class surprising the strawberry-blond boy although he didn't show it, "I know that we don't have a good history with Asano-"

Korosensenei paused as he looks down to find one of his tentacles missing, the top part missing to be precise. The class quietly stared at their teacher and to where the door is to see the green knife with his yellow tentacle. Then the class look back at Gakushu who stayed quiet.

'When did he threw the knife?' The collected thoughts of the class.
'Shit! I almost give myself away, just make up an excuse it was just a reflex.' Gakushu thought as he was internally screaming while keeping his calm appearance.

"I'm so sorry that I startled you Asano-kun!" Korosensei cried out and sweating, he already held the green knife in his hand-tentacle giving back to the boy and re-attaching his tentacle. "Now, Asano-kun is now a part of Class-E and I expect you all to welcome him."

Before there was some outcry, Karasuma steps in "Gakushu Asano would be very helpful, whether you like it or not the Government has approved of him."

"He does know material arts." Yuuma Isogai suggested and some are muttering in agreement of this especially after seeing Gakushu's knife work "He can help us in schoolwork too."

"Don't tell me you have already forgiven this bastard." Terasake called out, "He was the reason why you were almost expelled! He even had the other guy fired!"

"I know that but-" Isogai was about to finish his sentence but Gakushu joined in the conversation.

"You mean that guy? He made such awful cakes." As soon Gakushu spoke he quickly shut his mouth and quickly paled a bit and asked the alien teacher, "I'm going to sit at the front." And he did some on the far right of the room where also he was seated next to Karma.

'Not again!' Gakushu thought, laying out his books and hope that class would begin very quickly.

Isogai was surprised by his comment and remembered after that 'guy' was fired, more people came to the restaurant.

"Now that is out of the way, we should start the lesson." Korosensei said and first period which was physics has started.

Finally Gakushu can see what the class was like and see how they managed to improve so much, the lessons are to other people's eyes are fun but at the same time educational. This completely contrasts from the main school building where teachers just went by from the text book.

Thank God that Karma is more focused on his work!

Although it helps when the teacher happens can travel as 20 Mach speed.

It is good for Rilliane and the department because the floods of teenaged reapers are filling the hallways. Almost all were transferred to many parts of the world that now the English Branch no longer has the problems of being understaffed, it was then replaced for being overstaffed. They are trying to find ways to change the education system mainly in parts of Asia where many suicides happen due to school.

Class here is much friendlier even when they are learning. Gakushu noticed some writing inside of his notebook's cover, it was Rilliane's writing.

'Just to help you get through class, Gakushu-kun.

There was a boy who couldn't find his future,

He walks past a lost twin and a once king,

They said to him 'we can take you on the path'

Walking through the English plains,
The two companions started to sing to the boy,
To which he joined along happily.

They walked past a wolf and an agent,
They said to him ‘we know where to go’

Walking through a torn down wall,
The two companions started to talk about their experiences to the boy,
To which he talks about his story.

They walked past a police officer,
He said to him ‘I know someone who can help you.’

Walking through the snow,
He asked what the boy was trying to find,
To which the boy answered, ‘my future.’

They walked past an artist,
She said to him ‘Have you find it’

The boy answered ‘No’.

The artist smiled ‘We can help you find your future.’

‘We are looking for our futures as well’ she said.

The boy smiled, ‘Let us find it together.’

The eight now friends stayed with the boy,
Even if time ends,
The artist painted the next path,
As long as it takes,
We will be by your side until the very end.’

Rilliane was always good in poetry, it reminds him of Ren almost. He continued to read her poem as it gave him a calming effect and barely noticeable smile. It's nice of how Rilliane each have the group take on a role, Gretel as the lost twin as she is missing her other half while Arthur is the lost king in referenced to King Arthur. Or how the torn down wall was represented the Berlin Wall for Lucia and her fiancé, how the snow represented the harsh winters of Russia for Ivan.

It was an easy and simple poem to understand but it made him calm nevertheless.

He didn't need to do the school work because he already completed it in under 7 minutes.
To pass the time, he looked back in to past. He remembered the time when she got drunk because she tried to keep up with Lucia and Ivan. In her drunken state, she told Gakushu that she was always terrible in science and math. To only make up for it is her talents in the arts, she was a prodigy in that field but her parents weren't happy about it.

Even if she won many international awards and recognition, it never pleased her parents. Her one regret is leaving someone behind when she consumed the poison.

Gakushu assumed that someone was very important going from a logical route, he never dived deeper into her story because he felt bad of just hearing her story without consent. Alcohol does things to you. Even though we have a 'sleepover' night to bond with Gretel, Arthur, Lucia, her husband, Ivan and Rilliane where each told their stories. It was still with consent and possibly he doesn't know the full story.

It was where he learnt that Gretel along her twin rightfully named Hansel were musical and art prodigies before the Victorian Era started. They later found Arthur playing the piano at the orphanage and begged for their parents to have the boy after seeing his handiwork. The parents agreed on the conditions that Arthur will became their own servant and learn the way of a gentleman to which he quickly adapted. It all went downhill when Hansel died in a carriage accident, Gretel struck with grief hanged herself and after Arthur found her body hanging in Hansel's room surrounded by photos of Hansel.

*She was missing half of herself and wanted be whole again.*

Arthur too took his life by stabbing himself with a sword after releasing Gretel of her noose so he can die by her side while surround by photos of her twin.

*He would protect her in the next life especially after his failure.*

Never to be reunited with their third member of the trio, the two who are the oldest in the group work hard in hopes to see Hansel or his reincarnated form once more.

It was where he learnt of Lucia and her fiancé now husband when the GDR was still around. Lucia's husband nicknamed Wolfie was an actor who was displeased of his government. Lucia tried her best as a Stasi officer which at the time Wolfie didn't know, tried to save him through her connections and false reports. Lucia fell in love with the actor after seeing him perform for the first time and as same for Wolfie when he saw her in the audience. She was supposed to be monitoring on the actor but instead they engaged. It all went downhill when Wolfie was blacklisted meaning that he can no longer perform or act.

*What is an actor if he can't act? He is nothing.*

Eventually Wolfie took his own life by jumping in front of a car, Lucia after seeing the news of her lover's death, it broke her. His death was caused by the ones she was working for, the system she was protecting was the reason why he was dead. After losing the being that brought her so much purpose and life, she took a loaded pistol to her head and shot herself.

*Now reunited in tragic love story, like Romeo and Juliet.*

Now the two are reunited in the Grim Reaper realm and are oddly happy again.

It was where he learnt of Ivan back before the Soviet Union was dissolved, when he was a top ranked KGB officer who once truly believed that the system he worked hard for and to protect. Until he saw the corruption in the Party one day and was quickly disillusioned especially after seeing the
living conditions of its citizens. Feeling that he needed to repent for his crimes and sins was to be paid through his blood and death, he slashed his wrist until his bled to dead in his room.

*After one punishment after another.*

He made a friend with Lucia and Wolfie first as all came from similar backgrounds, living in a Totalitarian society.

These are their stories.

After finishing his school work, he started on his German work set by Lucia until Korosensei stand in front of him. "Asano-kun, did you already finished your work?"

Gakushu slightly flinched and looked up the see the yellow mass, he looked around to see copies of Korosensei helping the other students. "Yes, I didn't want to disrupt you."

"Is this work from outside of school?" The teacher asked,

"Yes, I must work hard Korosensei." Gakushu bluntly answered like the saying of the Grim Reaper goes, *I must work hard and continuously until the day I am forgiven.*

Korosensi sighed to this, "Asano-kun, I know that is the way you have been taught but you don't have to be perfect you know." Gakushu stayed silent, "Making mistakes is a part of growing up and is the proof of you going up, you shouldn't be ashamed of your mistakes."

How can Gakushu reply to this? He stared in disbelief at the yellow octopus, what does he know about me? You of all people don't know anything.

"Holding into your pride will only get yourself hurt." It didn't though, he felt no pride in that forest.

"Thank you for your concern but that won't be necessary." Gakushu answered like the Chairman's son as he is, he doesn't really need help from this class. He has his own peers from the reaper department who won't leave his side.

"You need to lean on more people. I know the system of the main building. You need to learn the importance of teamwork is you want to assassinate me~." I can easily kill you once I receive my orders.

*It would only serve for me to break more ties.*

"But I'm different from everyone else...." Gakushu muttered a whisper that only Korosensei and unfortunately Karma heard.

*I'm not a human, I'm just acting like I am a human.... I am what others see as the God of Death.*

"Baby steps Asano-kun, baby steps. I am here to teach you what you father wasn't able to here in Class-E." The after image of the teacher's from his super speed image disappeared leaving behind a quiet strawberry-blonde haired blond continuing his German work with some bitterness on his face for a small moment.

Karma would have written off the bitterness of the teacher meddling into Gakushu's business and trying to help him which doesn't pare with the boy's personality. He could have written off of Gakushu Asano being an arrogant bastard as always who doesn't need help or looking down on others because he's 'different' from everyone.
However that quick moment of bitterness of his face wasn't rage but instead his face was filled with sadness and regret. A sad smile etched on his face before returning to an emotionless mask as he continued hard on his work. It was like Gakushu Asano felt that he cannot be saved.

That small moment was sketched into Karma's mind for a long time throughout the first two periods.

*If only you had save me that day then maybe I be the student you wanted Korosensei…*

Gakushu reading the poem again he titled 'Future', he wanted to write forgiveness instead because that is what everyone in that short story was actually trying to find. Everyone in that poem was a reaper he knows, working hard to receive their forgiveness if it ever happens at all.

He looks at his new watch and seeing that it is only a few minutes before break time comes. Maybe he can finally see the End Class PE lesson?

'I saw the plans (blueprints more like) of a flag war, I should prepare first during break.'

'I remembered making some tunnels here…' Oh that, he doesn't remember why he did it but vaguely remembered that beer was involved thanks to 'aunt' and 'uncle'. Be thankful that it wasn't stronger as the two are into binge-drinking.

"In Germany, you can drink at 13."

"In Russia, it was considered a soft drink."

Whenever in rare cases or when he would be subjected to drinking games by Lucia and Ivan or dress-up by Gretel (sometimes with Aruthur) that the strawberry-blonde haired boy would often hide behind someone or under their shirts. Arthur would act as his shield most of the time.

This is when the group found another cute trait of Gakushu but that is story for another time.
Physical Education

Finally PE class came rolling around and everyone is suit up for the physical activities.

Gakushu swear to God he can already hear the cheers from the surveillance team cheering him on like a doting family with Gretel taking photos while Arthur was on the sidelines for her Gakushu diary. No matter how many times that he destroys that diary, more copies seemed to just pop out to the point Gakushu just given up on erasing its existent.

Gakushu felt a shiver going down his spin when he went to the changing room for PE, he suddenly felt uncomfortable.

'Don't worry me and Arthur are looking into it.
-Gretel.'

That didn't made him feel better, just because you act and look 15 years old doesn't mean that you are 15 years old! Gretel, you are almost 200 years old!

He decided to change outside and he did so during break time. Gakushu receives another text quickly after but this time from Arthur.

'We blurred that room out if you were worried.
-Arthur.'

Thank you Arthur! He sighed in relief and his violet eyes sparkle with happiness. The same amount of happiness whenever he eats cake! (Which is a lot.)

Once everyone else arrived outside, Gakushu could finally see how the class was able to improve so much in their physical activities in just a year. It was lack-lusting to him to say the least, for humans it is very impressive but he was not human. The only reason because he lost the Sport Festival was because he was under Rilliane's strict orders to act was 'human.'

It got him some quality cake from New York afterwards but he was also covered in tears by Rilliane who spend the day apologising to him. She knew it was difficult for him yet he still went by her orders, she spread the next couple of days in a depressed state until Gakushu decided to cheer her up is by writing a song about her when he was called to the Lyrics Karaoke Bar. Good thing it didn't continued on when he was ordered to be transferred in Class-E, he was already covered in tears from Lucia and Ivan.

Where is Wolfie when you need him to control Lucia and Ivan (Although it doesn't work 100% of the time when alcohol is involve)? He was the best person to do so because he doesn't need to do anything in the first place. Just have him in the scene and Lucia and Ivan would be all over him acting overprotective. Wolfie was too nice to say the least…. Why can't he be in the Retrieval Division like the group?

These PE activities are only basic warm-ups to him. Back when he started as a Grim Reaper, he had rigorous training which included jumping off a skyscraper when he was 10 years old. Or when he had to dodged numerous of bullets. Dancing practices with Arthur and Gretel are more difficult than this.
He quickly snapped out from his thoughts when the PE teacher, Mr Karasuma wanted to assess his physical progress. He quickly proven to be talented, strong and fast. Gakushu was trying his best to hold back his strength because he already killed enough trees already (101 trees and counting and no he does not have a temper problem!). Grim Reaper strength is much greater than human strength which is why they are thought of as 'godlike' by some people with abilities to see them. Like how some people can see ghost or demons.

Which is why they were sometimes given the title of 'God of Death.'

Nagisa and Karma noticed Gakushu sparring with Karasuma-sensei, they thought it was strange for the boy not to show off of how perfect he was. It was also strange of how he is treating all of this warm-up as a dance routine, with the fluent and graceful movements as he shifts and turned around to dodge Karasuma's attacks.

After testing of Gakushu abilities and was satisfied. Karasuma called the class together "Since Korosensei left for some Vid convention in America, he wanted me to test on your teamwork in a flag game."

"Teams will be split into groups of three." Gakushu was then teamed up with Nagisa, Karma and four other students that Gakushu wasn't bothered to remember. They are the red team. Everyone else was separated into the other two teams and the game started once each team found their flag.

"Ne… Gakushu-san." Nagisa turned around but see no strawberry-blonde boy anywhere although there was a note on the ground that just reads 'Going to get the flags.'

"Looks like Second Place went on ahead." Karma said, looking vaguely amused as he picks up the note, "Wanting to play the Lone Wolf."

Terasake muttered something rude about the boy and the rest were busy protecting their flag and scouting for the two opposing teams.

Six minutes went by with no action. Suddenly Isogai came to their 'territory' but upon seeing their one flag made Isogai confused. "You didn't steal the flag?" He asked with confusion, he was a part of the white team.

Another person, a tiny green haired girl named Kayano, came forward. She was in the blue team and has the same facial expressions as Isogai, "You too Isogai?"

It was clear to the other teams thought the red team had stolen their flag. But the red team hadn't made their move yet. The only person that was uncounted for was Gakushu Asano but he is up against several assassinator trainees on his own.

From the red team's viewpoint that the two thought to have stolen the other team's flags although they were just about to plan it after checking the surround area.

"Where Gakushu-san?" Isogai asked seeing the red team was missing one member.

"He went on ahead to get the flags." Teraska said and realised that the boy could somehow managed to steal the flags in only a couple of minutes and without being detected. Isogai and Kayano looked at each other as if they had the same thoughts, 'But we didn't see him…'"'Guys, I think your flag is stolen as well." Isogai pointed out and everyone stared of where the flag used to be leaving behind a flag. A small hole on the ground.

Eh…? When did that happen? And why does Nagisa sensed an odd presence below him…?
Suddenly from the direction to school where it harbours the End Class, a red flare was shot into the sky which signals that the game has already ended. A game of flag war which usually finishes in 20 to 30 minutes was done in only around 5 minutes.

Who won the game? Team Red has a feeling of who it is as unbelievable as it was.

Karma has a feeling that Gakushu was laughing at him for losing such a simple game, 'I will take back my spot Karma!' And it is pissing him off. When the entire class came back to the school grounds to find Gakushu Asano couching down and drawing with a stick along with Karasuma nodding to everything the boy says.

"And that's how I did it." Gakushu looked up to find the entire class staring at him and the flags behind him. All three of them. What was strange about this was that it was so uncharacteristic for Gakushu to be sitting like that like a 10 year old child. He are now captured half the hearts of Class-E already with little effort from the power of cuteness. "Oh, you're back."

"Did you get all of the flags Gakushu-san?" Isogai asked to the boy.

"Of course, who else could it be?" Gakushu answered as if it was the most obvious thing and then Korosensei came into the picture. Gakushu had seen him in class this morning and from pictures of him before but it didn't do the real thing justice.

Korosensei was huge with a globular yellow head and was almost blindingly bright yellow that may have not burn his eyes. His eyesight is already as worse as it is, I don't want your horrid colour making it worse. Of course Gakushu couldn't let himself appear shocked, not even in front of a super-being because technically he himself is a supernatural being.

He will just treat him as any other teacher although he is internally screaming.

"Welcome back sir." The strawberry blonde haired boy said with a formal smile. Korosensei turned to him.

"Ah- Hello Asano-kun, have everyone finished the game already?" Gakushu saw the alien held some bags of stuff he brought from Vid-con.

"Yes, Asano-san did it in just 6 minutes." Karasuma answered as he was recording the grading report. Gakushu has risen from his sitting position.

"It was easy, I saw the plans of the game and changed where the flags were positioned in the teacher's lounge." Gakushu quickly answered

People wanted to cry out 'cheater!' but it still didn't explain of how he managed to get the flags in the first place without being detected. Korosensei caught this on as well, as the boy can't travel at speeds of Mach 20.

"Asano-kun, how did you really do it?" The yellow teacher asked and everyone waited for his answer.

"I thought you would know Korosensei? DIdn't you know that there are a tunnel system here?"

"….There is?" The class chorused collectively. Now everyone was imagining Gakushu Asano walking in the dark tunnels to find where the flag is positioned and just pull it down. Just connecting the dots.

'So that is how he did it.'
"As an assassin, you must take everything you find to your advantage to increase your chances of survival and increase the success of the mission." Gakushu said, with a monotone voice as if he were reading from a textbook, "Isn't that right? At the same time, he was quoting of what he learnt in his reaping classes. Just swap the word Grim Reaper with assassin and make it human as possible.

Not like they know about that.

Gakushu was shocked to find the once yellow octopus now turned blue and was crying. "Asano-kun, I wanted you to learn the importance of teamwork and friendship!" He sobbed. Out of nowhere he took out his handkerchief to dry his tears, "That is not how you do it!"

This scene just reminds Gakushu of Gretel where out of nowhere makes the situation more dramatic. He remembered after his first day at Junior High when Ren became his friend.

'My little boy is growing up! He made his first friend that was around his age!' Or Rilliane sobbing when she is concerned about Gakushu 'Gakushu-kun! I'm sorry!'

Why did the group take on family roles again? Scratch that, I know the answer from the beginning.

"I do have friends, they are outside of school. They're just a little…. Older." Gakushu muttered to himself as he watched the scene unfolding. Although Arthur and Gretel made a bigger scene when he required Ren as his first friend his age.

He can't wait for the next period and he once again had an urge to eat cake.

In the surveillance room; Lucia, Ivan, Arthur and Gretel watched the scene playing in front of them.

"Is it hard to believe that I'm seeing a yellow octopus now turned blue?" Ivan exclaimed to the group as he watched in fascination.

"It's strange but it not the only strange thing I have seen." Arthur spoke while Gretel was writing in the Gakushu Diary of the moment where Gakushu said that he had friends.

"Really?" Lucia looked at the blonde teenagers, in her 40 years in the Grim Reaper Department that she never saw such a thing in her life. It can travel at 20 Mach speed for goodness sake!

"I forgot that you are younger, it is hard to tell because you look older." Gretel chirped while the German and Russia glanced at the girl would happens to be around 200 years old but retain the look of a 15 year old girl.

'Like you have the right to say that.'

"It was during when the Campania set sailed in the late 1880s where the undead created by a seceders named Undertaker which caused the most of the causalities." Gretel pointed out, "He did so by extending their Cinematic Records and adding fake ones. Making the body mistakenly believed that life is still continuing and boom! The undead were form, missing its soul. Basically acting like zombies."

Lucia and Ivan looked to Arthur to which he confirmed that the story was true, "I remembered something from Grell about a demon butler named Sebastian and a 13 year old Earl who happens to be the Queen's dog or something like that in that ship" Gretel pondered and the other two looks to Arthur to which again confirmed it to be true.

Ivan quickly gave a reason in a thick Russian accent, "But this is an alien! That event you said was
both done by a Grim Reaper and a Demon."

Gretel gave a shrug, "Maybe it is a human experiment that went incredibly wrong, humans are known to be adaptable." She closed the diary and was making her way out of the room. "I'm going to buy some cake for Gakushu-chan." Arthur soon followed her.

A bewildered German and Russian were left behind, still trying to wrap their head around both the undead with a demon butler and a being dubbed Korosensei.

At least the moon is fixed now, one less problem for them.

Back to Gakushu who was eating his lunch alone, he got a text from Gretel that we are having Black Forest Cake tonight. After eating his lunch, he then went to his snacks which is pudding today and then the thinking begins.

'Should I move out? I have a place back in the Department and it gives me the perfect excuse of moving out because it is was becoming uncomfortable with my father.' No need to hide majority of my secrets in that room.

He got another text from Ren which he promptly ignored and suddenly Karma and Nagisa appeared in through of him. Nagisa looked meek, Karma looked like Karma, well, Karma.

The blue-haired boy asked "Do you need if we sit here."

Gakushu quickly gave his answer "Why not? There is no-one here." He cast a look at warily Karma.

"Take a picture, it lasts longer Second-place."

"If I stared at you long enough then maybe you set on fire."

"Please don't fight." Nagisa said, acting as the peace keeper he quickly changed the subject, "So Gakushu-san how did you find the tunnels."

"During break time when I was exploring and I didn't want to change in that room." Gakushu shuddered a bit that it wasn't noticeable to the two, Gretel's complex is terrifying enough as it is. She had to take the role of elder sister although he also sees it to fill in her missing half.

Everyone desired to be whole; it includes him as well using their love to fill in of where his father's love supposed to be. All living beings instinctively try to fill up whatever they are lacking.

*When our bodies are wounded, we try to close it up.*

*When we feel lonely, we seek a companion to fill up the emptiness.*

He is no different from Gretel and he doesn't mind this. Because he doesn't mind this friendship they held, it feels warm and comforting. It is definitely real.

Korosensei went off somewhere meaning that the entire school day is cancelled, Karasuma asked Gakushu not to tell his father about this as he was also busy at meetings with the government. He stayed around because he likes nature and wanted to sit around as he was reading his Brecht book borrowed from Rilliane before his early shift came.

"Aw~ Daddy's little boy is embarrassed, he doesn't want to change in front of me." Karma chirped, "I wonder why." Gakushu called out, sarcastically taking a jab at Karma. Ignoring the red haired boy
by going back to his poetry. Karma knew that this isn't of the old Gakushu would act when he was in Class-A. What Karma didn't know is that Gakushu's pudding is helping him to control his temper.

Back in Class-A, Gakushu remembered of how he couldn't eat his sweets due to his father's prying eyes. No wonder why he was unbearable to most of Class-E because he doesn't have anything to control his temper so Class-E kind of became a target for his anger. Even if Gakushu cannot express how he is enjoying his pudding.

Nagisa quickly again changed the subject, "I heard that we are going to an excursion soon."

"Really? Why?" Karma asked and excited.

"Class was getting boring so Sensei suggested to go out and have fun together. I don't know what it is yet..." However Nagisa knows of why Korosensei is planning, because he accidently overheard the teacher's plans.

'Gakushu, you will learn how to make friends!' Nagisa heard this while Korosensei was planning the fun day.

While the red-haired and blue-haired boys conversed with each other, Gakushu checked his phone quickly for his shift of soul collecting.

"I have to go now, I see you tomorrow." Gakushu said curtly, as if he were at a business meeting. He quickly walked away from the two, he already had his bag in hand he sprinted down the mountain to level ground before Karma and Nagisa even had the chance to react.

Once away from prying eyes, he took out his Grim Reaper uniform designed by Gretel, a single black leather and double-breasted hooded coat with black gloves to match the colour of his clothing. It is only button down to his waist to allow flowing and easier movement. Taking off his coloured contacts and replacing it with his black-framed glasses to reveal his true eye colour.

*Today's shift starts early.*

It was manageable as he collects each soul, not too many people die in this town which equals less work for him. During the holidays rarely he would be transferred America to gain more experience but because he was a prodigy, he learnt it much quicker. He would be lucky to collect even five souls a day due to the overpopulation of reapers although Rilliane has told him that he was one of the very few rookies to a collect this many souls.

Today he is doing it alone, jumping off from building to building to reach to each soul is much quicker. He travelled through the day like a silent shadow, not to be seen even in board daylight. Slowly the afternoon with the bright blue sky gradually turn orange.

'Watabe Yoshimasa, born in October 17th 1957. Died from heart attack on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' He stamps on their profile picture 'complete'.

'Nemoto Rina, born in July 6th 1991. Died from injuries and blood loss sustained by car accident on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' He stamps on their profile picture 'complete' again.

'Yoshizawa Yoshimune, born in May 21st 2000. Died from injuries to the heart on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' He stamps on their profile picture 'complete' once more.

'Sasada Sumino, born in May 1st 1987. Died from complications during childbirth on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' He stamps on their profile picture 'complete' again.
Gakushu watches and observe each soul's Cinematic Records of their life story to their death to see if they deserved to die or not. When he stabs them of his key-shaped Death Scythe. Modify and designed by the one and only Gretel to resemble a key from that game series she loves to play.

He doesn't mind this because it was convenient whenever he reverts back to a smaller state, acting like a key-chain for his phone. The key or so he was told by Gretel is a replica of the Oblivion key, she showed him a picture of the key and thought it was pretty cool. It suited his uniform so why not, it lighten the mood.

Death Scythes are used to sever his or her memories and souls from their bodies so he can guide them to their resting place. Technically he transport them to the 'judging' department where other reapers see where the souls would go. Sometimes the souls would reincarnate. Humans who can be removed on his retrieval list when Death comes to judge them to have been one 'Who has potential to beneficial for this world'. Numbers of humans with this sort of value are very few to none.

'One more soul and I'm done.' Gakushu thought to himself, checking his list to find the name 'Nozaki Sora.' It was a picture of a young boy, Gakushu quickly learn to accept that death will come eventually to anyone no matter what age or gender you are. He can't let this affect him, he seen many people died both young and old.

It was his duty of course, as a Grim Reaper.

Gakushu looked to see the sky slowly covered in a blanket of grey clouds, "Looks like it is going to rain." He spoke to himself as he walked with his Death Scythe in hand.

This is his final soul but Nozaki Sora was nowhere to be found. Gakushu was in an alley-way where the boy is supposed to die. Suddenly a body plummeted from the build above. One second it was suspended in the mid-air, the next the body had smashed into the ground. The sickening sound of bones shattering filled Gakushu's ears.

Sora had landed right in front of him.

Death by suicide. Up until now he had ever seen someone commit suicide in his retrieval list. It shock Gakushu to his core and seeing the mangles body who was barely recognised as human anymore, it caused him to almost vomit his lunch out. Quickly out of reflex, he places his gloved hands to his mouth and breathed in heavily.

Unlike his own death that was 'clean', this was sickening. The stench of blood is heavy in the air as he walked closer to the body and accidently stepped into the puddle of blood seeping out of the mangled body.

By why does this boy's death affect Gakushu so much? He has seen many people die in horrible ways, is it because this person committed suicide? Because he had done this to himself?

It is because he actually saw the last moments of the boy, seeing the eyes staring right at him?

Quickly the images of that forest flashed into his mind, seeing the bottle of sleeping pills in his hand.

Why did Nozaki Sora kill himself…? Well Gakushu Asano is going to find out. Taking his Oblivion key and stabbing it into the boy's bleeding body to reveal the boy's Cinematic Records. One by one the memories of his childhood and the day he graduated from Junior High he observes.

Very quickly he found the reason. Bullied to the point of insanity.

"Nozaki Sora, born in August 3rd 1999. Died from leaping off a building to his death on XX
Gakushu's emotions started to waver, it was the first suicide he saw.

And like him, Sora is going to wake up in that room to hear the news that he will become a Grim Reaper as punishment for his suicide.

*His unforgivable act...* Gakushu quickly walked out of the alley and seeing nobody in a radius of the vicinity. He pulled his hood up and walked down the streets and it started to rain.

Rilliane stood in the middle of his path with a sad look, wearing her usual uniform the black suit soaked in the rain. Her almond brown hair that reaches to her waist usually held in a low pony-tail is damped by the rain.

He handed his book-list to her. "Gakushu-chan…"

It was like Rilliane knew of what Gakushu just saw, "It's okay, remember? This is my punishment…" Gakushu looks up to see the same emotion in her eyes that he harbours. Rilliane said nothing.

Gakushu bore a bitter and sad smile as he chuckles, "This is our punishment." Slowly Rilliane wrapped him in her arms like a mother.

"It's okay, you can let it out." Rilliane hushed to him and slowly darkness consumed the boy, this hug feels so warm. He felt a kiss on his forehead before he went to sleep.

What does his father's feels like?

He never told anyone but he always had dreams of his father hugging him, he can deny it all he want but deep inside it all he ever wanted. He can already see the flower fields of white daisies, why does it feels so nostalgic?

*That is what is need to make him whole, his father's love...*

*Like how Gretel needed Hansel to make her whole.*

Rilliane hold the boy in her arms, it reminded so much of the person she left behind when she consumed the poison. Ivan soon came to the two, carrying the boy as the two walked off back to the Grim Reaper department. It was another day to introduced new reapers to their new roles.

Ivan carried the boy gently so he doesn't wake the child up, Rilliane hold a strange golden key in her hand and using it on a random door. It opens a door to the Grim Reaper Realm and the three entered.

For a long time, it took Gakushu to learn how to cry again. It was one of the teachings from his father that look the longest to overwrite. How many more teachings from that man that stayed in him?

Yes, Rilliane remembered it like clockwork. All of the seven of their group knows;

*It took Gakushu a day to accept his role as a Grim Reaper.*

*It took him a week to discover his love for sweets.*

*It took him a month to graduate his classes.*

*It took him a month and a day to make his first (human) friend.*
It took him two months to learn how to smile for real again.

It took him six months to have the word 'friend' to be easily said.

It took him a year to learn how to ask for help again.

It took him two years to learn how to cry and to hug again.

And it took him four years to perfect his act as the Chairman's perfect son.

Gakushu felt so small in her arms, just like her little brother she left behind all those years ago. For Gakushu, he forgot about being strong and let himself to be comforted as he slept.

Gakushu saw darkness until a voice called out to him, "-kun." Slowly opening his eyes. He could just see Arthur, getting up to only to be stopped halfway. "You blacked out Asano-kun, we are at your now in the Department."

"Gretel took over your night shift." Arthur said giving him a glass of water, "Rilliane and Ivan carried you here and Lucia is taking over your shifts for the week."

Gakushu had heard of stories from his peers of their first suicide, some might say that he took it well than others. Gretel broke down after seeing her first suicide, Arthur went insane for a couple of hours and many others like Ivan and Rilliane shut off in their rooms for several days.

"What time is it?" Gakushu whispered

"It's 9:30 PM Asano-kun, you been sleeping for over 5 hours." Arthur replied, "You need more rest."

Gakushu laid back to see the white ceiling, "Do you mind reading something for me?" He slowly pointed to his bag, "There should be a poem by Rilliane."

Arthur complied with his request, "Rilliane I heard before her death was internationally famous for her work."

"I know..." Gakushu whispered and Arthur gave him a smile, patting his strawberry-blonde hair softly. Oh how he wanted his father to do the same for him... He slowly drifts away as Arthur converted the poem into a story instead.

"There was a boy who couldn't find his future, he walked past a lost twin and once king. They said to the boy 'we can take you on the path' and they walked through the English plains as the two companions started to sing, the boy happily joined along.

Then they walked past an agent and her wolf and said to the boy 'we know where to go' and they walked through a torn down wall as the two companions tells of their life experiences, the boy told them his story.

They soon walked past a police officer and said to the boy 'I know someone who can help you; and they walked through the snow as he asked the boy what he was finding, the boy answered 'my future'.

Finally they walked past an artist and said to the boy 'Have you find it?' and the boy answered no. She smiled and promised the boy that we all will help him find his future, together... The boy smiled and nodded to his new friends. The artist then painted a new path for the group of friends to follow.

Even if time comes to an end, as long as it takes, we will be by your side until the very end."
Until your future comes true.

Once Arthur finishes the story with some extra details, he looks to see Gakushu sleeping soundly with a sad smile on his face. "May you dream tonight, Asano-kun." Arthur whispered and left the room quietly and turning off the lights.

"Even if you cry, you often do so alone due to your father's lingering teachings. You can never allow yourself to appear weak in front of others." Once Arthur closed the door behind him, next to him was Gretel with a sad smile as well.

Gakushu had a dream that night. That he was with his father, Ren and his group of reapers together are playing in the daisy meadows and happy.

His wanted future....

And a single tear escaped.
Dance! Dance! Dance!

Gakushu has many hobbies from soccer to guitar player, this is one of those hobbies.

When Gakushu was 11 Gretel suggest the two, Arthur and Gakushu to form both a band and dancing group. Gakushu thought it was a good idea because it can help him to have his physical level improved. He saw one time during the school holidays in a fighting tournament once every two months held by Department where Gretel and Arthur were up against two other reapers from the American department.

Gretel and Arthur easily beat the two into submission, he remembered when Gretel jumped up and down in her puffy dress cheering about of her victory. How the two almost seemed to gracefully shift their feet to dodge the opposition’s attacks and attack together as if the two can read each other's mind.

Gakushu was acting like a younger sibling who was in awe of his older sibling’s performance. Then again, Gretel and Arthur acted like the elderly siblings to the boy. The almost effortless jumps Gretel made as she spins in the air upside down and landed gracefully. The strong attacks from Arthur that was seemly looked weak at first.

Rilliane was busy helping out trainees in their graduations, Lucia and Wolfie are on a 'honeymoon' and Ivan was on a recon mission at the time. So Gakushu spent a lot of his time with the blonde pair.

Gretel suggested to form the band after seeing Gakushu playing 'Dance! Dance! Revolution!' on the hardest song on the hardest difficulty. This is when Gretel and Arthur once again has found another of Gakushu's cutest trait, his dancing. Bonus points to get him to dress up too.

That is where Gretel suggested to form a dancing and singing group. Gakushu can watch more closely of how they perform.

It started as a hobby with the two blondes. Which quickly escalated into a professional band, it was good for his exercise and to achieve fluent movement. It was also good to vent out his frustrations other than karaoke or sweets.

'Of course we have stage names that is why no-one human has discovered one of my many secrets; I'm Ichigo, Gretel is Hazel and Arthur is Earl Grey. We are doing this to influence the younger masses to not commit suicide while the Department are working on ways to change the education system. Rilliane sometimes write the songs.

Ivan suggested for Gakushu's stage name to be Ichigo because of his hair colour, how original I know.

We haven't performed on stage yet, we just upload the videos of their performances on YouTube. Gretel always handle with his clothing, designing the whole thing.' He wears his glasses (meaning no coloured contacts) and a blonde wig similar to the hair colour of the two when he takes on the Ichigo persona. Arthur had to overlook Gretel's design process to make sure that she doesn't make female clothing for Gakushu although some have slipped through the cracks of the blonde boy's watchful eyes.

However Gretel and Arthur wear coloured contacts instead, regaining the colour of the English
plains for their eyes.

Most of the time, the three compose the music. It is much easier when all three of the members are geniuses and the other two were musical prodigies back when they were once alive. Gakushu can play any instrument but prefers the guitar, Gretel likes playing the violin more and Arthur plays the percussions.

Gakushu likes to write short stories for his songs that usually last for around a minute and a half. Here is an example of his work:

*Down the halls I walk as avoiding the broken shards around me…*

*As I woke up for the day ahead of me, I am ready for my new day.*

*Every step I take, every tear I shed.*

*As I am standing here alone.*

*The pain slowly becomes numb as I step into the darkness.*

*As slowly I sink into darkness, I felt a kiss on my forehead.*

*Yes this is my new rebirth.*

*This is your new birthday, this is your rebirth!*  

*Oh little one, Oh little one… This is your rebirth!*  

*No matter the pain I feel, I feel the comfort from this warmth.*  

*This is my new birthday, this is my rebirth.*

*And as slowly the darkness fades away, the light shines blinds my eyes.*

He usually writes in class because he already knew of the content in class during school. Whenever he feels bored, he writes something in his notebook because he can't eat cake at school due to his father's influence at the school. It doesn't help that sweets help Gakushu's temper although he always deny it whenever his Grim Reaper friends mention this, especially Rilliane. Because you can't exactly just kick or punch a full-grown tree down in front of humans.

So somehow, Class-E became a target to control his temper while at school.

"I'm wondering how that building is still standing." Lucia spoke after witnessing the extent of the strawberry-blonde haired boy temper first hand. Gakushu has a difficult time of controlling his own strength and it is even harder when he supposed to act 'human.' And when his temper goes off, hell is unleashed as the saying goes.

Gretel hoped to have Gakushu's friend, Ren to act as the boy's anchor. They can't be there with Gakushu 100% of the time but that doesn't stop the two blondes adventures to 'check' on their 'younger sibling' during school most of the time. Ren one time accidently saw his notes and thought that he has some good ideas, Gakushu ended up listening to him talking about the arts. Gakushu didn't mind this, in fact he likes this about his friend.

It did reminded Gakushu of Rilliane for some odd reason, was it because of his smile or his passion for poetry?
'One day I was playing DDR with Ren after school at an arcade who was impressed of how I was getting all perfects with little effort. Gretel joined in the game in her 12 year old form after introducing herself as a friend Gakushu meet when she visited Japan from Europe.'

Gretel certainly looked the part with her short blond hair, her eyes though are instead green like emerald. Or what Gretel and Arthur like to describe it as green as the English plains. Like how Gakushu is using coloured contacts to mask away his reaper eyes and revert back to his human eyes, amethyst violet.

While wearing a wear summer dress with laces she personally designed and crafted. He can never forget how Ren's face turned into a tomato when Gretel greeted him by kissing him on both of his cheeks.

Ren was further impressed of how Gakushu and Gretel no matter what the two keep having draws in their games, someone who can complete with the perfect student. They were even completing on the most difficult song on the most difficult level. It made sense Ren if Gretel was just as talented as Gakushu to be friends in the first place.

Afterwards Gretel exchanged her number with Ren before the boy had to go home. "Why are you here Gretel and in that form?" Gakushu asked as the three exited the arcade. What three? Well Arthur hid in a corner so he cannot be seen by Ren so he can take photos.

"Can't your big sister see what kind friends you have? Ren is such a nice and cute boy." Gretel clapped her hands together, "I thought it would be more fitting if our band is around your age, Arthur agreed to be 14 for the group."

"Right Arthur." Gretel sang as she turned back and finally Arthur came out nodding to her words.

"Milady, I got the photos." Arthur said while holding his high-definition camera and was wearing more casual clothing but still was wearing his glasses.

Then Gretel puff her cheeks and pouted. "Arthur, I thought I told you that you will call me Gretel!" Gretel called out as she placed her hands on her hips.

"Sorry Mi- Gretel, it was out of habit." Arthur said, yes… A very old habit. He bowed slightly to Gretel.

Gretel patted his head and sighed, "I know." She turns to the strawberry blonde with a grin, "I thought up a new routine for us."

Gakushu checked his watch to see that he only has 45 minutes of free time, "Okay but I have to go home soon." By home he means the house he lives in where his father.

Gakushu can only practice a few times a week due to his dispatch and all the work piling up from school. So he must make the most of it, it is one of the rare things that is fun for him to do.

He wants to perfect it and it is not because of his father but because he wants to.

Now if only Gretel actually write age-appropriate songs for Gakushu to sing, "Why did you include 'make a sexual moan' at the beginning of the song Gretel!?" Gakushu yelled after reading the sheet with his face turning bright red as Gretel laughed. Arthur had his hands covering his face to find his blush after reading Gretel's new song.

"You are definitely a cinnamon roll, my little Strawberry." Gretel was rolling on the ground, laughing uncontrollably while Gakushu called out on out many of his nicknames made up from his
reaper colleagues.

Strawberry, Cinnamon Roll, Shuu or Shuuie and the list goes on.

Yes, Gretel definitely fits the role of big sister. The one who teases her younger sibling.

"Dance! Dance! Dance!" The three sang.

How long will this happiness last?
Rilliane was never smart on math or science but she tries at least.

When Gakushu was 13 years old, he tutors his senior and friend in the fields of Math and Science.

Rilliane is a senior to Gakushu by almost 6 years in terms of experience, her usual attire is a black suit that perfectly highlight her waist and chest. Her white collar shirt buttoned high and completing it is a black tie. Her long almond-brown hair flow freely with its length reaching down to her waist.

"Not again." Rilliane cried as she receives her test papers back, in the Grim Reaper Department you have classes like any other normal schools in the human world. But here it is done mainly to;

One is get into a specific division like the Forensics Division where obviously the sciences are needed.

Two to those who died young to get the experience of what they missed back when they were human.

Three is for the sake of it, it is going to be a long time before the day of forgiveness comes so what else to spend the huge amounts of free-time. Especially when the Department is overflowing with young reapers that soul collecting has been split to give everyone the best amounts of experiences.

Rilliane usually spends her time either writing literature, doing arts and craft, paint, read manga, play games, teaching young reapers, using her keys to go to other departments like the French or American one and tending to meetings or conferences. Adding on the list is to see how Gakushu is going after his school day ended.

She looks down at her vectors test marked and graded with 39%, she signed as she prepared herself to go to the paper room to shred her failures. 'How did Allen do this?'

Who's Allen? Allen was Rilliane's little brother she remembers fondly. He was a splitting image of Rilliane with almond brown hair but her some odd reason, she doesn't remember what eye colour she once had as a human.

She remembers how cute he was and how smart he was in almost everything, both in the arts and the academics. She felt complete then with her younger brother but the control of her parents drove her to commit suicide.

'I think he was 7 then?' Rilliane pondered to distract herself from the test results.

When Grim Reapers are reborn from humans who committed suicide, some do not have all of their memories or none of their previous memories whatsoever. Gakushu was one of the prime example
who retain majority if not all of his memories.

Why of all things that Rilliane can't remember is her human eye colour that probably her little brother Allen too possesses? All it does is adding insult to our injuries or to our punishments.

It had been a mystery since she was reborn as a Grim Reaper as punishment of her suicide, of all things she had forgotten. She just can't remember the eyes she once possesses, it wouldn't bother her so much if that it wasn't connect to her brother's eyes as well.

Does this mean that Allen too had the same colour as Rilliane's human eyes? Because of that, she can't remember his face anymore. When she try to create a mental image of her brother, there always seem to be a black mask covering his face.

In her state of thinking, she didn't noticed a person walking in front of her and accidently bumps into that someone causing her to drop her papers she was about to shred and burn. It was Gakushu she bumped into who came in the department to mainly grab his belongings.

"Ah Gakushu-chan!" And before Rilliane react or can pick up her papers, the strawberry-blond boy already picked up her graded test. As Gakushu scanned through the paper, Rilliane started to cry and snot came dripping down.

"Eh! Rilliane!" Gakushu called out, shocked by her sudden emotions and he was then hugged by his senior.

"I'm a failure!" Rilliane cried as she is squishing the life out of the boy while covering him in tears and her long almond-brown hair.

Gakushu muttered a 'help me' as he struggles to free himself from her grip, this was before he accepted this 'fate'. This fate of being hugged while being covered in tears and snot. No matter how strong he is, he can never be able to free himself from such a grip.

After Rilliane calmed down, the two sat in the department's cafeteria while Gakushu check over her work. "You know you don't have to take the classes Rilliane."

"But everyone is so smart." Rilliane muttered as she digs into her lunch while Gakushu was snacking on a muffin. "I feel so left out. How can I be a senior if I can't do half of the things that you do?"

"You, Gretel and Arthur are basically prodigies. You are in everything." You are a prodigy, in the arts.

"Wolfie is good in math and science." That is because he was in the Forensic Department for almost 40 years and it's kind of his job.

"Ivan and Lucia are best in their fieldwork." That is because when they were human, they were a part of the secret police who was trained rigorously for those roles and has almost 40 years of experience.

Rilliane who was only an ordinary student back when she was a human. She wasn't a part of the secret police and was just a prodigy in the arts in general. She was an ordinary American student.

You barely have 10 years of experience and you are doing well than many other reapers. You have the same level of skills similar to a reaper who has 20 years of experience. If you hadn't noticed, Rilliane has an inferiority complex which thankfully hasn't surfaced too much in the present time.

Gakushu continued his train of thoughts he added when Rilliane spoke. "You are still a senior to me
Rilliane. Gakushu said which only resulted more sobs from the almond-haired woman.

"You are too kind Gakushu-chan." Rilliane then slammed her head onto the table and sobs.

"Beside it is only one test you failed." Gakushu pointed out, he doesn't have to act that everything has to be perfect like what his father expected of him. That aspect is slowly overwitten.

Rilliane and their group fills where his father's love supposed to be. She was perfect in the field she specialised in. She can paint, write and can easily suave others with her words making her the best choice to use in a meeting or a conference. Which is why often she is busy.

Gakushu really likes the poems she writes, his first birthday gift from their group of reapers was a beautiful hand-made novel completed with detailed illustrations from Rilliane. He still had it kept it in mint condition back in his room, at the Department of course.

"Which failure, the one where I didn't get an A or the one I legitimately failed?" Rilliane groan with her cheeks on the table's surface as she plays with her food.

"The second one, you still passed on the other test." Clearly this is getting the two nowhere, if Gakushu wanted to be honest he never had this type of experience before since he had to be perfect anyway. He remembered how happy Rilliane was after getting the results back on her algebra test, even if it was only 85% it still counts as an A grade. She studies continuously for a week for that test.

Although it is alien to the boy, he can kind of see how important it was for Rilliane as the group is trying to overwrite his father's teachings.

Gakushu soon innocently suggested "Why don't I tutor you?" And Gakushu wonder why the group calls him the Cinnamon Roll of the group.

Rilliane looks up to the boy, it is going to be a difficult challenge for Gakushu Asano because although he helps others in their school work, he has no experience in teaching those who actually struggles in their subjects. Like actual children who are not Gakushu Asano.

Although Rilliane just puts too much expectations on herself but a challenge is a challenge no matter what for Gakushu.

"You are sure Gakushu?" Rilliane glanced at the boy with hopeful eyes.

"Of course, you helped me so much. I have to pay back somehow!" Gakushu had his cheeks flushed, his arms crossed and looked away from Rilliane. "I have time anyway..." He muttered to himself although she can hear the words. Rilliane quickly took a picture of this moment for her Gakushu diary.

Rilliane acts more like an elderly sister similar to Gretel rather than a mother like she wanted to Gakushu but her hugs of comfort makes up for it. Her warm personality shines bright when she cares for Gakushu. She was the one who got him through the first days as a Grim Reaper, the one who introduce her to her pack of friends and later formed a friendship with Gretel and Arthur.

"I am an A-class student after all, this would be good for my reputation." Gakushu chirped with a smirk but it made Rilliane giggled. There is the 'tsundere' personality Gakushu everyone in the department knows and loves.

Another one of Gakushu's cutest traits, the almighty Tsundere.

Rilliane gently smiled, she takes off her half-framed glasses to wipe off her tears. She held her hand
out so she can pat the boy’s head, "Thank you Gakushu-chan."

"But first, can I shred and burn these?" And laughter then filled the cafeteria from the two.

This one event further highlights to Gakushu that you don't have to be absolutely perfect in everything. But his act as the son of the Chairman must continue on so he must enjoy every ounce of these moments he held with his reaper friends. Ren sometimes can see this side of him.

But sometimes thanks to Gakushu's completive personality, he can't help it but to achieve the best of the best. Unlike the leads up, it is not empty now that he has support.

If only his father is somehow added into this group of theirs, like the dreams he tried to deny of his father hugging him in the familiar daisy meadows.

When did the dreams started? Gakushu always wonder it because it is appearing too much lately especially after he became a Grim Reaper.

How long will it take to fill this certain emptiness that Rilliane, Gretel, Arthur, Ivan, Lucia and Wolfie desperately try to fill in?

He is nothing like how he acted when his father is around than when he is where his group of friends. He felt easy around them and it was much easier to talk to, about his thoughts and feelings or anything really. They won't leave him for a very long time compared to his human friends.

He took a bite into his muffin to cover up that emptiness.
Another day at Class-E for Gakushu Asano, the first two periods is math and history today as he check his school timetable. Honestly Gakushu is not feeling too good after yesterday's shift. It is good that Lucia took over his shift for the week.

He stands in his room at the Grim Reaper Japanese Department, changing into his school uniform. He realised that he was already wore his pyjamas when he went to sleep, it was possibly Rilliane or Gretel doing.

He buttons his collar high with his black tie, his navy-grey blazer and pants held up by a black belt. Looking in front of the mirror to not see his violet eyes and instead see the eyes that every reaper possesses, the same chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. He wears his coloured contacts to hide away his reaper eyes and reverting back to his once human eyes.

After he was ready for the day ahead of him, since he already consumed his fruit tea and cake this morning. He was informed that he won't have a shift tonight or for the next couple of days so he had more free time than ever. With his school bag in hand and the other a phone with three different key chains.

One is his Death Scythe designed by Gretel that can revert back to its original size whenever he wants. He has a second Death Scythe which is what you expect a Death Scythe would look like but he is using the key version because it is much more manageable and easier to hide especially for his dispatch and mission. Another key to transport him to his room back at the Department and the other to transport him to the reaper-run karaoke bar.

He exits out of his room and walks down the hallways of the department, greeting fellow reapers he passes by. "Gakushu-kun~" A cheery voice called out and from behind two hands groped his chest, of course that was Gretel in her usual 15 year old state.

Gretel was wearing her usual attire with her black Sailor-Lolita dress reaching to her knees but this the pattern are of constellations and her legs are bare. She wore yellow Converse to match her huge yellow unzipped hoodie. She is wearing the hood up and is carrying a small backpack.

"I see you have grown a bit my Strawberry!" After Gretel let go of his chest, Gakushu held his arms over his chest as if to protect them. "Are you welling feel now?" Gretel asked after giving the boy a fright for his life.

"Yes, thank you for taking my shift last night." Gakushu slightly bowed to the blonde-haired girl and slowly relax his arms.

"Anything for you my little Strawberry~." Gretel sang and she clapped her hands, "By the way, Rilliane is in China now for a conference about the education system for the next couple of days. Ivan is only doing surveillance today because Lucia is teaching today and Arthur got the short end of the stick so he is on paperwork duty." The door they wanted to use his keys on, there is a line full of reapers and they happened to be dead last. At least not in terms of education, they are at the very top and Gakushu went to second place due to orders.

"Already?" Gakushu exclaimed of the little amounts of information they gathered in barely a full school day worth.
"Even though it was for a few hours, it was good enough to present to the meeting." Gretel was talking about the surveillance they conducted on Class-E. Gakushu is only going to assumed here that the entire branch across the world knows of the yellow octopus alien he is observing and monitoring. Or the fact that it is somehow his teacher.

Don't think about in the morning? We do not want a headache in the morning.

The very few moments that Gretel is not with Arthur, she told him a little secret that even Arthur doesn't know. Gakushu remembered on particular story from the girl.

"I was a prodigy just like you however during my time I wasn't really allowed to go in the things that my male twin can do. So I focused more on the arts, dancing, music, languages and sometimes fencing when my parents from my older brother. Anything that was acceptable for me. I was able to dive into more subjects to perfect after my suicide."

Gretel and Gakushu are like a mirror image reflecting from the two, the shape of their eyes and face are the same and even the nose as well or so told by Arthur. Gretel is more 'intelligent' because of her 200 years of experience but Gakushu was a fast learner as well and almost catching up to her.

Whenever Gretel plays dress-up with Gakushu or when he is about to perform in their little dancing and singing group. He often sports a blonde wig. He was often told by Arthur that he greatly resembles Hansel. This was also where he learns more of her family, her older brother by 10 years of the twins was a part of the royal secret intelligence service. The second oldest at the time of her suicide was attending his final year at Weston College and was a perfect of the Green Lion.

Finally the two at the front of door, using the key that directs them to Lyrics Karaoke Bar's underground floor. Gretel continued her stories and Gakushu listened each very word as the two walked upstairs to the ground level.

"There was a period of time where I didn't know how to put on my own clothes, Arthur had to help me to dress myself after 10 years of my death." Gretel recounting the time when she struggled to button her clothes while the embarrassed Arthur had to help.

Gakushu could barely keep in his laughter, a prodigy like him doesn't even know how to put on their own clothes.

"Remember when Ivan saw the questions from your math notebook." Gretel asked to which Gakushu chuckled fondly.

"Yes, he thrown my book to the floor yelling that it was university questions and not from a high-school." When he was in his first year of junior high, Ivan wanted to help in his work and not listening to the boy, the Russian checked the work wanting to act like a fun and helpful uncle.

Ivan Ivanov spent the next couple of hours swearing heavily in Russian and cursing about Gakushu's father. Wolfie had to be dispatch to calm down the Russian.

"How are your languages coming up?" Gretel asked as they checked from the counter, today's counter shift are reapers transferred from Australia. A group of four once university students who did a group suicide; An, James, Mark and Johnny.

He heard it was a group suicide with car exhaust. It was a big incident in Australia 20 years ago but wasn't known internationally and especially here in Japan. It is why you see more reapers out in the open here in Kunugigaoka town without any fear who much older like Gretel because no-one can recognise them.
Rilliane although rarely goes out in the open without a full disguise.

"Fluent in German now, that adds to the list of I know several languages know." Gakushu answered as the two headed for his school.

"Is that so my little Strawberry?" Gretel said in German with a smile,

"I believe so Gretel and no nicknames." Gakushu too answered back in German,

"How about French, fluent?" This time Gretel in a pout asked in French to which Gakushu answered in French, "I believe so Gretel.

"English." Gretel spoke in her native language and Gakushu easily replied back in English. She even tried Korean and Chinese and the strawberry-blonde boy easily answered back in those languages.

Although Gretel has forgotten to mention Russia to which the boy is now fluent in. "There is still Dutch, Swedish, Italian and only languages we haven't touch upon?" Gretel reverting back to her native language, English.

Suddenly Gakushu came to a stop with a blank look on his face.

"Gakushu-kun…?" Gretel too stopped in her tracks when the boy froze in place.

She looks to what direction Gakushu was looking at, it was an electronic store with the front window advertising TVs televising a news report. "Yesterday police found was a body, the victim is identified as Norazki Sora aged 17 who was found dead in an alleyway. Police suspected it was suicide. Further news today…"

The silences grew between the two as Gakushu stared at the screen, he then looks down to his watch as said "I need to hurry to school." And the two arrived at the front of school gates in silence.

At the same time, Karma arrived to the school grounds a little early and just saw Gakushu with his 'female' friend. The girl was wearing both a hoodie and a dress who then patted Gakushu's 'ass' making Gakushu fluster and turning to the girl yelling at her. Karma would laugh at this scene even if he was being 'weird' to nearby passing students.

The two seems to having a conversation in English to only Karma can slightly understand, "Have a good day at school Gakushu-chan, you'll be fine." Gakushu only nodded, the girl leaned over to kiss both of his cheeks quickly.

The girl waved at Gakushu and ran out of school grounds leaving Gakushu to head for Class-E. Karma being Karma wanting to take advantage of this walked next to the Chairman's son as they walked up the mountain steps. "Girlfriend of yours Second Place?"

Gakushu continued to walk as if he didn't hear the red-head's words, he kept his emotionless mask as he made his way up to Class-E. "No, she's someone from Europe." Gakushu answered as if it was most obvious thing in the world.

The tension between the two hasn't lifted one bit, the only reason why Gakushu isn't reacting so much is because he had his moral support, (the fruit-tea and cake) and it would last him for the next hour. Karma was acting as if he was jealous of the relationship with that girl and Gakushu.

Karma was pouting as if he was hurt from being ignored, he takes a closer look at Gakushu and realises there isn't much life in his eyes.
Why do they look so old on a person so young?

Math went by very quickly in the first period for Gakushu, he always finished the set work early while Korosensei went to help the other students. Some students made an attempt to assassinate the teacher in class but it obviously didn't work.

Karma saw that Gakushu made no remarks of assassinating the teacher as it would fit perfectly to Gakushu's personality but that boy remained focused on his work. From what Karma saw yesterday was very strange of how he left in a hurry or his only attack on the teacher was due to be startled. Gakushu stayed quiet for the entirety of the lesson with no emotions on his face. You think he would try to save the planet, have a try at least?

History came along for the second period and the class is watching a documentary about the Secret Police of East Germany, the Stasi with Korosensei explaining the history about East Germany and the Berlin Wall. Gakushu tuned out most of this because he already knew everything about it thanks to Lucia and Wolfie. Soon Korosensei talked about a tragic story of an actor which catches the attention of the strawberry-blond boy.

'That sounds like…!' Gakushu instantly became more alert to the video.

The documentary soon shows of a theatre play with Wolfie acting the leading role, "Wolfgang Mühe was a famous victim to the GDR and the East German Secret Police." Korosensei explained, Gakushu held a slightly shock expression as he sees the clips of Wolfie performing.

'He looked so happy and so carefree…'

"His fiancé was a part of the Stasi who was sent to spy on the actor." Korosensei continued, "He was found to have Western books and was then blacklisted." The teacher was hinting to the students that his supposed fiancé was the one who reported this to her superiors, that is wrong! Lucia would never do that, he was reported and betrayed by his own jealous co-workers! "Being blacklisted basically is denying people's employment, so Mr Mühe can no longer act."

What is an actor if he can't act, he is nothing.

Wolfie's words echoes in Gakushu's head.

"Wolfgang later committed suicide." It shows the body of Wolfie after he allowed himself to be run over by a car. Quickly images of the deceased Nozaki Sora replaces the mangled body of Wolfie.

Shifting back and forth to Nozaki and Wolfie.

He was there when Sora took his own life in front of him, he still has the scent of blood fresh to his sensory and he saw how the body impacted to the cold paved ground and the sounds of crushing bones echoing.

He was there…

"Asano-kun…?" Korosensei said with worry and the whole class watched the boy still staring at the screen in complete silence. "Gakushu are you okay?" Korosensei sees that Gakushu have his violet eyes widen and skin turned pale.

Finally Gakushu held a mental image of the pills he took and himself lying in that forest alone.

Out of reflex, his hand quickly went to his mouth as he felt something trying to escape to which he
sprinted out of the classroom to the nearest bathroom he could find and it knock downs his chair. When he does find the bathroom, he vomited out all of his breakfast violently. He coughs harshly as he looks down the toilet bowl. After he was finished he flush it away and went over to the sink.

Looking himself at the mirror.

How can he be okay after seeing something like that, his first suicide? The mangled body after it impacted the ground and blood spattering across the paved floor. The bell ring to signal break-time, he need some time alone or a talk on the phone with Gretel.

But should he? Would he just get in the way?

Rilliane is in China for a conference, Ivan on surveillance duty, Lucia teaching today and Arthur is doing paperwork duties. Gretel is on the case of the rumours about his alien teacher.

Gakushu reminded himself one sentence and muttering to himself, "This is my punishment….

He need some time to cool his head but questions came filling his head.

Why does he need to do this task again? There is already a surveillance team looking into the class. But this will help him path a way forgiveness but it is taking 200 years for Gretel and Arthur who is working harder than him.

Is it because he is going to be the one to kill the teacher? Then why the class are so bonded with that creature? It defeats the purpose of assassinating the teacher in the first.

I need some cake. Maybe a talk with Gretel as well, Rilliane is in China right now…

He receives a text from Ivan who was watching the scene to signal that the Russian can be called. Sitting down the floor with his back placed against the closed door. The phone started to ring and the voice came to his ears.

"Hey, Ivan. I'm sorry that I have to call you while at work…” Gakushu spoke first.

"That is okay Gakushu, is there anything you wanted to walk about?” However Ivan already knew of what Gakushu wanted to ask.

"… How did you felt after seeing someone committed suicide for the first time?” Gakushu meekly whispered.

"I stayed in my room for days and didn't talk to anyone, Lucia had to do my shifts for me. It was mild compared to Arthur's though." Gakushu heard of several reactions after seeing people commit suicide after they became a reaper, it forces them to remember the day they committed their unforgivable act. Every detail and aspects of their self-inflicted death and its lead ups.

Arthur went insane for a couple of hours as Gakushu was told. Arthur was trashing his room and punched anyone or anything that was in his path. Afterwards he became a sobering mess along with Gretel who each cried themselves to sleep until they can no longer physically shed their tears for days on end.

"To be honest with you, I think you are taking it better than I ever can." Ivan weakly chuckled and trying to make light of the situation to get the boy to feel better.

"But I vomited my breakfast just then…” Gakushu weakly remarked, no longer acting strong when he is alone in this room as he was wishing to be comforted. Even if it is just Ivan's voice, it is just
enough for him to get through this.

This is one of the rarest moments of Gakushu as he wants to be comforted especially right now. However this is the type of experience that every reaper will experience eventually, their first suicide.

Gakushu is the same and now seeks guidance and comfort to get him through of his 'first suicide'. No-one in this school can help him, no-one but…

"But you saw the body firsthand, you saw the moment when that boy jumped off and impacted to the ground. I only saw the aftermath." Ivan recalled, it was after Ivan worked as a reaper for 5 years where he was assigned to retrieve a soul in a rural area of Soviet Russia. There as he walks into the soon collected soul's cottage, he found the man hung himself and a chair was on its sides. There a memory flashed back of every cut he had on his wrist and watching as the blood rains down from his arms.

For the next couple of days, Ivan stayed in his room interacting with nobody with Lucia taking over his shifts and Wolfie bringing him his food. He doesn't even remember how he managed to get through that experience.

"Why does it affect me so much though? I can't act like this Ivan." But unlike other reapers, Gakushu is on a recon mission to observe Class-E as of now and cannot arouse suspicious which in the young boy's mind he failed greatly. Not that he knows but the students from the class thought though it was strange for the boy like Gakushu to dash out from class but understandable after seeing such graphic imagery.

He didn't just prepare himself what came next and indeed they are right. How do you react of seeing a body to allow themselves to be run over?

"Just because you have the intelligence greater than many adults doesn't mean you are an adult yourself, you are still a child Gakushu." Gakushu held up a sniffle and tears started to form which irritated his eyes. He quickly rubbed his eyes to clear away the tears.

He can't be weaker here, it was enough for him to seek comfort but he can't allow himself to cry. Not here, not now.

"It is okay to cry Gakushu, it isn't a sign that you are weak. It is a sign to tell that you are still human." But I'm not human Ivan, I am a Grim Reaper. Ivan seem to know what the young boy was thinking.

In Russian he said, "We used to be human Gakushu and it was who we once were. It is not frown upon but instead encourage to act human again among reapers."

"… Okay." Gakushu whispered that was even to the Russian was barely audible.

"My best advice for this is to think of any happy memories, any will do. It is best to overwrite that experience to soften the blow." Ivan giving his personal advice, "But everyone goes through it differently, I hope it helps."

"You will get through this, I see you after school okay Gakushu?" Ivan reassuring the 14 year old Grim Reaper. "And besides, I'm sure that everyone will understand your predicament. It was quite graphic to see."

"Thank you, I call you later…" The called ended and Gakushu pull his phone away in his pocket as he stared at the ceiling for a couple of minutes.
Ivan acted as the fun uncle in the group, drinking buddies with Lucia and often tried to have Gakushu join in. Then the flashbacks occurred as advised.

Gakushu though up some happy memories to distract him from this mess.

"Gakushu, hic. Come join with us." Ivan spoke in a slur and Gakushu can practically smell the vodka emitting for his open mouth. Lucia and Ivan's drinking games would always go wrong one way or another and it is becoming almost of a sports event to see. It was the reason why he created tunnels at this school when he was drunk from beer to avoid the two drinkers that one time. But the time with shots and mixing involved was much worse.

The other time during the school holidays and his father wasn't around as he was busy with meetings or something like that. Gakushu was staying at his room back in the Grim Reaper Department. After that morning when Gakushu woke up in his room back in the Department, Lucia was only wearing her undergarments cuddling her empty whiskey bottle next to the shirtless Wolfie while Ivan was wearing a 'sexy' bartender outfit with only his boxers.

Gretel was wearing a school's swimming costume, Rilliane is only wearing her collared shirt and thankfully panties and Arthur was wearing only a toga. Gakushu was shocked to find that he was wearing a maid's outfit. He never found out how he gotten into a French maid outfit to this day.

Although he had sense that it was Gretel's doing.

That memory gave him a chuckle and a smile, he thought of any memory that was happy then Ren came into his mind. His first friend, it pains him to ignore him but even now the two are in different worlds.

He is human and Gakushu is a Grim Reaper, he is Class-A and Gakushu is in Class-E and so on.

It is better if the two remain distant from each other but it didn't stop him from thinking the happy times he spent with the almond haired boy. Even if Gakushu himself doesn't need to study, it always fun when he helped out Ren in his studies.

Ren... He was the one who had me feel that I was human again. He was the one who helped me keep my powers hidden away when I was in that school.

Slowly the tears came flowing, he remembers the words spoken by Gretel on that day just a few years ago "Ren is such a nice and cute boy." And yes he is, he is too nice for me to deserve. Gakushu wipe off the tears and re-adjusted his contacts as he continued to sit there. In silence and staring down at the floor.

Until a knock came from the outside, "Asano-kun? Are you okay?" It was Korosensei.

"I'm fine now." Gakushu quickly answered as he slowly stands up and slapped both of his checks to mentally prepare himself. Feeling that he is ready after checking his appearance from the mirror, he left the bathroom back to the main classroom to find luckily no-one was inside. 'Looks like the teacher went off.'

He took a seat by his desk and started to read on his Brecht book, then the bell rings meaning that break-time has ended and some of the students came back into room. Silence began to brew, Gakushu glanced at the group and quickly went to his book.

"Gakushu-san, are you okay?" Nagisa asked, it was a shocking to see Gakushu Asano dashing out of class.
"I'm fine, just felt sick. That's all." Gakushu quickly answered.

Nagisa went over to see what he was reading which was completely in German. "Can you really read this Gakushu-san?"

"Yes." Gakushu simply answered with the short answers, clearly this situation is going nowhere. Karma couldn't stand the silence or Gakushu not acting like he was back in Class-A, he knew then how to interact with the Chairman's son.

"Is there anything you can't do Second Place?" Karma laughed as he places his arm around the boy to which Gakushu quickly shake it off with an irritated look. To break the silences, the red-head thought up a plan to get the 'old' Gakushu back and to annoy him at the same time.

This is going to be the first step. "Looks like you are still human Second Place, I thought you would be the perfect robot."

Oh how funny that Karma was half right, that Gakushu Asano is not human but instead a Grim Reaper. "Is that so?" Gakushu remarked still eyeing at his book.

"Are you sure you are fine Gakushu-san?" Nagisa asked and was not convince of the well being of his fellow classmate.

"I told you from the start, I am fine-" And then Korosensei came rushing interrupting Gakushu and hugging the boy and covering him in snot and tears.

It just reminded him of the hugs he was subjected by the group, primarily Lucia and Ivan's.

'Why must I be the one to endure this? I always got this from the German, the Russian and sometimes Rilliane. Now added to the list is a yellow octopus who just happens to turn blue."

"I'm so sorry Asano-kun!" Gakushu stood there and accepting of his fate, he got used to it after a while. "I knew it was very graphic but I didn't account of how you would be affect by it."

Soon more students came back to the classroom.

"But Korosensei why is he the only one vomiting his breakfast out." Terasake with a smug look and wanting to rub it onto the perfect student.

Gakushu thought it was strange for this type of situation to be happening in the class in the first place. He just ignored Terasake's word although it is taking all of his mental strength. Gakushu does not want to add tree number 103 to the death toll!

"Class, all but Asano-kun here has been here since the start of the year! You are already taught to be de-sensualized by violence." And before Terasake can say anything, the yellow teacher turns to Gakushu.

"I decided as an apology that I buy cake. Cake for everyone!" The teacher spread his tentacle-arms out.

And who is going to complain about that, in their heads they are thanking Gakushu for getting them some cake.

As soon Korosensei mentions cake, Gakushu couldn't help but have his cheeks turn slightly pink like cherry blossoms with the thoughts of, 'Must resist cake, must resist cake. Can't show class.'
Korosensei finally reveals a white box and opening it showing strawberry sponge-cake.

‘….Shit.’ Gakushu mentally screamed, he quickly brought out his work to resist the temptations of cake.

"Everyone gets cake!" In 20 mach speed, he slice the cake and gives it to every student and lucky last was Gakushu Asano.

"Here Asano-kun, you get the larger piece-" The teacher then pauses as he stares Gakushu face who is now failing to keep his excitement for sweets and dropped the plate onto his desk. His face now flushed red like tomatoes as he is bites his lips to control his urges. His eyes and eyebrows narrowed to concrete on his work instead on focusing on the cake. Korosensei swear that he can see the sparkles.

The sparkles…

The screaming soon began, "My eyes! My eyes!" Then Korosensei fell to the ground as he covered his eyes with his tentacle arms and started to roll around. Quickly Gakushu rushed to finish his piece of cake.

"Korosensei!" Okuda yelled out as she rushed to their fallen teacher, now everybody's eyes lay on the boy and the new development of their teacher. Nagisa was busy writing down his list of Korosensei's weakness and Karma was laughing his ass off.

"What happened Korosensei?" Rio called out.

"Cuteness levels are through the charts, over loading." The teacher whispered but it was loud enough for everyone in class to hear.

'Gakushu cute?' Now Karma wants to see this.

'God damned my love for sweets.' Gakushu sat there internally screaming, why must the teacher buy cake? And strawberry of all things!

Yes strawberry was his most favourite, isn't it funny? A strawberry-blonde boy who loves strawberries. It was amusing enough for Gretel that she starts buying products relating to strawberries for the boy, strawberry scented shampoo and everything. Even Arthur who doesn't usually get involved in this sort of thing brought him a strawberry shaped cushion. Now everyone in his group joined in this gag and it continues to this day.

Rilliane buys him strawberry juice or milk, Lucia and Ivan had him try (more like forced) strawberry-flavoured alcohol and Wolfie got him strawberry related stationary. He is thankful when he gets strawberry cake though, that was the plus in this gag.

"What on Earth is going on here?!" Karasuma came into the room, Gakushu looked up the government agent as if he was his saviour from this situation.

"Cuteness overloading, cuteness overloading…" The teacher continued to repeat his words.

"Everyone get seated." Karasuma ordered and everyone did what he said. Quickly afterwards Korosensei snapped from his trance and allowed Karasuma to take to the desk.

'It must be important news.' Everyone in class thought.

"There is a secret that only the top officials in the government across the world only knows about. I
expect you not to reveal this to the public."

"The moon is now fully repaired."
The Department

Chapter Summary

When the moon is finally fixed!

The Department

"The moon is now fully repaired."

'It took them this long to figure it out!' Gakushu thought as he folded his arms.

Quickly the class went into a frenzy as expected, Gakushu joined along to avoid suspicion. No need to report this to the Department because they are the ones who fixed the moon in the first place.

"Quiet!" Karasuma yelled and everyone shut their mouths, he turns to Korosensei and asked to set up the projector. Thankfully to the yellow octopus's 20 Mach speed, it was done in a blink of an eye. Now showing the logo of the Grim Reaper Department or the GRD.

That is definitely the Department Gakushu knows, he has been working for it for four years after all.

"Most of the intelligence community doesn't believe they exist, but the ones that do call them the Department." Karasuma introduces Gakushu's department and it made Gakushu amused of how dramatic Karasuma is making to be. Or how Korosensei is sweating buckets.

Although Gakushu never knew that they were known by top government officials, obviously they must have hid the fact that we are reapers. If news broke out then there would be chaos everywhere with humans trying to eliminate the Grim Reapers to prevent their deaths. Jokes on them because reapers cannot be killed by any means.

How can you hide the fact that the moon is now fully repaired after its destruction by his own teacher from a population of over billions of people across the world? Make it seem like it was never destroyed and it was all of a conspiracy?

"They're a ghost, nobody has found a single ounce of information about them." Grim Reapers are good in this because they have hidden themselves for hundreds and hundreds of years from the mortals, of course.

"We only have this one photo snapped of its existence." He then showed the class of one of the Reapers from the French Branch, although it was very blurry it was clear to the class that it was an adult male in a black suit jumping off from a building with garden slasher.

For a very long time, Grim Reapers had their Death Scythes take on appearances on gardening tools. Gakushu always thought it was just a quirk of a reaper but he's not complaining because his second Death Scythe is practically a key. A key that is acting as a key chain for his phone.

The man sporting black hair is someone Gakushu knows of, it was Christopher Neubert. A reaper who committed suicide to escape the torture waiting for him back when Nazi Germany invaded France after going against their teachings. If he remembered correctly, there was some 'disturbance' that causes some reapers to be more easily seen during that time in the area.
Grim Reapers generally have a low-presence and adding more effect to it is their uniforms. Some exceptions to this is that some humans can see reapers, it's like someone who can see ghost for a better term.

"Karasuma sensei? Why is that picture important?" One student of Class-E asked.

"It was taken after the death of a high government official but he instead died from heart failure. This man managed to pass all of security and a letter was sent by the Department after this incident." Karasuma explained and clicked to the next side of a letter that is signed by the Department. Gakushu can feel the tension brewing but he feels indifferent about it. It is nothing new, it is very hard to act concern about this. So Gakushu just copied the facial expressions of some students he glanced around him while keeping a professional image to further his act as the Chairman's son.

"They left a voice message after sending us the news of the moon. We are trying to trace it back but we are having no leads." Karasuma said and the class whispered to each other.

The transcript of the video reads;

'Greeting the End Class, we know of the purpose of the class and the secret it harbours known as Korosensei who had blown up the moon. We have fixed the issue of the moon if you looked up at the sky recently.

We can't have the entirely of humanity in danger again after Korosensei is soon eliminated.

We are allowing to continue this game of pretend school as we found it so amusing that the international community is allowing young children to deal with its' issue. Possibly the other motive of the class is to create the perfect soldiers at the disposal of the government. Funny because the last time that happened was with Kinderheim 511 but I digressed nonetheless.

We will later send in our personals to test your abilities. I hope you all do not disappoint and that you live up to the expectations of a class of hopeless causes.

Until then good luck because sooner or later we will take over this operation.

-Signed, the Department.'

How are you supposed to react afterwards?

Terasake acted on his greed, "Taking our share of the bounty." He muttered rudely and thanks to Gakushu's enhanced reaper abilities which also includes enhanced hearing. This however replaced his eyesight sadly and his contacts starts to irritate his eyes again.

Gakushu's mouth started to twitched, that is the most pathetic reason why you should go against the orders of the Department he has every heard? The very organisation that fixed the fucking moon! Even if you are just human and just recently found out the workplace that Gakushu works for. "Idiot." Gakushu muttered underneath his breathe.

This brief moment was witnessed by Karma who smirked. "Want to add in your two-cent Second Place?" Karma sang as he leaned back in his chair. Now everyone's eyes are on the undercover reaper and is waiting for his answer.

Shit… Might give out a half-truth answer then.

Gakushu mentally sighed and with his hand resting on his left cheek he answered.
"If they come then they come, I don't care." Orders are orders from the Department. Obviously there is some outcry of Gakushu's answer.

"But Asano-kun, Class-E is supposed to be-" Korosensei steps in but Gakushu quickly interrupted his speech.

"Why should that matter?" Gakushu retorted and slowly creating the anger in some of the students who is directing it to the strawberry-blonde haired boy. "Why should I go up against an organisation who has fixed the moon that was destroyed by your doing?"

"They did restore the moon..." Isogai whispered and the class muttered in agreement begrudgingly.

"Do you really think that they care for the measly ten billion bounty when they have the resources to fully restore the moon?" Gakushu continued his answer in the harshest way possible.

"If they come to assassinate you instead of the one from this class then so be it, one less problem for me and the world to deal with." Gakushu still retain his sense of coldness in his voice he learnt from his father, it silences the entire class of this cruelness Gakushu spoke of towards to Korosensei who stayed silent during Gakushu's little speech.

How cruel was it for Gakushu to add in 'one less problem for me and the world to deal with' but it cremated his act as the Chairman's son. It made him look like he was looking down on others.

'How long before the orders come in?' Gakushu thought as he watches with bored eyes before going back to his set classwork. Gakushu had the urge to eat from cake, he can already feel the anger emitting in him. He hopes that today won't be the day where tree no.102 is added.

The next periods and lunch came quick for Gakushu, he still didn't fully interacted with anyone in class and he was sure they won't for a long while especially after that little speech of his. 'Good' Gakushu thought as he sat in class for his last two periods, Home Economics.

Although it is supposed to be in partners, no-one was paired with Gakushu but he was happy since no-one would get in his way to make the perfect cake. Although it was difficult to control the sparkles he was emitting when he heard that the class was making cake and it can be any type of cake.

'Any cake!?' Gakushu is in bliss now. Gakushu wearing an apron to which Ivan probably took note of so the Russian can later 'mention' it to Gretel. He clapped his hands to begin his work.

For the chocolate finely mincing the dark couverture then melting at 60 degrees. At its boiling temperature, add in the unprocessed cream and after stirring let it cool until it is room temperature then add in the strawberry flavoured liquor. Pour out the chocolate into a tray and spread it until it is thin, afterwards place it into the fridge to set.

For the cake preheat the oven at 350 F and then line up the four 8" round cake pans with parchment paper sprayed with non-stick cooking. Combine the unsalted butter, vegetable oil, granulated sugar and gelatine into a bowl. Mixing at medium speed until it is light and fluffy and then add in the eggs one at a time mixing well each time. Add in a teaspoon of vanilla extract. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt in another medium sized bowl, in another separate bowl mix the butter milk and strawberry puree together.

Mix the cake batter at low speed this time, add a third of the dry ingredients and mix until just a few of flour streaks remain and then pour in half of the butter milk. Continue the alternate adding of dry and wet ingredients. Stop when the flour is mixed in. Finally mixing the batter with a rubber spatula
to make sure all of the flour is mixed altogether, pour the batter into the 4 cake trays. While the cakes are baking for 30 minutes at 350 F in the oven, Gakushu moves onto the whipped cream.

Gakushu doesn't notice this but while he was in the process of making the cake, the whole class stared at his performance. The way he moved so gracefully and elegantly like a waltz, some students swear that he was just showing off especially Karma.

After finishing the cream and the cake is baked to perfection, he soon start to assemble the cake. Having each layer to be generous filled with whipped cream evenly. The four layered cake would then be fully covered in whipped cream. Taking out the firm chocolate from the fridge, with a hot knife cut it into rectangular panels to be placed into the sides of the cake and overlapping them slightly. Finally place the strawberries on top then sprinkle it with icing powder.

And now Gakushu is done and realises that everyone is staring at him, "Your cake is burning." Some hurried to their ovens and everyone snapped from their daze and continued on with the class. Gakushu places his work into the fridge and with nothing to do, he gets out his language book and refines more of his English skills so he can be able to speak without that accent getting in the way.

Gakushu is very fluent in many languages and especially with English but there is always a hint of an accent left behind.

What should he do for this next now that his shift is taken over by Lucia? The last time he had this amount of free time, he made enough sweets for a bakery and he didn't realise it until he made the final black forest cake.

Maybe dance practice? Or singing? Gakushu is not so sure when Arthur is going to finish the paperwork duty. Lucia, Rilliane and Wolfie is off of the list leaving behind Ivan and Gretel to hang out with at the karaoke bar.

"Ah! Asano-kun you finished always?" Korosensei appeared in front of him and acted as if the scene from earlier never happened.

"Yes, it's in the fridge if you want to see." Gakushu quickly answered but his eyes never left from his book, Korosensei went to the fridge and opening it to only close it. It was as if the cake was radiating holy-light and the teacher closed it because it was too bright or pure for his eyes.

"Asano-kun, did you do it by yourself?" The alien teacher asked and Gakushu only nodded.

"Yes." Gakushu again being distant and Korosensei started on his speech of why he should interact more with the class. Repeating what he said from the first day when Gakushu transferred to Class-E.

"You need to learn of the importance of friendship and teamwork." Gakushu mostly blurred out most of his teacher's words in his head.

"I do not need them after all I am different from everyone else." Gakushu replied and this time everyone in class heard it.

"Yeah, like you are the only one who vomited his breakfast just today." Karma laughed as Nagisa is trying to cover up his mouth.

"A reasonable reaction of seeing the mangled body of an actor who committed suicide by jumping in front of a car." Gakushu retorted with a bit of annoyance in his tone. "Did you wanted me to laugh at his death instead?"

'If you put it that way…' The class collective thoughts.
"Is that true Asano-kun?" Korosensei asked. The teacher was worried of how Gakushu is acting very distant to everyone and he got news from Gakushu's father that he never came home after being sent to Class-E.

"Of course." Gakushu bluntly answered and then the bell ringed with him leaving the building first after collecting his school-bag.

As he walked down the steps, in one hand he texts Gretel to find a new apartment or house to stay in to avoid possible suspicion. He already has suspicions that his father or the Chairman has told the teachers at Class-E that he never came back home. It is very easy to find since there are many reaper-run establishments around Kunugigoaka town.

Gretel texted back that she already had a place not too far from the school which acted more of a design studio than home. Gakushu rather prefers his own room back at the Department but it will have to do. Looks like he can't just move in his room at the Department rather all.

He now just need to create the perfect excuse for this situation. He again ignored the numerous texts from Ren.

Then he encounters two of the Virtuosos, Seo and Akari who held a sneer on their smug little faces. Why does Gakushu feel that the death count of trees will increase today? He has been secretly keeping a tally lately to see how many trees he kicked or punched in total. Currently it is at 101 trees Gakushu reminded himself.

"Is there something you need?" Gakushu asked, keeping to his professional and emotionless mask.

"How is Class-E been treating you?" Seo smugly asked but Gakushu only shrugged.

"It has been very pleasant." Gakushu is only following orders to be transferred to the class in the first place and it got him some cake with some extras from Rilliane. He is still a prodigy in well... everything.

The two Class-A students continued to throw more insults to Gakushu to get a reaction but he ignored them and block their voices in his head. He is waiting for the two to shut up so he can finally leave. He wants cake god damn it!

While he was appearing to be calm, he really wants to punch the nearest thing and hopefully it won't be the two students in front of him.

Gakushu finally replied with a neutral face "Says the one who did couldn't get into top 10."

Akari retaliated with "Even your father hates you-"

And out of nowhere Akari was knocked out by a kick to the head, it was Gretel and thankfully in Gakushu's mind that she is at least wearing shorts underneath.

"I swear that Ren is the only good person in this damned school!" Gretel started to continuously kick the downed Akari. Gakushu thought that he just heard a rib just cracked now.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Okay several crack ribs Gakushu corrected himself. He just need to calm his friend before she manages to break every single bone.

"Hi Gretel." Gakushu said in English like nothing has happened and Gretel snapping out of her rage beamed happily at her 'little brother'.
"Hi Gakushu-kun~ Are you okay? Ivan told me what happened." Her mood shifts from blood hungry to happy in a heartbeat.

"I'm fine, I was just caught off-guard." Gakushu give the girl a polite smile but one unlucky student made a very stupid decision.

"Class-E scum!" Seo was literally shaking in his boots pointing his finger at the blonde-haired girl.

'You idiot…' Gakushu started at Seo in disbelief and again keeping his professional appearance, that student just made it harder for Gakushu to calm down his senior.

Not a very good decision made by Seo. It is very lucky that Gretel and Gakushu act only on orders, if it was Grell instead then Seo would be sliced in half by the Death God's chainsaw. But Gakushu is really pushing knowing of her complex, dubbed the Gakushu or brother complex.

"I don't even go to your school you twat!" Gretel remarked switching back to Japanese and gave the finger to the terrified student. She is definitely losing her cool when she starts using British slang because she loves to keep her appearance of being a 'lady'. Although she can't just outright kill the students because it just gives her more paperwork to fill in even if the two just insulted her beloved Strawberry.

'Screw it! Gakushu is more important than paperwork!' Gretel thought.

"Now, how should I torture you for bullying my Strawberry here? I have been meaning to try out water-boarding for a while." Gretel started to crack her knuckles and her smirk is etching on her face. Gakushu had to step into the situation before it gets any worse. He swear that he can see fire in the background behind the blonde reaper.

He reminded himself of how terrifying of Gretel's little complex.

"I'm sure that Ivan is waiting for us, Gretel." Gakushu folded his arms waiting for his 'older sister's' response while tapping his feet. It given him the image that he was impatient which is not expected of the Chairman's son but this was very cute in the eyes of the blonde girl. Anything that Gakushu does that is deem cute (more like anything he does) easily catches Gretel's attention.

"Hai Gakushu-kun." Gretel jumped off Akari and the two walked off together. Well that was very interesting to the nearby bystanders.

Ren from the background seemed to spot the girl as he was attempting to call his friend, Gakushu. 'Gretel…?' He vaguely remembers of the girl from that time they met around the age of 11, she texts him here and there every so often.

Instead of going to the Lyrics Karaoke Bar, the two headed for Gretel home that is currently used as her design studio. Using just a regular key, she opened the door and the two entered greeted by a drinking Ivan. Thankfully it is something non-alcoholic, it was just cola and Gakushu sighed in relief.

"Hey Gakushu." The Russian greeted the boy "Got any homework today."

"Naturally no, class is too easy and it barely gives out work anyway." Gakushu shrugged as he went upstairs to put away his stuff after being told that his room is upstairs and labelled. Reaching to the door that reads 'A. Gakushu' he enters to find it already furnished and has everything he needed.

Now what to do now that Gakushu has this large amounts of free time? Gakushu changed from his
uniform into something more casual but at the same time stylish. Switching out his contacts and replacing it with his reaper glasses revealing his true eyes.

Going back downstairs to find Ivan was watching and analysing the latest surveillance footage from today while Gretel was working on her new branch of clothing. Gakushu joined next to Gretel while taking out the next language book to perfect, the next is Italian and Spanish.

What to do with this free time? Now that Gakushu is in Class-E, he doesn't have to do club activities or being Student Council President anymore. He had been meaning to perfect one of Gretel's many skills where she can imitate a person's voice.

How else did Gakushu managed to find the fact that he is a part of a three person dancing and singing group for 3 years? Adding to his Ichigo person with his blonde wig and reaper eyes.

Then Gakushu's phone started to ring, it was Ren again. He ignored it, Gretel asked "Who was it?"

"It was Ren." Gakushu answered as he turn the silent of his phones before placing it back into his pockets.

"You should talk to him." Gretel ordered turned to her junior, she too took off her contacts to reveal the eyes that every Grim Reaper possesses. It was the same for Ivan as well who is wearing his glasses.

"I rather not especially what just happened."

"What happened?" Ivan joined in the two's conversation.

"Two assholes was bullying our Gakushu here." Gretel recounting to the Russian of what just happen earlier, it is a good thing that Gakushu was there next to her is what Ivan was thinking while Gretel continued her speech.

"But Ren is different and you know it!" Gretel exclaimed as she stood up from her seat and her hands griping tightly.

"I know but I think I should avoid him for a little while." Gakushu gave the two a small smile before going back to his book.

Ivan and Gretel didn't press longer on the issue and as much Gretel would want Gakushu and Ren to be together again. She knew why Gakushu rather break the ties because they are Grim Reapers and they outlive humans by a longshot.

Gretel has plans anyway whether Gakushu likes it or not because big sister knows best after all. She finished her little project, a black hat with dog ears for Gakushu. Half of his clothes are made by Gretel and sadly half the time Gakushu acts as her test subject. This would be the usual scene;

"Gakushu-kun, I have new clothes I want you to test." Gretel sang as she hugged or groping Gakushu from the behind.

"Please like it be male clothes this time." Gakushu felt a chill through his spine and has his arms over his chest. Afterwards most of the time ends up with a game of cat and mouse. With Gretel being the cat and poor Gakushu as the mouse as he runs away when Gretel made either dresses or very age-inappropriate outfits.

For example a mini French maid outfit, a 'sexy school uniform' or cosplay outfit that usually fits with females.
It is becoming of an event similar to Ivan and Lucia's drinking games, "Run Forrest! Run!" That line from a fellow reaper echoes in Gakushu's mind. It is becoming of another exercise period for the two, he jumped up multiple buildings in hopes to escapes and somehow Gretel manages to be one step ahead of him.

It is also terrible for both Arthur and Gakushu when it is Gretel's turn to write the song for their next performance. 'The last time the power went to the girl, she wrote a song where the lines were I quote:'

'Matching the pace of our breathing. I can feel it seems to explode. The bites around my body. Drowning in love. Or that sexual moan from the very beginning of the song!'

Even if the dance routine was good with fast arm and leg movement, even if there is a lot of hip swinging. The two male singers and dancers had spent 10 minutes trying to compose themselves and failing as their faces were basically a tomato when they were first shown the song. There was stream emitting from their heads while Gretel was laughing her ass off.

Now it only takes the two males 5 minutes to compose themselves whenever they are about to practice or perform that very song now named as Pomp-pomp Love.

Now that Gakushu thinks about it, Karma has some aspects from Gretel but that didn't make the red head more likeable. Gretel is using her role as the oldest sister to tease both her 'little and older brother'. She does it in a way that doesn't antagonise Gakushu but to lighten up the mood, she balance this aspect of hers. Karma is just Karma and nothing else.

He wouldn't be surprised if Karma was the devil. Demon do exist in this world after all.

Ivan quickly finished his video analysis and Gretel ran out of material to work on.

The day went by with the three reapers trying to pass the time, they tried the game twister but it wasn't as fun with only three people. Ivan had Gakushu practiced on Russian which the boy spoke fluently.

Uno wasn't the best choice either because Gakushu always win or Gretel throws the game to let the boy win. Karaoke wasn't the same without Rilliane or Lucia joining in with Ivan and no drinking games thankfully because Gakushu has school the next day.

The three baked a cake and decorated it. They didn't eat it because they wanted the rest of group to enjoy it. Then Gakushu showed the pair of the weapon that is supposed to kill the yellow octopus, the green rubber knife to which Ivan was laughing and rolling on the floor. "That little thing supposed to be threatening to the alien!"

The three practiced scenarios to help Gakushu avoid suspicion, "I told you before I don't need any help Korosensei." Gakushu said in a prideful tone with an emotionless mask while Gretel tried on the role of Karma and Ivan trying Karasuma.

Gakushu and Ivan find it so unsettling that Gretel manages to capture the student's voice without any effort. "Gakushu-kun!" Gretel in her Karma voice sang and another chill was sent down the strawberry blonde's back.

The mental image of Karma saying 'Gakushu-kun' is enough to give the poor boy several nightmares.

Afterwards the three tried a movie marathon of Morgan Freeman because in quote of Ivan, "His voice is awesome! What else is there to say?" Watching the movies in their original language,
English. Ivan was urging Gretel to imitate the movie actor and to which she did so perfectly, the two males applauded of one of her many talents.

Soon the three fallen asleep together. Gretel smuggled next to Gakushu who was leaning next to a drooling Ivan.

The day slowly moves into the night where there is recovered moon illuminating the sky once again.

"I'm home." It is very late as Arthur opens the front door, the house is very dark with the only light source emitting from the living room. Arthur moved his way to the living room to see the three reapers huddling together and sleeping on the couch while the television is on.

Arthur smiled as he walks to turn off the TV set, he turns to the group and takes a photo adding into the collection. He looks at Gretel hugging Gakushu as they sleep and a memory flash into his mind to the days when Hansel was still around.

The days before he and Gretel became Grim Reapers.

He kissed the two's foreheads and grabbed a blanket to cover the pair. "Sweet dreams milord, milady." He remember the days of how he greet the twins back in the day.

Arthur wishes for the day when he sees Hansel again so Gretel can be happy again, that is his wanted future. For Gretel to be happy. "May you have sweet dreams Asano-kun." The male blonde gently pats Gakushu's head.

Gakushu had that same dream again, how many times must he be tortured like this?
The next day for Gakushu is a new day for him to observe the class that is training children to be the 'perfect soldiers' or assassins. Whatever you call it, it doesn't really matter to him.

Gakushu brushes his teeth while looking at the mirror next to Gretel who was doing the same. Ivan woke up earlier than the pair for his shift on surveillance of Class-E. Luckily for the Russian he is not alone today for his shift as Lucia is doing the shift with Ivan as well.

Rilliane is still in China for her conference on the education system (and possibly also on the being nicknamed Korosensei) and Wolfie is doing his usual work at the Forensic division of the Department.

"Have you heard? Rilliane is asked out by the stick in the mud Thomas Freeman during the conference." The blonde girl mumbled through her brushing.

"Thomas Freeman? Wasn't he from your branch?" Gakushu asked after he spits out the toothpaste solution and rinses his mouth with the tap water. He only vaguely remembers of the English reaper from the Management division, the only thing that stands out was that expandable Death Scythe of his that was similar to William T Spears.

One of the few things that he remembers about this reaper who has 50 years of experience is that when he woke up after committing his unforgivable act, he lost all of his human memories. He wouldn't even know his own name or the circumstances of his death not if for the files from the Retrieval Division.

He washes his toothbrush while Gretel continues the conversation. "Yes, don't know much about him though. Only knew him from Grell." Gretel only shrugged and continuously brushes her already bright and white teeth.

Arthur wakes into the bathroom as he yawns greeting to Gakushu and Gretel. Gakushu looks to the giant with envy. Even if Arthur is only in his 17 year old form, he is towering over the student.

"I'm going away for a few days to the American Branch tomorrow. Orders from the Department." Arthur spoke while he grabs his own toothbrush.

"Buy me and Gakushu something a gift while you're there." Gretel spoke as she spits out and rinsed her mouth.

"Will do Gretel." Arthur nodded, anything to make her happy Arthur will do. Although there are expectations to this aspect of Arthur's when it regards to Gakushu seeking protection from the blonde male from either;

Drinking games from Lucia and Ivan or dress up from Gretel. Or other situations…
It make Gakushu more of the adorable cinnamon roll he is when he hides under Arthur's shirt as if it was a safe haven.

"What are you doing today Gretel?" Gakushu asked as he places his coloured and prescribed contacts on. He is more at ease when he is around his reaper colleagues and it is much easier to talk to about anything really.

"Got morning shift today for soul collecting with Arthur and nothing else after that. Might dig around on this Thomas guy or that teachers of yours again." Gretel answered and brushing her short blonde hair.

Gakushu already in uniform heads out for school and the two blondes waved their goodbyes to the strawberry blonde boy who has some sweets in hand. Hopefully it will be enough to get him through the day, after yesterday now that everyone should distance from him after that speech of his so maybe the handful of sweets should do its job.

However Gakushu knew that this won't last for long as he finds that students from Class-E have a very strong sense of justice. For now he will continue the act as the Chairman's son who will remain distant and looks down on others until certain situations come into play.

And luckily for him as Gakushu walks to school, there is no red hair demon named Karma in sight when he walks up the mountain steps.

Before he heads into the classroom, he hears a certain conversation from a group of girls that catches Gakushu's attention stopping him right at the door.

"They just uploaded yesterday!"

"He's so cute."

"Earl is so dreamy!"

"Ichigo is cuter!"

Looks like the girls are talking about both a dancing and singing group named Candy fest that he, Arthur and Gretel formed back when he was 11 years old (not that they know that). Gakushu has been told by Rilliane that the group is gaining more popularity internationally recently.

More luck was on his side that the girls continued to talk about the group while Gakushu walks into class and set out his work. He can hear the song written by Arthur playing from Kayano's phone, it was the 'Cosplay Complex' song.

"Cosplay! Cosplay! Cosplay! Cosplay for me darling!" Gretel sang in a happy tone.

"I am just an ordinary boy who has a talented older sister and brother, looking at them from the distance and thought to myself that 'I am willing to do anything to make them happy'." This was Gakushu's part as he sang through his lines fitting to the quick tempo.

Although he had to mask his voice a bit so instead of the usual Gakushu voice, it is more of a moe or a cutesy voice. Something that won't say 'Is that Gakushu Asano?'

"Really then? Then please. Can you wear this maid outfit for me?" This again was sang by Gretel.

"Eh!" That single worded response is uttered by Arthur and Gakushu or should I say Ichigo?
The video itself is not really a dance number but a very short movie that goes along with song. Should Gakushu mention that Gretel was in bliss when Gakushu had to wear a French maid outfit? Or a Magical girl? A neko girl? A female school uniform? Nurse?!

To be fair, Arthur had to join in this game of dress up as well with choices such as a butler outfit or a sexy bartender costume.

The song continued to play as more students came into class and finally the school bell rang. First period today is language and he is getting out his set work.

For some reason, he is getting a ‘Gretel’ vibe from this language teacher, Irina Jelavic.

No, something much worse than a Gretel vibe. The first time Gakushu met the blonde teacher from the all-school assemblies, all he thought that he should avoid this woman at all cost.

He's already been smouldered by reapers daily and an extreme example is Gretel groping his chest to see how they have grown. He does not want have another person added to the list of ‘smouldered in most likely chest area.’

Just because he got used to it doesn't mind he minds it!

That list is already filled by half of the reapers that are stationed at Kunugigoako town, he is estimating the numbers stationed to be around 100 to 200.

Yes, their eyes and ears everywhere and the numbers has increased when Gakushu confirmed that there is an alien octopus that is his teacher in his hometown.

These reapers are either disguised or are unrecognisable from the public due to the fact they died decades or centuries ago.

Adding to the list are 'being hugged and covered in snot and tears' taking first place are Lucia and Ivan. Another list titled 'how can my life get any stranger than it is' with finding out that Class-E has an alien teacher who was behind the moon's destruction taking the cake.

Gakushu really wants cake now before all of this thinking gives him an irritating headache. He secretly pops another candy into his mouth and it is strawberry flavoured.

'Heaven~' He mentally cheered to himself even if he can't show it due to personal reasons. It is very difficult to keep his calm image and not have his cheeks flushed. There are no orders to not show this aspect of his because it is deemed to be 'very human.'

Gakushu knew that his father isn't around this part of school which was one of the main reason why he didn't eat any sweets back when he was in the main building but he can't allow himself to show his obsession for sweets.

Should the tally of how many trees Gakushu has killed should be added? Another thought came to Gakushu and he quickly drops that idea because that was a tally and not a list.

Although he feels that something will happen is much worst if he stayed around Irina Jelavic, that he will get a much worse experience than a grope occasionally from a certain person named Gretel.

Thankfully that feeling shifted away when Korosensei took over the class instead. He never thought that Korosensei would save the day even if this creature maybe the cause the end of Earth and life as we know it before the year ends.
Gakushu will make sure that his teacher's death won't be so painful when orders come in from the Department.

Gakushu is just not comfortable around Irina Jelavic and he does not want to stick around to find out why.

Gretel is terrifying enough with her complex, the Gakushu complex. Or the drinking habits of Lucia and Ivan during several in their games.

How much can they drink? They drank enough alcohol to kill a healthy adult 200 times. The best Gakushu himself can keep up although forcefully was enough to kill someone 25 times.

Rilliane the weakest in her alcohol can only drink enough to kill an adult 6 times before blacking out.

A Grim Reaper's body is very strange indeed. They have godlike endurance, unexplainable physical abilities and enhanced hearing. Although Gakushu's strength is twice of a regular reaper due to his 'prodigy in everything' status. Some might say that he already had level of a reaper's before his timely death and his reaper abilities just enhance more.

They can do what humans cannot possibly accomplished but yet have very terrible near-slightness.

What it worth to trade off good eyesight for all what Gakushu just listed?

*But this story won't be focusing on Gakushu.*

"Please pick up." Ren whispered into his phone as he attempts to call Gakushu Asano again. There was no answer once again.

Ren who has his hair half-shaven and spiked and his eyes are sharp with a hazel colour staring down his history of fail calls to Gakushu on his phone.

It's been almost 3 days since Gakushu transfers into Class-E and the last time he spoke or saw the boy properly. Ren hasn't been himself lately after that certain event, he no longer flirted with any of the girls in class and became distant from everyone else in school. That last part was for a very good reason though.

School has become a living hell now that Gakushu is gone because it left a power vacuum in Class-A. Many students are completing against each other to take the spot of leadership and sabotaging each other. Ren is currently having the best and highest score after Gakushu transferred and he is doing his best to avoid the spotlight as much as possible.

He has been searching through his list of poetry to find the perfect one so he can use to apologise the strawberry blonde boy for his mistakes. Or an idea in his attempts to talk to his friend.

He cannot afford to lose someone important to him again.

As he walk down away from school which it ended not too long ago, he wanders around aimlessly. Until he spots Gakushu's father in the distance, the same man who places his own son into the class for hopeless causes which Gakushu is not one. Without a second thought Ren dashes to the man and stopped right in front of him begging. He doesn't care if it causes a scene in public.

At the same time Gretel was finishing her shopping for clothing materials and as soon she steps out of the shop she spots Ren in the distance. He is seemly bowing to a man and as Gretel walk in closer to the two to find that the man was Gakuhou Asano. To avoid the mass of negative emotions waiting
to burst out, she instead focuses her attention on Ren Sakakibara.

Ren seems to be begging to be transferred into Class-E explaining that he did far worse than Gakushu in the exams.

"Swap me with Gakushu!" He bowed to the Chairman hoping that the man will change his mind. He waited for his answer and is drowning from the thick atmosphere. But anything with be worth it to have Gakushu back in Ren's mind.

The Chairman simply answered "No." That single response send a shiver down the boy's spine of how cold and emotionless it was. Ren slightly glanced up to see the Chairman cold smile and dark eyes prying into his very soul. Chairman walked off and into his car, driving off and leaving behind a stunned Ren.

Everything around him doesn't seem to matter him anymore like the world froze around him.

Gretel was amazed of how loyal Ren was and calls out to him although she isn't getting any response from him.

"Ren? Ren? Ren?" A girl's voice called out from behind but Ren continued to ignore it, he doesn't want to flirt with anyone today.

"Ren?" Gakushu voice called out from behind, immediately the almond-haired boy with high hopes turned back to only see a girl with short blonde hair in a salopettes dark navy dress and a white blouse underneath. She was also wearing a bright yellow unzipped hoddie with the hood on.

It crushes the glimmering hope he had the moment he didn't see the strawberry blonde haired boy in front of him.

"I'm sorry, I just had to get your attention." Gretel continued to speak in Gakushu's voice while smiling apologetically. This was the girl he met back when he was 11 years old.

'That was both a cruel and cook trick that she just did…' Ren thought with some gloom floating over his head.

"…Gretel?" Ren hesitantly spoke if he remembers correctly and Gretel nodded.

"It has been a long time hasn't it Ren-kun." She chirped back in her original voice as she did a little curtsy.

Gretel suggested to hang out at a nearby café for a while, Gakushu went off with Arthur to practice on their performance back at Gretel's place. Gretel left the two on their devices so she can start up on her plan to rekindle Gakushu's friendship with Ren.

Big sister knows best after all~

She gave an excuse to the two males that she is going out to buy some material for new costumes and some possibly sweets. It was worth it when she saw Gakushu's lit up in happiness due to his sweet obsession. She loves how his cheeks flush the colour of cherry blossoms and how his eyes sparkles with life.

Yes, the sparkles...

"How have you been Ren-kun?" Gretel sipped her Earl Grey tea as the two sat outside of the café. Ren ordered nothing although it didn't please the blonde haired girl. She instead gave some of her
pastries insisting that she cannot finish it all. "It's been almost 3 years since I properly saw you."

Ren stayed silent and nibbling on some of the food given by Gretel still remaining silent. "What happened? Did something happen between you and Gakushu-kun?" Gretel already knew what was happening and just wanted to start the conversation somehow.

"Gakushu recently transferred to Class-E and it's my fault." Ren answered in a whisper and of course Gretel knows that this wasn't simply true. Gakushu was only following orders from the Department to join the class known as the End Class.

"I don't see why it is your fault Ren-kun." Gretel said to the boy and took another sip of her tea.

"I did worst in my exams, everyone else in Class-A did but Gakushu and his father decided to punish Gakushu for all of mine and the class's mistakes." Now that Ren thinks about, maybe Gakushu should ignore him after what he has done?

"You don't know that? Gakushu is a very shy boy you know." Ren gave a weird look towards Gretel and she just giggled with one hand over her mouth.

"I have been with Gakushu for almost 4 years. Give him some time, he will come around." She spoke with glee. Ren wanted to say that he too been with Gakushu for 4 years but he can see the difference between himself and Gretel. Gretel is seen almost as an equal to Gakushu in terms of intelligence and talents as he remembers the experience of when Ren first met the girl.

"To tell you the truth, I moved here just a few years ago so I already knew that Gakushu transferred to Class E." Gretel rests her cheek with her hand and gave a warm smile to Ren. "Trust me, he doesn't blame you at all Ren-kun."

"But…" Ren doesn't know what to say next.

But for some reason, Ren feels that he can trust this girl in front of him that he hasn't properly seen for three years. He feels that he can talk about anything of his problems like she has a presence of an older sibling. Gretel looks wiser than what her appearance is giving out to be.

Is it strange to think that her presence reminds him of Gakushu? She makes it so much easy for him to talk to and the words just escape from his mouth. Bringing out his true feelings.

"I just feel that I am taking advantage of him…" Ren hesitantly spoke and his head and shoulders dropped. The atmosphere slightly changed around the blonde girl. Her emerald green eyes thanks to her contacts emitted a dangerous glint.

"How so?" Gretel asked in a more monotone voice, waiting for Ren's answer that will either further or discontinue her plans. Because Gakushu's happiness is a part of her happiness.

"How can I explain this?" Ren quickly catching onto the slight change in Gretel's tone almost panicked and started to way around his arms in hopes it will help to answer her question. "Whenever I am with him, I feel complete I guess?"

That completely surprised Gretel although she didn't show it to the boy in front of her and keeping to a professional manner like how Gakushu does. Earlier she held thoughts that Ren only became friends with Gakushu for social or status gains or both. Thankfully this wasn't the case and she feels terrible for thinking so.

Now she calls herself stupid for thinking ahead as she knew that this boy in front of her begged for Gakushu's father to swap Gakushu's place in Class-E. No-one that is looking for status gain would
do that after all. Ren was willing to swallow his pride to see Gakushu again.

This answer from Ren was very strange to her as well, it almost reminded of herself and Gakushu. As well as almost every one of their little group.

"Gakushu is very smart at everything he does and since I like the arts more, it sort of completes me I guess... Science and Arts like Ying and Yang almost." Ren meekly smiled as he thought of the strawberry blonde boy while he continued his answer.

Gretel has heard of this before. This sort of answer before…

’Where I have heard of this?’ Gretel thought as she sips her tea listening in the boy’s answer. She knows that she heard of this before but she just can't put her finger on it.

She soon realises that Ren finished talking while she was off in her little world of thought.

Looking at Ren who was waiting for her response, Gretel mentally smiles and decided to further her plans as she finally finishes her tea.

"I see, I understand now."

"Gretel said as she stood up from her seat. She looks down to Ren who held a sad look on his face and was already expecting the worse. Gretel looked at the boy with a mischievous glint in her emerald green eyes.

"How about this Sunday? I can have Gakushu see you that day." Gretel sang, she wishes that she took a photo of Gakushu's human friend reaction. It was quite funny with his jaw wide open and a confused expression painted on his face.

"Many a dinner reservation? Want me to choose the place?" She asked with a cheerful smile as she clapped her hands together.

"EH?" That was the only response from the hazel haired boy. He quickly raised from his seat "But I just told you that I-

Gretel quickly interrupted the boy by stuffing his mouth with what left of her pasty. After he swallows it, she said "Gakushu-kun will understand." There wasn't any doubt in her voice.

Before Ren can retort this statement of hers, Gretel finished the topic with one final sentence. "After all, I am his big sister." She gave a warm smile to the blonde and coincidentally a light breeze blew from behind causing her dress to flutter a bit and short blonde hair dancing along with the breeze.

"I will call you to discuss this later, okay?" Kissing both of his cheeks which leaves him with a face of a tomato. After saying her goodbyes, she quickly leaves the café which she can't obviously tell that it was reaper-run to the boy so the check is going through her account.

_Gakushu was right, Grim Reapers are everywhere in Kunugigoako town._

What's next? A reaper run arcade?

Gretel walked deeper into town, she grabs her customised smart-phone out from her handbag. She calls through the Identification Division line and hopes that someone will pick up.

"Hola~" That voice is a reaper from the Spanish Branch named Antonio Abano. Gretel switches her language to Spanish in hopes that no-one around her can understand what she is saying. It would be unlikely for someone in Kunugigoako town to be fluent in Spanish.
"Antonio, I need you to look into Ren Sakakibara." Gretel spoke in Spanish as she walks through the crowds.

"You know that you are not allow to change their fates-" The male voice reminds the female reaper.

"You think I don't I know that, I just need you to look into some personal details and that's it. No fates or anything. Just some personal details." Gretel still keeping her professional image of a 'lady' and is very careful to not yell to gather more attention. Her language skills is already giving her some exotic looks from the crowd but she is in a hurry.

She gives out her final orders, "Make sure you send it through my phone only, do not tell anyone."

"You own me one." Gretel can feel a smirk etching on his face but she too smirk although internally because she has a secret weapon on her side.

"Gakushu singing his Pudding Song." Gretel said and she can already imagine that Antonio exploded from sheer happiness. The legendary song that Gakushu wrote during his first years as a Grim Reaper.

"Deal!" Antonio cheered and Gretel ended the phone call. She sighed to herself.

Gretel trusted Ren but that didn't help the uneasiness brewing inside her. She hopes that this file will make it disappear. Just check some personal details and cross it off from her list.

She knows where she heard his words before but she doesn't know where from. She hopes that the boy's file can rid of this feeling of hers because Ren is such a nice and cute boy.

Ren is Gakushu's first real friend after all and Gretel intends for Ren to remain so for a very long time.

It won't be long for his life flicker away like a candle lit, a human's life can sometimes just be a blink to a Grim Reaper. Gretel doesn't want Gakushu to have regrets because of this choice of ignoring his friend in hopes to soften the blow when Ren one day dies.

Maybe buying some mochi for Gakushu can distance herself for the time being? It is not always good to have such negative thoughts as a reaper's job is quite depressing after a while.

She must continue her act as Gakushu's older sister rather all as Gakushu continues his act as the son of the Chairman. She enters a nearby shop known for its sweets.

"I like to have 10 boxes of mochi please~"
Short Story: A Reaper's Breakdown

Chapter Summary

Life as a Grim Reaper is quite depressing, some just eventually snap...

A Reaper's Breakdown

A Grim Reaper job can be very depressing and eventually it causes a mental breakdown for many of its reapers.

When Gakushu had been a reaper for almost a whole year, he learnt one of the many dark secrets of the Grim Reaper.

It all started during the school holidays where Gakushu would usually be at the Department's central building that connect to all of the Branches. It was the place where reapers could easily go from Japan, to France and to America with only a simple teleportation key in under a minute.

An aspect of Gakushu was that he likes to hand in his reports on Kunugigaoka by hand himself at the front desk instead of Rilliane having to do it for him. Usually she would hand in the report as she was the one who was more often is paired up with Gakushu's retrieval shifts.

It is tradition to pair up a senior and junior together and be stuck with that for many years. Luckily this is a very flexible tradition. So if he wanted to, Gakushu could either do it alone or with someone else from his group of friends. He doesn't mind if Rilliane is paired up with him and she had said that it is good for him to socialise with other reapers anyway.

Earlier today, since he had no school due to the holidays and because his father was out of the town business, the strawberry blonde decided to take on the early shift and wasn't paired up with any one. There wasn't much work in Kunugigaoka town so Gakushu only collected four souls and all of them being the elderly.

Rilliane was trying to let Gakushu to get a bit more experience now that the school holidays were around. She was hoping that a small transfer to the Americas for a couple of days would be good for him. She was currently working out the details on when he boy would do it, if he wanted to.

He might as well do it since the amount of free time he had now, the group had been meaning to go to Disneyland together.

Gretel said that her little Strawberry was growing up to be a big boy while he was reading his list of souls on his customised phone, claiming that he was doing his shift alone. The usual routine for Gakushu was that he checks the list on his phone first before using his hard-copy booklist.

As Gakushu waited in line filled with other reapers of all sorts of backgrounds to hand in their report at the front desk. His head was suddenly filled by an ear-piercing scream and he and many others turned to where the scream was coming from.

One of the main doors used by teleportation keys that were within the Grim Reaper realm, rather than the Human realm. It was opened to reveal the same Russian and German that Gakushu knew,
Ivan and Lucia.

Lucia's appearance was dishevelled, her long blonde hair tangled in knots as it covered her face. Her chartreuse phosphorescent eyes were red and puffy, telling Gakushu that the blonde has been crying. Her rectangular glasses were stained from her tears and he watched as Lucia tried to free herself from her friend.

"Let go of me! I have to find him!" Lucia was struggling under Ivan's hold as he was barely keeping her constrained under his grip.

Ivan yelled at the building, "Medic! I need medic! I need the Ward" Ivan yelled in the building, as his pale face held a panic look. As soon as he said the 'keyword', people around Gakushu rushed into the scene. As Gakushu looked around, he saw that those who went were mainly seniors rushing in to help.

"Help me! I need to find my baby!" Lucia continued to yell as more people came in to restrain her.

"Where is my baby!?" She cried out, thrashing around as people began to surround her and Ivan.

Gakushu stood there, frozen in his place like the many those who had lesser experience than the seniors, watching the scene playing in front of them.

'What on Earth is happening?' It was shocking for Gakushu as he knew Lucia personally. She was the type of person who was always cheery, happy and very relaxed with a hint of flirt for her beloved Wolfie now and then.

"My baby! Where is my baby!?" Lucia continued to scream out her words. Gakushu thought she was just like a fanatic person, crying and screaming out her words. Someone who was trying to free herself from the grips of many reapers attempting to calm her down.

Like a mother who was trying to find her lost child.

A team from the Medical Ward quickly came over in pure white lab coats came to the screaming woman and injected a sleeping agent into her. Lucia as she slowly drifts away into unconsciousness, Lucia continued her mumbling as tears rained down from her reaper eyes.

"Let go of me… I have to find my baby…" Lucia's final words before she entered into the world of darkness.

Ivan carried the sleeping Lucia in his arms and is followed the medical team down the hallways. Many of the senior reapers around him acted as if nothing happened, like it was an everyday occurrence. While the juniors such as Gakushu were confused about the scenario that just played out.

'What just happened?' Gakushu thought to himself after witnessing such a scene, he needed answered and thankfully, one came to him.

Thanks to his enhanced hearing, he overheard a conversation from those who helped to restrain the German. "Another one." One reaper said sadly as he talked to his co-worker next him.

"What do you think triggered it?" Another reaper asked to his co-worker. The other only shrugged to indicate that he didn't know.

Gakushu decided it would be best for him to hand in his report first to calm himself down before seeing his friend.
It took Gakushu 6 months to be able to call someone a friend so easily and the group was very proud of this accomplishment.

As soon he handed in his report, he hurried his way to the Medical Ward where he went to the counter. "What room is Lucia Mühe in?" He asked, not bothering to give a charming smile to the secretary as he would if he was in the Human realm.

"Oh you must be Rilliane's boy." The secretary quickly rose up from her seat with a key in hand, and she opens the door behind her. Using the key, the door reveals another Ward, "Are you coming as well, Gretel?"

Gakushu turned around to see Gretel in her usual attire and form, she nodded "Yes. I will also be guiding Gakushu-kun. Let's go." Gretel went into the door with Gakushu quickly followed behind.

"What just happened Gretel?" Gakushu asked as he quicken his pace to walk side by side with Gretel.

"I was hoping it would be a long time before you witness something like that." Gretel answered with a sad faint smile. As the two continued to walk down the white halls of the Ward, Gakushu could see the patients o each room through the large glass panels in each one.

One certain patient catches his eye and it was a certain someone from the Australian Branch. "An?"

The Australian girl taking on the appearance of an 18 year old was sitting in the corner and wearing a hospital gown. She acted as an instructor back when Gakushu was learning the ways of the reaper. Her usual group of friends James, Johnny and Mark stood outside of the glass panel watching her in concern as she mumbles her words. "I'll be good… I'll be good."

Gretel walked past the group and Gakushu followed right beside her while he looked back to what he just saw. A reaper dressed in white went to the group.

"This is the Mental Ward specifically for reapers experiencing the 'breakdown'." Gretel explained and finally the two finally reached to the room where Lucia is housed at, room 54. Lucia was now conscious, wearing a hospital gown while continued her cries as she sat in her room. Ivan stood outside of her room and was watching his friend continuing her sobs through the glass.

"Breakdown?" Gakushu almost let his fear emitted in his words but he stopped himself in time. He couldn't allow himself to appear at such a moment.

"Yes, a reaper's job can be quite depressing after a while. You are force on the job to watch people's regrets and attachments when you're on shifts." Gretel greeted the Russian and he faintly smile to the two, before placing his gaze back on Lucia. "Eventually some just snap…"

Ivan ignored interfering with the conversation of the two, knowing that Gakushu has now learnt one of the darkest aspect of a Grim Reaper. It was best for the strawberry blonde boy to know now. He continued to watch his Lucia's breakdown while waiting for Wolfie to come and help calm down her.

Lucia soon turned to the group, her eyes widening when she saw Gakushu Asano. "My baby!" She ran to the boy and was stopped by the glass wall in front of her. Nevertheless, Lucia smiles as she looks at Gakushu who was very confused.

"My baby, my baby." She repeat her words over and over again. It looks like she is trying to touch Gakushu's face behind the glass panel. Wolfie finally arrived at room 54 and went inside alone into the room to comfort his significant other. It looked like a child being comforted by her parent with
Lucia resting on Wolfie's lap.

For some reason, Gakushu felt envious of her.

Gretel and Gakushu watched the scene, unmoving and Gretel continued her explanation. "Not everyone has a breakdown but anything can trigger it."

"Those with regrets or desires are more prone. Maybe some dark memories can do the trick as well? I'm not too sure myself." Gretel's chartreuse phosphorescent eyes reflected on the glass panel as she looked at Lucia, the same for Gakushu.

"No-one knows when it will come but it goes like clockwork. Some have annually or monthly or something just triggers it. An outburst rarely happens when we are on shifts in the Human realm thankfully but it has happened before..." Ivan now joined in the conservation, he glancing at the boy before his reaper eyes revert back to Lucia again.

"But what we do know is that once someone has their first breakdown then we expect more to come." Gretel's words rang in Gakushu's head as he could hear it repeat itself over and over, remembering it word for word.

Over the course of the next couple of years, Gakushu learnt that Rilliane was a victim to this as well. He remembered watching her scribbling drawings of faces as he watches her behind the glass panels. "What colour?" She repeated those words, she was trying to find out what colour of her eyes once were when she was human.

You might ask, 'Why not just show her a picture back when she was human?' This doesn't work, for when she sees it, there is only blackness covering her face on the photo. She cannot see who she once was, for body or her mind just blocks it out.

Eventually, Rilliane's desires built up on each other before making her snap. Rilliane only experience this once every few years.

Gakushu also learnt why Lucia's breakdown started, as it was her desire to become a mother. However a reaper's body can never allow that. It was disturbing for him to hear that it was one of the most common reasons why many other reapers across the Branches have a mental breakdown. For Lucia's case, it can come out of nowhere but it only happens a few times a year.

After someone is calmed from their 'burst', it is acted like if it never happened. At first, Gakushu thought it was strange. But at the same time, he was relieved as it wouldn't make the conversations or interactions with said one awkward.

After a bit of deduction, Gakushu had realised that this sort of thing was now a normal occurrence to the Department and would always be. It is just accepted as a part of life.

Some reapers are able to break out from their breakdown, but only after many years. That is why it has been said that the first 50 years of a reaper is one of the most dangerous times. As the percentages of breakdowns are much higher.

Gakushu soon learns to accept this as a part of life as a Grim Reaper, for nothing can be done to stop such a thing. All that he can do was to help calm them from their breakdown or just watch. For Lucia's case where they learnt that Lucia in her unbalanced mental state views Gakushu as her 'lost' son. So he would act as her's.

Gakushu just hoped that he wouldn't be the next victim, as he too have desires that even he would
never tell his group of friends about. He remembered that Gretel has desires as well, and hasn't experienced one single breakdown in her 200 years of experience. She possibly might never will have one now that she passed the 50 year mark.

Gakushu hopes that he is the same as her.
A Date?

Chapter Summary

Where Gakushu expresses bits of his true self...

A Date?

It was now Friday and Gakushu was waiting for their final period to finally end. He soon realised how much free time he really had, and didn't know what to do with it. Back when he was in the main building, his work kept him busy. Even though he thought it was too much for him back when he was 11, now that he was 14 it was much more manageable than he remembered.

Did his reaper abilities give him something more as well? Was it the fact that he was spending more time with a certain prodigy like himself named Gretel, who happened to have 200 years of experience.

Shifts wouldn't start for him until next Tuesday. He was feeling much better after his first 'suicide' and was ready to get back into his shifts. He knew that it was a very bad idea for him to memorise the entire Japanese curriculum in the first place.

Why? What should he have done with this free time? He didn't have any shifts yet, Rilliane was still in her conference in China, Lucia was stuck with teaching duties again and Arthur went to America due to orders from the Department. Wolfie was doing his usual work in his Division.

It was hard enough on Wednesday where there was only Ivan, Gretel and himself trying to pass time. Yesterday was okay because Arthur was around so their little dance group could practice although Gretel went off to buy some clothing material. It got him some good quality mocha after her trip though.

'What to do?' Gakushu thought to himself as he ignored Korosensei's lesson since he did memorise the Japanese curriculum anyway. Of course he pretended that he was paying attention to avoid suspicion, but what could he do? Perhaps have a mental overview of the week to pass the time?

Avoid showing one's inhumane strength during PE, check.

Complete work and homework on time (or very early), check.

Avoid Miss Irina as humanely as possible and do not stand out in her classes, check.

Today Gakushu have discovered why he should avoid that certain blonde teacher, for he witnessed in her language class that she kissing the students as a punishment and as a reward. Gakushu didn't want to have his first kiss stolen by that woman.

Gakushu could already imagine the group or the entire Department saying to the boy "That is definitely the cinnamon roll" or Gretel saying "My little Strawberry is far too pure for this world." He just recently found out the meaning of the nickname 'cinnamon roll' was.

Was he viewed as such an innocent person by his reaper peers?
So what if his face turn into a tomato whenever he reads the certain songs written by Gretel. Or when he covered his face yesterday at Gretel's place when Lucia walks out of the shower in only a towel?

Or what if whenever something inappropriate is said by someone, his ears are immediately blocked by him or someone in the group. It is surely a normal reaction from a 14 year old, right?

Another thing that Gakushu likes to add is that there were too many close calls during PE. He almost added tree number 102 to his tally.

Thankfully he narrowly missed it and avoided the looks from his classmates. He also to avoid the topic of why he lost the Sports Festival if he was that strong in the first place, for it could give away his true nature.

Gakushu couldn't just say that he was following orders from the organisation that fixed the moon. Maybe he could make up an excuse that he didn't ate cake on that day or during exam day?

Yeah… that could work. It was sad to think that the entire community in the Department could reason with that.

Gakushu reminded himself to better control his own strength as difficult as it was. Why must he have twice the strength of a Grim Reaper? Or everything else? Why must his once perfect eyesight be traded off?

'Maybe I should start on my poetry book again?' Gakushu thought to himself as he stares down at his desk. The secret notebook that only person in the whole school that knew of if its existence was Ren.

Gakushu quickly shook his head from the sudden image of the almond haired boy from his mind.

The same notebook had been sitting in his school bag and hadn't been been touchrf since Gakushu came to class 3-E.

He quickly shift his hand to his bag to grab out the notebook that was still in mint condition since he first obtained the book from his second birthday as a Grim Reapers. It was strawberry themed and a gift from Wolfie who typically buys the boy strawberry themed stationary as it was a continuing gag of the group. Flipping over to a blank page, Gakushu wrote a very short poem that may be a potential song he titled, 'Blink'.

Finally the bell rang and many students dashed out of the classroom. Gakushu neatly places back his books into his bag until a photo on the wooden floor catches his attention. It was a photo of a girl with long blue hair and was wearing a summer dress.

As soon he picks up the photo, a certain red head's arm wrapped over Gakushu's shoulder. "What you got there Second Place!?" Gakushu quickly learn that he had to accept this and he felt his mouth starting to twitch from the mere sound of Karma's voice.

From Karma's perspective, he had spotted Gakushu picking up one of the Nagisa's mother photos of his 'dress-up' that she accidently left behind. The red head immediately hatches a plan to save his blue-haired friend from the potentially smugness of the Chairman's son. Karma's amber eyes glances at Nagisa, who started panicked from looking at Gakushu who picked up the photo.

"Oh, I know her. Her name is Hana and she has been meaning to go out with you." Karma chirped and Gakushu's violent eyes never left from the photo. "I'm great friends with her you see. Don't know why she likes you but she asked me if you want to go on a little date with her? How about it?"
Sometimes Karma doesn't get Gakushu Asano, at times he can act uninterested like a robot. Other times though rarely he acts how he usually back when he was in the main building. A lot of things isn't adding up concerning about the strawberry blonde boy.

Karma along with Nagisa knew that Gakushu has been holding back in PE and now that he thinks about it, Gakushu has been doing it since the start of Junior High. Was he really that overconfident in his abilities? It wasn't the first time that it back fired on him.

"But I know that since you are the perfect Chairman's son that you don't have time for such a thing." 'Surely Gakushu won't have the time for such a thing.' Karma thought smugly.

"Actually I have time." Gakushu said as he removes the arm that was over his shoulder.

'….Shit' Karma did not predict this whatsoever but he couldn't show his surprise to his rival, "How about tomorrow at 12? Local mall?"

"Sure, but I'd rather like it if she asked me in person." Gakushu shrugged. This could be a ticket for Gakushu to find a past time and being the gentleman he is, he couldn't just reject a girl outright without knowing who she was. The girls from the main building didn't count because he knew the reason why they wanted him. Gakushu quickly left the room and was out of school in no time.

Gakushu was sure that Ivan will tell Gretel about his little 'date.' He hopes that Gretel doesn't go overboard about this… what is he thinking?!

This is Gretel he is talking about! The girl who has a Gakushu 'little brother' complex. Hopefully mercy would be on his side and Ivan won't tell her. For both the girl's and his sake.

Nagisa and Kayano who also witness the scene is told by Karma to come to his apartment for tomorrow's big day.

'Wait… Who is that girl Gakushu was with a few days ago?' Karma suddenly remembered of the girl who has short blonde hair he saw a few days ago before shrugging it off. 'Must be a mindless follower then.'

*That guy doesn't do friends in the first place.*

Before going back to Gretel's place, Gakushu decided that he would pick up some cake first to get him mentally prepared of what could possibly come next.

Thankfully when Gakushu arrived back at Gretel's place, Gretel didn't jump at him to discuss on plans for tomorrow. As he walks in, Gretel is trying to past time with Ivan like how they did on Wednesday. This time the two are playing monopoly and Gretel is clearly winning and Ivan almost bankrupted.

"Welcome back Gakushu-kun~" Gretel sang and the Russian greeted, though was more focused on his next move in hopes of defeating his senior. Gakushu mentally sighs in relief, seeing that Gretel didn't know about tomorrow meaning Ivan hasn't told her.

Gakushu thanked the heavens and he also blessed the Russian.

Gakushu greeted back and he walks upstairs to his room to change. After switching his contacts for his black framed glasses and his school uniform for something more casual. He popped on the black hat with dog ears Gretel made not too long ago. He is quite fond of this hat if he was honest to himself.
Not that Gretel needs to know that, but she probably knew anyway.

He went back downstairs to join the two and when he did Gretel was jumping over her victory after Ivan given up the game.

Now another day of attempting to pass the time, so Gakushu worked on his next language to perfect which was Dutch. Ivan did his surveillance footage analysis and because Gretel was out of materials to work on, she went to help Gakushu on his Dutch and to practice hers as well.

After both Gakushu and Gretel finished perfecting their Dutch, Ivan had just finishes his job. Gakushu blessed him again as Ivan was using headphones to listening in the video preventing Gretel from hearing tomorrow's plan.

Another day came, and to attempt to pass time. They decided to try origami, going to create 1000 paper-cranes. It was done in under an hour.

Since Ivan was the one who added the 1000th crane, he wished for some good quality vodka.

"Of course." Gakushu thought after knowing the Russian for almost 4 years.

Hide and seek was off because only having three people play was just boring. And thankfully no drinking games again for Gakushu since Lucia wasn't around. Chess wasn't the best choice as well since Ivan was up against two prodigies in pretty much everything. Gretel would still throw off the game to allow her Strawberry to win anyway.

Ivan suggested that the two to write a duet to which they did however they quickly finished it in 30 minutes. Both the lyrics and composing.

The next thing the three tried to do is creating a fort so it could be later be used for the next movie marathon. Since it was Gretel's turn to pick, from the 'mystery hat' that was filled with movies, she picked Leonardo Dicaprio films. Gakushu vaguely remembers from a certain Australian group being sad that they can no longer do have any 'Leonardo no Oscar' memes.

Soon the day slowly moves into the starry nights.

Again like Wednesday, the three slept in the living room on the couch while leaving the television set on.

This time Lucia walks into the group instead of Arthur like last time. She enters into the dark house to find that the only light source was coming from the living room. Quietly shifting her way to the room, she peered inside to find the three sleeping together on the couch.

She smiles at the sight of the drooling Russia whose arms are wrapping around Gretel and Gakushu. While the three was surround by pillows which Lucia can only assumed to be the remains of their little fort.

Like Arthur, she turns off the electronic and covers the three with a blanket. "Good Night" She whispers in German before going upstairs.

She quickly went back downstairs to the sleeping three to take a photo for her collection with her own customised smart phone, 'Almost forgot.'

It is now Saturday and Nagisa who is fully disguised is waiting at the local mall. Wearing a simple white dress with many frills, he had a long-haired wig that fits from the photo. 'Remember the plan.'
He thought to himself as he waited for his 'date.'

Karma and Kayano is at a distance watching Nagisa from a hiding spot, hopefully everything goes would go according to plan. With at the end of the date, 'Hana' would tell Gakushu that she was going out with him in the first place because of his father. Cruel, but it also serves as a nice small revenge after what Gakushu has done to them and the rest of Class-E for this year.

There is a voice transmitter fitted under Nagisa's dress, just an extra measures that could also be used as black mail material in case the date if it somehow went wrong.

Nagisa now posing as Hana nervously waits for the strawberry blonde haired boy. "I am so sorry that you have to wait Hana-san." Gakushu's voice called out, Nagisa turn his head to the boy and was very shocked of what he was wearing. As for Karma and Kayano, they too were shocked of what Gakushu was wearing.

'So this was what Korosensei was talking about.' Karma thought as he stares at Gakushu from his hiding spot.

Gakushu was wearing much casual clothing, a simple black hoodie jumper and denim jeans. But what was most surprising was the dog-eared black hat he was wearing. It made him adorable and it definitely didn't gives him the appearance or aura as the Chairman's son.

Nagisa was almost blinded by the sheer amount of cuteness that Gakushu was emitting. It was very surprising that Gakushu didn't use this to his advantage, but at the same time a good thing as well.

"Hello Asano-kun." Nagisa bowed to the boy.

"You can call me Gakushu, Hana-san." Gakushu gave the 'girl' a polite smile, "Have you eaten yet?"

Nagisa stutters his words "N-No… I haven't." He couldn't just take off his blue eyes off of that hat that Gakushu was wearing. The blue haired cross-dressing boy could see that it was tailored made. "Do you want to eat at a café?"

Karma, Kayano and Nagisa swore that they could see sparkles surround Gakushu. "Sure" Gakushu happily beamed.

Was this really Gakushu Asano?

Yes, it is, if you asked the Department. Gakushu thought it was a good idea to show a bit of his true self, his sweet obsessing self.

What the date didn't know was that they were being watched by a certain blonde and a certain Russian, Gretel and Ivan.

Gretel is hiding behind one of the mall's plants while Ivan in a 17 year old form is hiding alongside with her. "Why did you wanted me in this form again?" The Russia whispers to Gretel as she excitedly watches her little Strawberry.

Ivan was wearing a simple white tank top that shows his toned muscles and abs with a dog-tag necklace around his neck. Matching with this, black baggy pants and military styled boots. He was using the coloured contacts giving his eyes the colour of the night sky, his once human eyes.

"It would be creepy if a 20 something year old man was watching a 14 year old." Grete bluntly answered as she continues to watch Gakushu interacting with his 'date'. She was wearing a larger black and white hoodie that almost acted as her dress with some shorts underneath. Her hood was up
and her eyes were hidden behind dark sunglasses. She was wearing her usual contacts that gave her eyes the colour of the English plains.

Yesterday just after covering for Ivan's shift and doing her own shift, she was doing her usual shopping for clothing material. She then was spotted by a fan of the band that she, Arthur and Gakushu formed. She was recognised as Hazel, she greeted the fan of course and allowed her to take a photo together. Gretel did asked them not to tell anyone, which the fan furiously nodded.

She wasn't taking any second chances for Gakushu's special day! She could already imagine a *shoujo* style romance between the two. And like Gakushu, Gretel was emitting sparkles.

What Gakushu didn't know was that Ivan did in fact told Gretel about his little day at the mall. Gretel did a very good job on hiding her excitement, for she could it whenever she wants. She thinks that it's much more fun to let her love burst out.

She was Gakushu's older sister after all, who happened to have a Gakushu complex…

As soon Gakushu and the disguised Nagisa walks off to the nearest café, Gretel rises from her hiding spot "After them!" She said, pointing to the two.

These two reapers followed Gakushu, in hopes that the date would go perfectly. It's very easy if the mall is filled with reaper-run establishments, which they are. They are everywhere…

Oddly enough Karma and Kayano didn't notice the two reapers and they too followed after the dates.

The two sat outside of the café and Nagisa as Hana ordered some food. Ivan noticed a gang coming in a direction towards Gakushu at a distance. When Gretel ignored the Russian for a good minute, Ivan went off to deal with the delinquents, who were stationed at the abandoned part of the mall.

"What are you doing?" Ivan asked the group of men, who were trying to act menacing. Ivan in terms of appearance look much smaller compared to them. His flat yet bouncing and curly black hair didn't help to cremate his strong or scary image.

"Get lost kid!" The leader of the pack yelled, pushing the once KGB officer back. Ivan glances of what they were holding, baseball bats and pocket knives.

'Did they just called me a kid?' Ivan stared blankly at the gang, wondering why they just called a 40 something year old a child.

'Did they just called me a kid?' Ivan stared blankly at the gang, wondering why they just called a 40 something year old a child.

"Why don't you go to sleep for a long while kid?" The leader of the gang smirked as he looks down onto the fallen reaper. "Nosy piece of shit." He muttered under his yellow crooked teeth.

His minion eyed at Gakushu from a distance, "Can't wait for break that brat's every bone he has?"

"His little daddy was the reason why my life is ruined" One crony bitterly muttered.

"That girl is probably in that same Class-A as him." Another crony added to the conversation.

"And his lady friend will be extra fun." One person leered with a lustful look.
"Da~ Is that so?" A certain Russian eerily spoke from behind, the gang quickly turned back in fear of how the male in front of them was standing up like nothing happened. Ivan cracked his neck a bit as he moves his head side to side a bit.

"It has been a while since back when I was in Russia that I actually beat up someone." Ivan said, as his anger started to raise as he tilted his head a bit to the side. "I really don't want to fill in paperwork, and I'm not really allowed to be involved in such matters after all." Ivan couldn't just outright kill humans without orders from the Department as per rules.

Ivan smiles at the gang and his black eyes closed. Even though there was a smile etching on the Russian's face, he is clearly not happy one fucking bit.

A dark haze is emitting from his body as it surrounded Ivan, "But I can make an exception here." Ivan sang playfully, getting in touch with his KGB persona at the same time.

"I have time anyway~" The gang of delinquents screamed in terror as Ivan walk closer to them with the same bloodied metal pole that hit the back of his head.

Injuring humans without orders won't get any reapers any sort of punishment or paperwork.

"Da~"

Just be thankful that Gretel didn't get involved in this. It was mild of what she did to Akari, who was currently in hospital because Gakushu was there to calm her.

"Ivan where were you!?" Gretel harshly whispers to the Russia who just came back to her side.

"Just had to deal with some bullies." He gave a toothy grin to the blonde haired girl, "What did I miss?"

Gretel puffed her cheeks, "Luckily for you, nothing much. Just some small talk here and there."

"Like what?" Ivan asked.

"You know, hobbies and stuff." Gretel answered and the two went back to focus on their little cinnamon roll. "The girl, Hana is into flower arranging and from a different school who saw Gakushu when she went to his school to pick up a friend."

'Like love at first sight!' Gretel thought as she was getting in touch with her inner shoujo.

Now back to the 'date'.

Nagisa or Hana watched as Gakushu was happily eating his strawberry shortcake. "Do you like sweets Gakushu-san?" Gakushu nodded as he took another bite of his cake.

"But I never see you eat sweets when you are in the main building?" Nagisa has been very curious of the boy in front of him. This was definitely not the same Gakushu from Class-E or when he was Class-A.

"I was never really allowed because of the Chairman," Gakushu answered and 'Hana' nodded. Nagisa took note of how he said Chairman instead of family terms.

Gakushu looked around the café and for some reason, it looks very familiar.

He got his answer when he saw An at the counter, who winked, giving him the thumbs up to the
strawberry hair boy. Nagisa must have seen Gakushu going slightly pale.

'Hana' just happen to have chosen a place that was reaper-run… Shit.

No wonder why the cake was up to Gakushu's standards than other places. He realised that he had extra strawberries on his cake as well.

"I should go pay-" Gakushu was then interrupted by a certain Australian named Johnny who suddenly appeared at the two's table.

"It's on the house after seeing a happy customer like yourself." Johnny then went to pinch Gakushu's cheeks while laughing and Nagisa quickly paled. Surely, this would go downhill as Nagisa assumed. Another Australian named James quickly slapped Johnny's hand away.

"You shouldn't be interrupting their date John." James spoke to his best friend in English. Nagisa understood most of the conversation, and also blushed at the mention of the word 'date'.

"But mate, I just wanted to see Shuuie~" Johnny pouted, replying back in English. They continued their talk in English.

Nagisa stared at the two workers and almost in envy of how mature the two look. Cleary these two were foreigners because no-one that tall and so young could be from here.

Johnny was the one with spiked dirty blonde hair with slightly tanned skin. His eyes were sky blue which was clear to Gakushu what he is just wearing coloured contacts.

James was the one with light blonde hair with skin white as snow. His eyes were hazel and again clear to Gakushu what he is wearing coloured contacts.

"I think you should escape before they snap out from their talk." Mark stood next to Gakushu and warmly smiles at him. "An will add the bill to your account." Gakushu thanked the black-haired man and quickly walked off with 'Hana' following along.

'That just happen.' The thoughts of Karma and Kayano, who were listening to the scene through Nagisa's voice transmitter placed underneath his clothes, mixed together.

Nagisa just assumes that Gakushu knew of the three workers but didn't press on.

"Do you want to go to the park?" Gakushu asked, and Nagisa looked around, seeing more people eyeing at the two as if they were supporting the two. From the café, to the arcade and other shops 'she' could see more people eyeing at them and especially to Gakushu.

Nagisa agreed and the two walked off while continuing their conversation.

Nagisa was learning a lot about his classmate, such as how Gakushu loves his sweets and liked to play soccer as the date progresses.

Gakushu told 'her' about the time that he was so into his baking that he didn't realised that he made enough cakes to supply a bakery. A giggle escaped from Nagisa's mouth and he quickly covered his mouth.

Gakushu gave 'her' a smile and chuckled along. "It is quite funny isn't it?" It wasn't a smile that Gakushu would use to charm his way through people but it was an actual real smile. This moment was quickly captured by the hidden Gretel and Ivan.
"Sorry mister!" A little boy at the age of 10 came running to the two to collect the ball.

"Be very careful next time." Gakushu picked up the ball and handed to the young boy, then he started to give some pointers on soccer which the little one whole heartily took in.

"Thank you!" The little boy bowed to Gakushu and ran off back to his friends.

Gretel also took a photo of this moment, it had been so long for her to see Gakushu talking about soccer again.

Gakushu and 'Hana' continued their walk until Gakushu stopped in his tracks looking off somewhere. Nagisa tries to find what the strawberry blond was looking at. For a quick moment what he saw was a family playing together, and Nagisa glances at Gakushu who seemly watches on.

A father and a mother holding hands with their son in the middle.

"Sorry, we should get going." Gakushu gave 'her' a polite smile going back to his professional image. They continued their walk until 'Hana' checked her phone for the time.

"I should get going now."

"It has been fun seeing you." Gakushu turned to the disguised Nagisa, "We should do this again some time." Gretel is in bliss now! She clapped her hands together.

This week has been going very well and tomorrow would be the day that Gakushu will be with Ren again! What can possibly go wrong?

"I'm sorry, but I can't." Nagisa said looking away from Gakushu's violet eyes.

"Eh…?" Gretel response with an expression similar to Gakushu as he looks confused.

"You are different than what I expected." Nagisa didn't like what he was saying but he was out of chooses. It pains him just to hurt Gakushu after learning so much about him. All the things that he learnt made Gakushu more like a normal student than the son of the Chairman.

"The truth is, I only went out with you because of your father." Nagisa said according to the plan devised by Karma.

All Ivan could think was, 'Damn…'

"I did not see that coming." Ivan said to himself as he watches the scene behind some bushes. He was holding a branch as if he was becoming one with the bush.

He realises that Gretel has been very quiet for a while, he turned to the blonde and was immediately scared of what he just saw. A once KGB officer was scared of a reaper who has the appearance of a 15 year old girl.
Gretel twitching her head to the side and a stand of her short blond hair was stuck to her mouth as she chanted over and over again "That bitch, that bitch, that bitch."

Gakushu looked at 'Hana' with an emotionless mask as if he should have expected this and only responded with an "I see."

All of a sudden to Gakushu's eyes, a menacing figure appeared in the air and was about to kick the head of Nagisa straight clean. For a split second, the blue-haired boy could feel the killer intent behind him. Thankfully someone caught the figure just in time.

"Calm down Gretel!" Ivan yelled as he attempts to restrain the blond reaper in his arms. "Calm down!"

Gretel kicked and screamed as she was hold in the air, "Goddamn it Ivanov! Let me at it!" She was clawing her hands towards Nagisa. "Let me at it!"

"Let me go!" Gretel cried out in fury.

Was it very surprising that someone similar to Gakushu's height and with so much innocence could release this much killer intent? Not like Nagisa has the right to say that.

"You can't just kill her!" Ivan tried to reason with his senior but with no prevail.

Where is Arthur when he is need? Why out of all days that he has to be in America!?

"I can and I will!" Gretel yelled at all her might. "She could have said we should just be friends and I will have be fine with it!"

"She could have said that she was moving away and wanted to see Gakushu for one last time and I will still be fine with it!" Gretel yelled out her words laced with hatred.

'She has a very creative mind.' The thoughts of Gakushu and Ivan merged, but then again, they expected this from the 200 year old reaper.

Ivan wouldn't be so sure if Gakushu could calm Gretel down this time around. For the case of the two Class-A students they only threw insults that didn't affect the boy at all. But here, this 'Hana' just broke Gakushu's trust which was very unforgivable and definitely to the girl who had a Gakushu complex.

Kayano swore that she seen and heard of this Gretel before. Karma just continue watching the scene playing before him and wonder how he never spot such a colourful character.

"But no! She just had to be the gold digger!" As Gretel continued try to free herself from Ivan's grip which was slowly loosening from the sheer amount of strength that one little blonde reaper has. Gakushu stayed in silence until he step into the scene when Gretel managed to slip her way through.

"For Gakushu-kun!" Gretel leaped towards 'Hana' for only the voice of her Strawberry stops her.

"It's okay Gretel." Gakushu looked at Gretel with a small smile. It stopped Gretel in her tracks from breaking many bones, like how she did with Akari.

"You don't have to lie to your sister you know?" Gretel worriedly said and another bombshell strikes the other three Class-E students.

'He has a sister!'
"This is actually for a song I am song about broken love." Gakushu answered with a polite smile, "I'm sorry that you misunderstood but I asked Hana-san to play the role."

'That is your excuse?!

"Thank God, I was so worried." Gretel sighed in relief and all of the killer intent disappears afterwards.

'She brought it?!

Ivan gave Gakushu a sceptical look but didn't press on since he didn't want to ignite Gretel's overprotectiveness.

"I still need to do some things before I go back, so go on without me." Gakushu said, looking as cute as always and adding more to the factor was his hat with the flat dog ears.

Gretel came to pat his head, "I will be back at my place then, and we are having Green Tea cake tonight since Rilliane is coming back today." Gakushu nodded and watches as Gretel and Ivan to walk off into the distance.

There was some silent brewing between the two now left alone apart from Karma and Kayano watching from their hiding spots.

Nagisa or 'Hana' attempted to break the silence, "Gakushu-"

Gakushu quickly interrupted before 'she' can finish her sentence. "Don't, Hana. Or should I even call you Hana. Well Nagisa?"

'When did he?' Gakushu as if reading Nagisa's thought quickly answered.

"Midst in the chaos, I spotted Karma and Kayano hiding and just connected the dots." Gakushu positioned himself that only his back can be seen by the other two.

"I am such an idiot, who would be with me for-" Gakushu then stopped his speech as he tries to get his emotions in check. Gakushu's violet eyes burn through Nagisa's very soul.

"Do you really hate me that much? Do you despised me that much?" Gakushu asked as if he was talking to all three of the classmates. It was as if he knew that there was a voice transmitter underneath Nagisa's clothing.

"It's not like that." Nagisa stuttered his words reverting back to his original voice.

"Then why did you decide to play with my emotions? Was it that funny to you?" Gakushu coldly remarked and Nagisa furiously shook his head.

Gakushu tilted his head, "Then why did you all went into some much effort for this? Do you really want to become an assassin that badly?"

Nagisa didn't answer, he held a hurt expression on his face while Gakushu looks at him, as if he didn't deserve to do so.

"If so, then you did a brilliant job. You could easily drive someone to their deaths with a bit more practice." Gakushu leaned over to Nagisa and bitterly laugh.

"I should have expected this from Class-E." Gakushu held his hand over his right eye and chuckled coldly. "After all, it is a class filled with mindless puppets waiting for their government's whims."
Karma would have leap out from his hiding spot to take out Gakushu Asano if Kayano hadn't stop him in time.

"I will see you on Monday." Gakushu harshly said and he walks off further into the park with both of his hands in his pockets. With an emotionless mask, he walks away.

What shocked Nagisa wasn't because of Gakushu's words but because of his expression. Where Gakushu's hand was and how he gripped on his strawberry blond hair tightly.

His perfect act as the Chairman's son cracked a bit and a single tear escaped from his violet amethyst eye.

After all, Gakushu so desperately uses the love of others to fill in his emptiness.

Not that the three know anyway.

Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven.'

"Little children like you shouldn't do something like that you know?"

"I guess you can call me Ivanov."

"I think you are more of an elder sister than a mother."

"I am the same as you after all."

"Emotions are very tricky things."

"Gakushu-kun is just like Hansel."

The next chapter, Mother.
Chapter Summary

Just one day is fine, right?

Mother

As soon Gakushu was out of Nagisa's sight, Karma and Kayano came rushing to their friend. All three talked about what just happened, with the supposed sister of Gakushu who almost attacked Nagisa or the cold reaction from Gakushu. They were so engrossed in their conversation that they didn't notice the figure behind them.

"Little children like you shouldn't do something like that you know?" An unfamiliar voice called out from behind. Immediately the three turned back to see a male around the age of 17 years with flat yet curly and bouncy black hair.

It was the same person the three met for a small moment and the one who was holding back the girl named Gretel from murdering Nagisa.

"Or in possession with such dangerous weapons as well." Ivan cheerfully sang as he flipped out a pocket knife from his hand which was clearly stolen from Karma's pockets.

Karma didn't bother to hide away his shock when Ivan played the knife in his hand in front of the group. They didn't even feel his presence until he announced himself.

"Who are you?" Kayano cautiously asked while staring at the male.

"Da~ Me?" Ivan pointed to himself and a shiver went down Kayano's spine. There was something about this person in front of them that felt very off. He seems overly cheery. "I guess you can call me Ivanov?" He said in a bubbly tone.

There was silence again, and Karma prepared himself, in case a fight broke out. Ivan found it very amusing since he himself was a Grim Reaper and the little red head thought that he could go against him, one of many Gods of Death. The Russian found Nagisa's cross-dressing to be very similar to one of Gretel's many skills, although she was far much more talented. Kayano as of yet has nothing that sparks his interest.

And then Ivan sighed, shocking the three from his sudden change of personality, "You are very lucky that Gakushu managed to calm Gretel down." He scratches the back of his head, "Who knows what would have happened?"

He gave another sighed and shook his head, "No, actually I do. She would have ripped out your organs with no problem."

Karma snorted at this, but when his amber yellow eyes glanced at Nagisa, he quickly change his mind. Nagisa was completely pale and his sky blue eyes widen because he felt the killer instinct emitted by the blonde female at full force.

Ivan face palmed as well and this time spoke to himself in his native language, Russian. "And now
the next stage has to be postpone as well. It is bad enough that the little one is ignoring his friend and now you just gave him a reason justify it.” The group was hoping that Gakushu would socialise more especially with other humans and these three humans just threw their hard work out the window.

Gretel or Rilliane would not be very pleased and Ivan was more worried with Gretel as he didn't know when Arthur would be back. Similar to how Ren acts as an anchor for Gakushu in keeping in his temper back at school, Arthur acts the same for Gretel.

Clearly the three students couldn't understand what Ivan or Ivanov, was saying. After ranting to himself, Ivan looked to the three humans again.

"I expect you all to apologise to him very soon." Ivan puffed his cheeks a bit and Karma, Kayano and Nagisa just stared blankly at him.

'You want us to do what now?' The thoughts of the three Class-E students merged.

"What if I don't want to?" Karma playfully said as he places both of his hands in his pockets.

"Da~ Is that so?" Ivan eerily sang back but quickly snapped out to let out another sigh, "I already put 5 guys in hospital today, I do not want to add another one or a girl into the mix."

'What do you mean already!?' Kayano slowly backed away from the unfamiliar male, slightly hiding herself behind Nagisa.

"Just do it." Ivan bluntly ordered and Karma obviously answered again.

"What if I don't want to?" Clearly this was getting nowhere and Ivan finally gave up after feeling a headache coming up.

He really wants vodka right now.

Ivan could understand now of how Gakushu could suddenly out of nowhere, get his cravings for cake from.

"Fine, do as you wish then." Ivan turned his back on the group of humans, "And I'm keeping that knife of yours."

"Gakushu is going to have a hard time trusting you or anyone for that matter if you don't do anything." With his parting words, Ivan left the three, hoping that the other two would follow his advice.

As soon as Ivan was out of sight, the three realises that this Ivanov character knew of Nagisa's true gender.

It was too late now to chase after the Russian.

Gakushu continued to walk further into the park and wandered around aimlessly. He should had been expected because Gakushu had no place in Class-E. Not because he was the son of the Principle but because he was not human.

The day slowly turns from blue to a blazing golden orange as the sun set. It just reminded the strawberry blonde of the day when he committed his unforgivable act.

After witnessing his first suicide, the memories of his act lingered on in his mind. He put his hood up
so nobody in public could recognise him, though that would never work for Grim Reapers.

"Gakushu-chan?" A female voice called out.

Gakushu looks up to see Rilliane disguised with a long pink wig where its bang covered her eyes and she wore a long casual white dress. He kept his emotionless mask while Rilliane looked at him with a sad smile.

"Rilliane?" Gakushu said and Rilliane place a finger over her lips.

"It's Rin." She whispered and Gakushu nodded as she walked closer to him, "Ivan told me everything."

Gakushu glanced up to Rilliane, now dubbed as Rin, which serves as an alias she would use whenever she was out in public without being in her the reaper uniform. "Of course, did he tell Gretel as well?" Gakushu asked.

"I think Gretel would catch on that you were lying about it with or without Ivan's words. He hopes that hell wouldn't come too early today." Rilliane let out a soft giggle, taking the hood off from his head so she would be able to pat it.

"True." Gakushu let out a little chuckle as well. He mentally thanked Rilliane for lightening the mood a bit.

"Do you want to sit somewhere?" Rilliane asked but Gakushu only shrugged, so she dragged the boy to sit at a nearby hill. Seated on the dry grass on top of a hill as the two watches the sun slowly goes down.

"I heard from Gretel that Thomas Freeman asked you out." Gakushu said, attempting to make some small talk to put his mind off of certain things. Although he was genuinely curious about it, he could see that Gretel was rubbing off on him.

"Actually we have been seeing each other for a while, he just made it official during the conference." Rilliane blushed like a bright tomato and tried to laugh it off. Although he wasn't showing it, Gakushu was very happy that Rilliane was happy with this Thomas character.

Now that he could join together with Gretel to observe and make sure everything goes right when their date comes along.

"I see." Gakushu only replied before he went back to watch the sky painted with a blend of golden orange and fiery red.

"Do you want to talk about it? You can trust your mother here." Beneath her pink bangs that covered her eyes, she wore her reaper glasses. She patted his head while giving him a reassuring smile.

"I think you are more of an elder sister than a mother." Gakushu simply answered. He always had these thoughts about this ever since the roles were given to each person of their group.

Gretel as his elder sister, Arthur as his elder brother, Ivan as the uncle, Lucia as the aunt and Wolfie is more of a distant uncle.

Rilliane quickly took the role of mother. If Gakushu wanted to be honest, he rather have another 'big sister' since he never remembered anything about his own mother or had any significant connections to that woman.
He didn't even know what she looks like. He only considered her the person that gave life to him and nothing else as she quickly left him when he was only a toddler.

"Maybe it is because I look too young to be a mother." The disguised reaper scratched the back of her neck as if she was nervous.

"Rin? Why do you want to be the mother? Isn't it normal to have many older siblings?" Gakushu innocently asked, and it took him a while to get an answer from Rilliane as she thought long and hard about it.

"Why I want to be a mother?" She repeated the question out loud to herself. Rilliane let her back fall on the dry yet soft grass, looking directly up to the sky where she could see the darker purple colours.

"I guess I wanted to recreate that experience I had before… you know?" Gakushu knew all too well of what Rilliane was talking about, as you can't just outright in public say you committed suicide.

Rilliane turned her head to Gakushu as she laid in the grass, "Remember when I had too much to drink?"

"Yes and luckily for me, I wasn't involved in their drinking games that time." Gakushu rest his hand over his right cheek with a pout, and Rilliane let out a chuckle.

"I remember saying something to you that I left someone behind. I think you know that person had to be very important to me." She vaguely remembered saying some things under the influence of alcohol, Gakushu nodded, allowing her to continue her story.

"I had a little brother, his name was Allen. He was cute as you, especially in the cheek factor." Rilliane tried to reach for Gakushu's cheek to pinch from the position she was in but he evaded the gesture. His cheeks were already pulled today by an Australian reaper named Johnny and he didn't want another.

Rilliane looked back up to the darkening skies and continued her story. "Sometimes I felt that I was more of a parent to him more than our own parents, who often went off somewhere. I'm sure he felt the same even though he was very young."

"He accidently called me mum when I went to pick him up from school." Rilliane said, recalling one of her happy memories that made Gakushu amused. It was the same type of amusement when Gretel told him a story where she didn't know how put on her own clothes for a time period.

"I'm sorry that I-" Rilliane's sentence was then interrupted by Gakushu.

"No, its fine. It is mutual after all." The strawberry blonde no longer held eye contact to Rilliane's sharp chartreuse phosphorescent eyes.

"I am the same as you after all." Gakushu softly spoke, and Rilliane said nothing and slowly lifted her back from the ground. With one hand, she wrapped her arm around his shoulder to lean in closer to her shoulder. Looking straight in the direction where Gakushu was looking at, which was the warm colours of the sky made by the sun setting into the far horizon.

'So warm…' Gakushu accepted this comfort, as it reminded him of his untold desires for this type of warmth from his father.

"Why does it hurt more than it should?" Gakushu finally asked. Sometimes, he can never be 'strong' around those in his group or from the Department especially now that his mask as the perfect son
was cracked and breaking apart.

"Emotions are very tricky things." Rilliane only answered and Gakushu's violet eyes stared blankly at the sunset. He could feel the tears gradually forming and pricking his eyes. It irritates his contacts.

*It took him two years to learn how to cry again.*

"I should had expected it." Gakushu muttered but Rilliane shook her head, disagreeing to his statement.

"No-one should expect something like that, especially someone as young as you Gakushu-chan." She turn her head slightly to him.

A single tear fell from his right eye, and Rilliane used her hand that was holding close to him to wipe off the tear. He no longer had the strength to push away her actions or words.

"Am I that weak?" Gakushu never liked crying in front of others even those from the Department, as it was one of the longest and lasting teachings from his father. When he does cry, he silently does so somewhere alone and so rarely seeks out comfort.

He hugged him knees closer to his chest as he sat next on the grassy hilltop. "Is showing hurt a sign of be weak?" Gakushu almost whimpered his words as he whispers.

"No, it makes you human." Rilliane had her hand place around Gakushu cheek to turn his face to hers. It instantly reminded Gakushu of Ivan's words. She uses her free hang to move half of her bangs away to reveal only her left eye, the colour of chartreuse phosphorescent. Looking deep into Gakushu bright violet eyes with a sad expression.

Gakushu looked away as he turned his back away, and slowly but surely, he removes his coloured contact because he can no longer bear the irritation it was creating.

"It is okay to cry Gakushu-chan." Rilliane said, thinking that he was trying to hide his tears.

Suddenly Gakushu leapt into Rilliane's arms, which surprised her a bit, hugging her tight, to which she return it. No longer wanting to act strong any longer, he seeks the comfort after his emotions were toyed.

He seeks out the comfort. Just like after his first-suicide…

*It took him two years to learn to how hug again.*

Rilliane drew him deeper into her arms as Gakushu continued to let his tears flow through. A light breeze passes by, it ruffles Rilliane's long pink wig and Gakushu's strawberry blonde hair.

"Can you read that poem you wrote for me?" Gakushu who was still buried in Rilliane's arms, weakly asked.

One day is fine right? For Gakushu to act like this, as someone who is visibly hurt and seeks comfort so obviously.

Although Rilliane knew which Gakushu want, she felt the need to ask. "The one I wrote in your notebook?" Gakushu nodded and Rilliane agreed to his wishes.

In a soothing and mother-like tone, Rilliane began to narrate the poem she memorised, as she does for all of her work. All while embracing Gakushu, who snuggled closer to her shoulder.
There was a boy who couldn't find his future,
He walks past a lost twin and a once king,
They said to him 'we can take you on the path'
Walking through the English plains,
The two companions started to sing to the boy,
To which he joined along happily.
They walked past a wolf and an agent,
They said to him 'we know where to go'
Walking through a torn down wall,
The two companions started to talk about their experiences to the boy,
To which he talks about his story.
They walked past a police officer,
He said to him 'I know someone who can help you.'
Walking through the snow,
He asked what the boy was trying to find,
To which the boy answered, 'my future.'
They walked past an artist,
She said to him 'Have you find it'
The boy answered 'No'.
The artist smiled 'We can help you find your future.'
'We are looking for our futures as well' she said.
The boy smiled, 'Let us find it together.'
The eight now friends stayed with the boy,
Even if time ends,
The artist painted the next path,
As long as it takes,
We will be by your side until the very end.'
Eventually Gakushu grew tired, his eyelids feeling heavy, and he entered into the world of darkness.
After such an eventful day, Gakushu fell asleep in her arms. The same poem acted almost as a
lullaby for the strawberry blonde boy.

His body relaxed and arms around Rilliane started to loosen. Where Rilliane sat on the grassy hill, she carefully placed the boy's head on her lap, gently strokes his hair after removing his hand-tailored hat.

Again like before, Gakushu felt so small around her arms, just like the brother she left behind all those years ago.

Gakushu slept soundly, and for a short period of time, he was free from any sort of pain that could possibly come after him. As his body curls up, his head rested on her lap, Rilliane saw a faint smile on his face.

This time for the boy, it was a dreamless sleep.

*It took him two years to learn how to cry and hug again.*

*How many more teachings from that man was implanted?*

As Gakushu will soon eventually put back on his mask as the son of the Chairman, at least now let him be comforted before the cracks of his mask are fixed. Rilliane just hopes that Gakushu would open up to more people without that mask of his.

Like how he does to the group or those from the Department.

*Or? Can his mask even be fixed again?*

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Gretel was at a local bakery buying extra cake than usual, and she glances back to see the still 17 year old Ivan returning to her side.

"Rilliane would want you to help her with Gakushu-kun." Gretel said, still looking at the wide selection of cakes. Ivan jumped a bit and tries to play it off as if he didn't know anything.

"What are you talking about?" Ivan stutters his words as he quickly goes pale, even quicker than Gakushu finishing his sweets.

"Did you really think that I didn't know that Gakushu-kun was lying?" Gretel bluntly said and Ivan slumped a bit. Of course not, this is the very same girl who has a Gakushu complex.

"Then why?" Ivan's word slipped out.

Gretel became quiet, choosing her cakes and paying them. Ivan followed her as she walked out of the bakery, catching a glimpse of her sad smile.

"Gakushu-kun is just like Hansel." Gretel answered, and instead of going back to her house, she walks back to the park. Ivan knew that Hansel was Gretel's twin brother but nothing else after that.

"Hansel would always try to make the situation better than it looks to make me feel better." Gretel faintly smiles, she hops onto the nearest ledge and balance herself with her arms spread wide.

"When he cries, he would do it alone if someone wasn't there to comfort him." Gretel felt a cold breeze on her bare legs.

"When he is flustered, his face would become bright as a tomato." Gretel let out a giggle as she walked forward, although it sounded more sad than happy.
"Even the shape of his eyes and face is just like him." Gretel soon shook her head, denying one simple fact. "But I know that Gakushu-kun is not Hansel."

Ivan didn't utter a word, and it was a wonder that Gretel, never once in her career as a Grim Reaper, never had a breakdown. Her love for Hansel would had long ago drove her into a mental breakdown like the many reapers Ivan had personally witness himself over his 40 years in his career.

"And besides, I want to respect Gakushu-kun's choices for today." The blonde girl stopped in her tracks, still balancing on top of the ledge.

"Today?" Ivan replied with confusion.

"Tomorrow I want Gakushu-kun to be with Ren-kun again." Gretel answered, still not looking at her Russian junior. Ivan didn't go against this, though he understood the reasoning of why Gakushu was ignoring his friend.

"By the way, since Lucia is coming means no alcohol for you after trying to cover it up." Gretel sang devilishly as she jumped off from the ledge.

Ivan died a little on the inside but at the same time was very thankful that he didn't had to endure even a bit of the blonde girl's wrath. Gretel was terrifying enough with or without her Gakushu complex.

Finally, the two reached to where Rilliane was at with Gakushu sleeping soundly on her lap. Of course, Gretel took a picture of this cute moment.

Ivan went to pick up the sleeping boy until Gretel suggested to be done piggyback style. Ivan did so and the three with Gakushu sleeping on the back of the Russian, walked down the streets back to Gretel's place.

There was darkness for Gakushu until his eyes started to flicker and he saw Gretel's face right up against his. Gakushu couldn't scream at her face so he did this internally.

"Hello Gakushu-kun." Gretel sang her words, Gakushu felt his heart skip a beat. "Feeling better?"

Gakushu quickly looked around and found that he was back at Gretel's place in the living room with him lying on the couch. "How long have I been sleeping?" He asked, grabbing his customised black glasses from Gretel.

"Not too long, just two hours." Gretel shrugged, "The Strawberry is awake!" Gretel shouted from the top of her lungs and immediately the group came rushing to the room.

Lucia came leaping to Gakushu, hugging him while covering him with tears and snot. "My poor Gakushu!" Wolfie had to pull out Lucia from hugging the life out of the strawberry blonde boy.

Rilliane, without her disguise, giggled at the sight and the front door suddenly opened and closed, and dashing into the room was Arthur with bags of gifts all the way from America. "I'm here! I'm here!" He came breathing heavily.

Gakushu of course looks very confused. "Uh…?" He was then given from the blonde male reaper five of the gift bags.

"I thought it was a good idea to give something more special to cheer you up?" Arthur asked. "MarieBell chocolates."
'They are crazy expensive!' Everyone but Arthur's thoughts merged. Sometimes one reaper's budget is quite terrifying, especially to a human.

Gakushu peeked into the bag to see a large colourful box with the tag reading 'River of Diamonds Cien.' He didn't show his surprise this time even though that the box of chocolates cost 400 dollars. Besides, that was just one of the boxes given to Gakushu.

"You knew?" Gakushu stared up blankly to the group, mainly towards Gretel.

"Of course, you think I wouldn't know?" Gretel exclaimed with a pout as she folded her arms together.

Gakushu knew that it couldn't fool the girl who has the Gakushu complex but he hoped so.

"That's why I made Ivan not to drink any sort of alcohol today for trying to cover it up." Gretel pointed back to Ivan who was looking a bit down. Gakushu stared at Ivan as if he grew a second head. The Russian nodded to conform that what she said was true.

"Don't worry, I won't drink any as well." Lucia patted the depressed Russian's shoulder to reassure him, and Ivan muttered out his thanks to his fellow drinker.

Gakushu looked down to his gift bag "T-thank you." He stutters his words, his face flushed like cherry blossom petals.

"Aww~" Everyone awed at the sight of Gakushu. Suddenly Gakushu started to tear up and he couldn't hold it on any longer. And Gakushu started to cry again even though there was a bright smile on his cute little face.

Everyone stared blankly at the boy, in silence until Wolfie asked the obvious "Gakushu? Are you okay?"

Gakushu realised this that he cried once again, but this time in front of everyone else. Sure, he didn't use his Chairman's son image in front of his friends or those from the Department, but it was still very embarrassing for him to act like this.

He already cried once in front of Rilliane today!

Now the colour of his cheeks turn from cherry blossoms to cherry tomatoes.

Quickly, with the blanket he was using earlier, Gakushu buried himself underneath them like a cocoon. "I'm not crying!" He yelled angrily under his warm blanket, and the group still remained in silence as they watch the boy crouching underneath his 'shelter'.

He could already feel the playful and cheeky smiles from the group directing at him.

"Then it's happy tears?" Wolfie suggested.

"I'm not crying!" Gakushu yelled back.

"I guess after learning to cry in front of others, it is harder to keep it welled up" Rilliane said while adding to her list of Gakushu accomplishments.

To show your truest self easily.

"I am not crying!" Gakushu denied his unexplainable tears.
"You are so much cuter when you cry." Ivan laughed with Lucia joining in.

"Not crying!" Gakushu yelled once more.

"I guess after being denied to cry for such a long time, it just goes out easy?" Arthur said while pointing out how it could be similar to Gakushu's obsession for sweets that only surfaced when he became a Grim Reaper.

Gakushu could already imagine the nods from the group in agreement of Arthur's words.

"Not crying!" Gakushu cried out from under his blanket.

"There are no orders that prevent you from crying," Gretel bluntly stated.

"I know that!" Gakushu replied and the group heard a sniffle from the boy afterwards.

Gretel slowly approached to the couch, shifting her place on the seat next to her 'little brother'. "You are only doing the 'mask' for personal reasons aren't you?"

Gakushu stayed silent, neither denying nor agreeing with Gretel's statement. "You had been convincing yourself that you had to act as the 'Chairman's son', weren't you?" Gretel continued, and Wolfie, Ivan and Lucia felt their hearts breaking.

Gakushu popped his head out from the blanket "… Everyone else would think that I'm weird if I show…" He softly whispers his words, he stops himself from finishing his sentence. His eyes were red and puffy and his strawberry blonde slightly tangled. "No-one wants a leader who is weak."

Gakushu was like a puppy almost, no wonder Gretel's tailored dog hat suited him so much. The group was resisting the urge not to take a photo of this moment to not destroy the atmosphere.

"Nah, you were always cute than cool Gakushu-kun." Gretel wrapped her arms around the strawberry blonde boy, rubbing her cheeks against his. Of course everyone else took a picture of this adorable moment this time. The cuteness levels are going through the roof!

"Your father isn't here." Rilliane gently spoke like how a mother would.

"You will always be our cinnamon roll." Lucia chirped. Gakushu felt a smile coming back to his face.

"It is quite amusing for you to act as the cold leader when really you have the most innocence." Wolfie pointed out and soon the entire group started to laugh. Even Gakushu joined in.

"Now that everyone is here, what should we do?" Rilliane clapped her hands together and quickly was flooded with suggestions.

"Twister!" Wolfie proposed.

"Cards against Humanity!" Ivan suggested.

"Baking!" Gakushu's motioned.

"Karaoke!" Lucia's offered.

"Movie marathon." Arthur recommended.

"Gaming!" Gretel jumped.
"How about we do all of those things?" Rilliane suggested and everyone else cheered.

Soon at the end of the day, the group slept together in living room, all with smiles on their faces. Wolfie, who was the last one to sleep, turned off all of the lights and slept right next to Lucia.

Rilliane with her arms crossed slept against the wall. Ivan took over most of the floor as he drools.

Gretel, Arthur and Gakushu took over the couch, huddling together as they slept so soundly.

Gakushu had the same dream again.

Again in the daisy meadows together with Ren and his group of reapers playing around, as well as his father's embrace.

A single tear escaped, but this time, there was a smile on his face as he was snuggled closer to Gretel. They really do look like twins…

Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven'.

"Can we eat out for dinner tonight?"

"I'm glad you like it, Gakushu-kun."

"Hola~ Shuuie."

"God damn it Ikeda!"

"Did you hear something Nagisa?"

"Thank you Ren for joining us."

The next chapter, My first friend.
My First Friend

Chapter Summary

Ren, My first (human) friend...

My first friend

Today was Sunday now, and Gakushu sat in the backyard, soaking in the morning sun. He had a white sheet surround his body that only left his head uncovered.

The strawberry blonde boy found that his hair was getting too long for his liking, so Gretel suggested to cut it for him. If it was any other person, Gakushu would had said no, but this was Gretel, and he trust her in her skills.

As Gretel got into her work, she attempted to make some small talk with Gakushu to pass the time. "I won't be here for half of the day because I'm struck with counter duty at the Lyrics Bar." She sighed, sad that she couldn't spend her day with her 'little brother', "I got retrieval shifts before that as well."

"I can take it over." Gakushu with no hesitation, as he really has nothing to do today.

"Are you sure?" Gretel asked as she made another snip with her scissor. She already knew Gakushu's answer being the 'elder sister' that she was but she liked to ask anyway.

"I have nothing else do." Gakushu bluntly replied as he tried to act as the Chairman's son, but it only had made Gretel laugh instead. The face that he was making was more of a pout then a scowl.

"Can we eat out for dinner tonight?" Gretel said, she made another cut with her scissors. "Sundays are too boring."

Sundays weren't always the best for Gakushu or the group. Rilliane would always be struck in meetings, Lucia was stuck with teaching, Wolfie would be doing his usual tings and Ivan the unluckiest one, had paperwork duties in all sorts of fields. Gakushu didn't even mention the retrieval shifts they had as well.

Arthur was in the living room writing a new song as he waited for Gretel to be done.

"Reaper run?" Gakushu asked.

"Reaper run." Gretel nodded.

"Okay, their food was always better." Gakushu exclaimed, he had some high standards for his desserts after all.

"I'm done Gakushu-kun." Gretel walked to the nearby table to place her scissor down and grabbed a rectangular mirror. She then handed it to show Gakushu her work. "What do you think?"

Gakushu held the mirror and sparkles surround the boy as he marvelled at Gretel works. That was enough for Gretel to know that he loves it. The sparkles he was radiating was the same amounts of happiness whenever he ate cake.
His strawberry blonde hair was now cut slightly short with the front of his bangs that covered his forehead was now layered. His hair no longer had his hair covered the right side of his face but was now evenly spaced to show more of his eyes.

Gretel swiftly took off the cover that surroundrf Gakushu and all the snipped hair flew off. He soon stood up from his seat and ruffled his hands through his newly cut hair.

"Thank you Gretel." Gakushu faced the blonde reaper with a bright smile on his face, his violet eyes sparkling and his cheeks flushing the colour of cherry blossoms.

"I'm glad you like it, Gakushu-kun." Gretel flashed a grin back as she held her smart-phone in her hand. "I'm sending you today's retrieval list." Gakushu's phone started to vibrate to signal that he had received the message. She quickly took out a broom and swiped the hair into the dust bin.

"Looking good there Asano-kun." Arthur said, popping his head outside, and Gakushu felt his ears going a bit red and muttered his thanks.

"Be sure to lock out the door when you go out." Arthur reminded the boy.

"I will." Gakushu sang, and Arthur and Gretel then went out for their shift at the Lyrics Karaoke Bar.

Gakushu went back into the living room to review his list of souls to collect before going up to his room to grab his reap coat, a black double-breasted hooded coat. He folded the coat and placed into his backpack, putting in his black leather gloves as well.

He took of his coloured contacts and replaces it for his black-framed glasses. Wearing a simple white and blue stripped tank top with white cargo pants, he matched it with some black boots. With his backpack on his back and his growing favourite dog-eared hat, Gakushu left the house, locking the front door with one of the keys that was acting as his keychain for his phone.

Walking to the nearest convenience store, which happens to be reaper-run, the automatic doors slid open, letting the boy walks in. "Good morning Antonio." He greeted the lightly tanned man with somehow curly dark brown hair at the counter.

"Hola~ Shuuie." Antonio happily sang, Gakushu never found out how that nickname and 'Shu' came to be. If it was any other person, Gakushu would have asked for his actual name but Antonio was from the Department and he means well.

God forbid what would happen if Class-E and mainly Karma would catch on of his various nicknames!

"Doors in the staff room." Antonio said, resting his arm on the checkout counter as he positioned his head on his hand to point at the door.

Gakushu nodded and gave his thanks, heading for the staff room until Antonio casually threw some pudding at him to which Gakushu easily caught it. The strawberry blonde happily beamed and thanked the Spaniard before going into the restricted room from the general public.

Gakushu's love for cake is equalled to his love for pudding.

As soon Gakushu went into the room, Antonio felt blood rushing to his head, escaping from his nose. Just when a customer, who happened to be Karma, walked into the store to buy some strawberry milk.
Karma stared at Antonio, who waved him off, "Don't mind me, I just had an overdose on cinnamon roll."

'…The fuck?' That was Karma would think of.

Gakushu used a key that transported him to the central building of the Department, picked up Gretel's list, and he was off on his shift. Wearing the black coat uniform with its hood up, his key-shaped Death Scythe was now full sized in hand.

*Today's shift starts early.*

And today he was doing it alone, so jumping off from building to building to reach to each soon to be retrieved soul was much quicker than via road. The list had at least four souls. Even Gretel was not free from the lack of souls due to overpopulation of reapers, even if she was a senior.

The morning would soon move to the afternoon.

'Mizukuro Toshiki, born in February 1st 1979. Died from complications with the heart on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' Taking out a stamp that said, 'complete', Gakushu stamped it on their picture.

'Yasui Masamichi, born in May 14th 2005. Died from injuries and internal bleeding sustained by a car accident on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' Gakushu stamps on the profile picture 'complete'.

'Ozawa Hokusai, born in December 25th 1980. Died from drug overdose on cocaine on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' He stamps another 'complete' on the profile picture.

'Nakadan Kanjiro, born in December 8th 1995. Died from strangulation on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' With that, he had finished up his shift.

Gakushu watched and observed each soul's Cinematic Records, from their births to their deaths. It was the usual to see whether or not they deserved to die before he transfers the souls to the Judging Division. Whether if they pass on, reincarnate or whatever.

It was the usual to find that the soul that has no the potential to benefit for the world.

Gakushu sat at the ledge of the building, observing the records of his final soul with a bored look. He reverts his Death Scythe back to a key chain and reattach it back to his phone.

"Yo~ Shu!" A voice called from behind, and Gakushu glances back to find other senior around Rilliane's physical age. The adult looking reaper calls himself Ikeda, who was from the Japanese Branch like Gakushu.

"It's Gakushu." Gakushu bluntly said and glanced back down to the body of his final soul.

"But you let Antonio and Johnny call you Shuuie!" Ikeda whined, he started to shed some fake tears.

"They gave me pudding and cake." Gakushu said as he rolled his eyes. "You're barely around anyway" If Ikeda had a family role then he would be the very distant cousin. A very, very distant cousin.

Ikeda snorted to this and he muttered under his breathe about Gakushu's sweets obsession. The reaper walked up and stood next to Gakushu to look down on the body of Nakadan Kanjiro.

"That is the third victim this week. The guy has finally found his preferred killing method." Ikeda
muses, but Gakushu only shrugged.

"And that's not my problem. Can't be allowed to be involved in such matters without orders remember?" Gakushu reaches for the side pockets of his backpack he was wearing during his rounds and grabbed his pudding that was given to him in the morning.

Ikeda only responded with some laughter, and Gakushu glanced at Ikeda, who was wearing the black and white colours typically associated with the Department. A black jumper hoodie and white jeans. Chartreuse phosphorescent eyes behind the black glasses, and his light coloured hair slicked back.

Ikeda, like Thomas Freeman, forgot all of his memories of when he was a human. Now he'd rather be called by his first name and wanted to forget his time as a human, saying that it had to be really bad if it that drove him to commit his unforgivable act.

Gakushu himself didn't know why, but for some reason, he really had some distain for Ikeda for no apparent reason. Maybe Gakushu really did lost some of his memories during his time as a human? Gakushu didn't really care because it wasn't really that important to begin with, and it was only just Ikeda after all.

The strawberry blonde boy went to check his phone for the time while ignoring Ren's numerous texts and calls, seeing as to how it was now 12:10. 'Almost lunch time.' He was about to open the wrapping of his pudding until Ikeda took his snack off from his hands.

"Thank you Shu~" Ikeda sang before he ran off by jumping to the next building. "Come and get it!" The brash reaper taunted, waving Gakushu's pudding in the air.

"Ikeda!" Gakushu angrily yelled as he immediately stood from his spot. "Give me back my pudding!" Ikeda always liked to play around with Gakushu, and it definitely reminded the strawberry blonde boy of Karma and not in a good way.

"Come and get it then!" Ikeda yelled from a distance.

Gakushu took a couple of steps back, before he ran after the reaper as he leaped over the gap between the buildings with ease. This was nothing when you had to jump off a skyscraper at age 10 or have dancing practices with Arthur and Gretel.

"Ikeda!" Gakushu growled as he quickened his pace.

"Run Forrest! Run!" Ikeda laugh as he runs off and jumps over many gaps. Gakushu followed in pursuit of his senior that he barely knew.

"God damn it Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled angrily. He was going to use all of his anger and frustrations that was usually directed at trees on chasing after Ikeda. "Come back here!"

He wants his pudding god damn it!

"Did you hear something Nagisa?" Karma asked to his blue haired friend, and Nagisa shook his head.

"I don't think so?" Nagisa softly answered. Karma looked around until he looked up to see two figures running on top of a building. The red head swore that the one running after the other person looks very familiar… was that Gakushu Asano?
Who else did Karma knows that wore a hat that has dog ears?

"Hey, it's Second-place." Karma said, looking amused of what Gakushu has gotten himself into.

"Where!?!" Nagisa looked around frantically. Karma just pointed up to the building and Nagisa still had to narrow his blue eyes to be able to see.

"Where..? Oh, I see him." Nagisa said, surprised. Karma looked to his friend as to why he had trouble seeing the obvious, but Karma soon realised that the surround people didn't even see a hint of the two people running and yelling on top of a building.

Watching the figure jumped off the building and landed on the next building. Karma really hoped that Gakushu won't do what he was thinking.

Gakushu jumped off the building… doing the exact thing that Karma didn't hope the strawberry blonde would do.

Did Gakushu have that much confidence in his physical abilities?

Nagisa became frantic as he explained that Gakushu didn't have enough skill for something like that, but Gakushu landed at the next building with no problem and continue running. Gakushu proceeded to do it again for the next building and the next building after that, like it was only hurdles.

Was there anything that Gakushu couldn't do? His skills brought many questions that were left unanswered.

"Get back here!" Gakushu yelled, his voice laced with anger.

The other figure only boomed in laughter, "Run Forrest!" It looked to be a common occurrence for the two runners to have this sort of situation, but it is also was surreal for the two Class-E students.

Karma and Nagisa decided to run forward in the direction of the two running and jumping figures. However, they quickly grew tired from all the running, even after all of their assassination training. How does Gakushu has the endurance like Korosensei?

And that rises other questions as well. Gakushu was definitely not acting like the cold son of the Chairman.

"Get back here!" Gakushu yelled, but Ikeda jumped off back to the level ground, and Gakushu did the same, feeling no pain as he landed the bottom ground.

"Run Forrest!" Ikeda said between chuckles, "Run I say!" He laughed to his heart's content as he headed straight for the Lyrics Karaoke Bar. The two dashed into bar, passing Gretel and Arthur who was sitting at the counter.

"Is that…?" Arthur asked as he watches Ikeda heading for the underground floor.

"Looks like Ikeda is playing around again." Gretel said as she took another photo of Gakushu running. 'He looks so adorable with his hat.' She thought before going back to check in another Grim Reaper to a room.

Gakushu and Ikeda soon entered the Grim Reaper realm, where Gakushu could maximise his physical abilities as there were no humans around to witness.

Eventually Gakushu caught up with Ikeda, taking his chances as he tackled his senior down to the
paved grounds of the Department. He finally obtained what was his, his beloved pudding, which he just found out was strawberry flavoured.

Ikeda spent the next hour laughing his ass off and rolling on the floor. Gakushu gave him a kick to the stomach and felt pleased with himself as he heard a crack.

Many from the Department would say that Gakushu was very similar to Gretel, especially in their tempers.

Gakushu decided to eat lunch at the Department's cafeteria, but before that, he waited in line at the central building to hand in his book-list to the front desk.

Handing in Gretel's list to the desk, he walked off to the nearest cafeteria for some much needed cake. While he was eating many varieties of strawberry cakes, his reading began as he reviewed some articles he found just lying around.

After snacking on his food, for lunch he was having a chicken sandwich with several toppings and more sweets on the side. His drink was ice-tea. Gakushu had already devoured enough food for two people for lunch.

One certain article that caught his eye was the disappearance of Allen Williams. The reason why it grabbed Gakushu's attention was the picture of Rilliane holding a prestige award, being dressed very formally. Her bright olive green eyes shined at the camera, it looked like the picture was taken months before her suicide.

The articles goes on to detail of how Rilliane was a prodigy in the field of the arts and was already considered as one of the world's best artists since the age of 5. However she often struggles to meet the high expectations from her parents that eventually drove her to commit suicide by drinking a concoction of poison in her home at age 17.

'After the tragedy of Rilliane William's suicide, her younger brother Allen Williams disappeared mysterious. On XX XXXX the parents of Rilliane and Allen William were stabbed to death in their homes by David Boyd, a friend of Rilliane Williams who discovered through the diary entries of Rilliane Williams that her parents drove her to her tragic death.

Before police arrived at the scene, Allen Williams wasn't found at his home and hasn't been found since. David Boyd claims as quote, "Rilliane's most important treasures is being protected in a faraway land." Mr Boyd is now currently serving a life sentence.'

Gakushu continued to read the article, 'All identifications and photos of the boy has mysteriously vanished or been erased.' He sipped his tea as he reread the article, and soon did his own investigation on the topic as he went through several articles on the missing boy through his phone. He took notes on a notebook that Gakushu usually stores in his backpack.

Surprising for Gakushu, time went extremely fast, as he checked on his phone that it was 5:46 pm. Gretel just then sent a text message along with a picture to him that read the following.

'Dinner at 6:30.' The picture was of a member exclusive reaper run restaurant which only accepts reapers or those invited though rarely.

Gakushu decided to take a bubble bath to past the time, so he went back to his room that was at the department to grab his clothes and toiletries, which happens to be strawberry scented for his much needed bubble bath.
’It is almost 6:30’ Gakushu thought to himself as he stood outside of the chosen place called Midnight Alpha. He dressed himself in something more casual than formal.

A black jacket with a navy blue and white striped V-neck shirt underneath. Matching this was a pair of white denim jeans. He also decided to wear his coloured contacts as there were limit number of humans that could potentially recognise him.

"Gakushu-kun~" A cheery voice cried out from behind and suddenly two hands came to grope his chest. Gakushu instantly froze and paled from the touch, and he knew only one person who would do something like this.

He glanced over his shoulder to see Gretel nicely dressed in a dark blue navy Sailor-Lolita dress, which was knee-length and short sleeved, complete with white stockings and her signature white and bouncy ribbon headband.

"Looking as adorable as ever my little Strawberry." Gretel sang as she let go of his chest, and the paled Gakushu held his arms overs his chest to protect them as usual.

Before Gretel could start to grope more of Gakushu, Arthur stepped in. ”Shall we go inside now?” He suggested, and Gakushu mentally thanked the blonde male reaper as the blonde female agreed.

Arthur opened the door and the three sat at a circular table that could fit five people. Gakushu went and to grabbed the menu booklet, sticking his head into the booklet which had Gretel squeal from the cuteness he was emitting.

Surprisingly, the three as of right now were the only ones dining.

Gretel's phone started to vibrate, and she went to her handbag to grab out her smartphone. ”Excuse me, I have a little something to do.” She slowly got up from her seat gracefully and walked off outside.

Gakushu and Arthur didn't spoke anything about this, as the two thought that she wanted a private conversation although Gakushu did want to ask her about it later to satisfy his curiosity.

Gakushu still held his head in the menu booklet, deciding what to eat for dinner as Gretel quickly came back inside as she cheered "I'm back."

Gakushu muttered a "welcome back" as Arthur did the same while still burying their heads into the menu.

"Thank you Ren for joining us." Gretel sang as she sat back to her seat.

’…What!’ Gakushu thought.

Immediately Gakushu flipped his menu book down and was shock to find Ren sitting on the opposite of him at the table.

"R-Ren?” Gakushu stuttered his surprise and he felt his cheeks going a bit red. For a quick moment, his violet eyes lit up with happiness from seeing his friend. "W-What are you doing here?"

"H-Hi Gakushu, nice hair-cut." Ren nervously said, not too sure on what to say as he sat in his seat staring at Gakushu.

Gretel looked at the scene, pleased with herself, and while Arthur kept to his neutral face as always, Gakushu could see this as there was a wide grin plastered on her face.
'You planned this.' Gakushu deduced as he stared at Gretel with a scowl. But again, the scowl looked like more of a pout instead. Gretel as if she knew what Gakushu was thinking gave the boy playfully grin.

"Sorry, but could you please excuse me for one moment?" Gakushu calmed said as he eyed at Gretel, rising from his seat, Gretel ding the same. He plastered the 'perfect smile' on his face, the one he uses back when he was in Class-A as he walked off from the table to have a slightly 'private conversation'.

"Gretel." Gakushu worded with irritation in his voice as he tried his best to control his emotions. Gretel only gave him a grin that reminded Ren and Gakushu of Karma.

Ren watched as Gakushu grabbed the wrist of blonde girl and dragged her to the kitchen.

"Are they allowed to do that?" Ren whispered to the tall blonde male as he watches the two entered the kitchen.

"Yes." Arthur answered, his eyes still glued on the menu booklet. Ren blankly stare as he looked at the circular windows of the kitchen doors. Behind the windows were Gretel and Gakushu having a heated conversation that was inaudible to him and occasional looks at the table.

It almost made the two look like as if they're siblings. Gretel did told Ren that she was Gakushu's big sister.

Ren didn't look too convinced and was very worried if the two got themselves into trouble for going into the staff-only area.

"We come here very often." Arthur said, attempted to reassure the hazel haired boy.

'How does that answers it!?' Ren mentally yelled.

________________________________________________________________________

And now, onto Gakushu's and Gretel's not so private conservation in the kitchen.

"Gretel! Why did you invite Ren?!" Gakushu angrily yelled, and Gretel only puffed up her cheeks. The staff continued on their work and ignored the two.

"Even so, I think you were quite happy to see him, I can see the look in your eyes." Gretel exclaimed with a cheeky smile and her arms crossed. Gakushu immediately turn into 50 shades of red.

Some workers, who were all reapers, awed at the sight of Gakushu, where even his ears were turning red. They were almost tempted to touch it, Gakushu's soft and marshmallow-like cheeks was already tempting enough to poke.

"G-Gretel!" Gakushu stutters, quickly trying to figure what to use for his argument, "You are not allowed to change people's fate!"

"If you do not know their fate then you cannot change it." Gretel countered with a look of pride painted on her face, the type of pride that a senior could only have.

'God damn Gretel and her 200 years of experience.' Gakushu thought to himself.

"You know that I am not hum-" Gakushu quickly stopped his sentence and looked over to the kitchen staff who were both watching the scene and preparing the food.

His face turn into a tomato from embarrassment as he watched the numerous stares of the workers.
"We all are reapers here if you were worried, continue on." One reaper the two knew as Van Nguyen stated, and Gakushu gave his thanks to the Vietnamese reaper before continuing with his conversation.

"You are only giving me more ties to break Gretel." Gakushu muttered, he gripped his hands together.

"He is human and I am a Grim Reaper, we live in two different worlds." His voice started to waver and his eyes watered.

"And eventually Ren will die." Gakushu stated, choking on his words. "I do not want to see his regrets as he passes on while I am still…" The tears easily flow right out of his eyes, because ever since yesterday, Gakushu was more willing to show more of his emotions.

Some might have said that he was becoming more emotional, as Gakushu had some troubles fully expressing his emotions and controlling them. Which was expected coming from his personal background…

"All humans do eventually, and some are probably reborn as Grim Reapers." Gretel said with a sad look, handing the strawberry blonde boy a handkerchief so he could dry his tears.

"Humans are like a candle, beautiful, but so delicate at the same time." Gretel said softly, Gakushu could feel the wisdom radiating from her tone. She went over to the counter and grabbed on lit candle. "A lifetime of a human can just be a blink to us."

Gretel then blew the small lit candle out to further emphasis her point. Gakushu remained quiet.

"I understand the pain of the inevitable but that pain would be greater if there are regrets left behind."

"Trying to soften the blow will only make your regrets worse." Gretel places the no longer lit candle back to the counter.

"Live happily together with the time you have now."

"Act like how you always would when you're in the Department or with us." Gretel glanced at the window in direction of their table with Ren attempting to make from small talk with Arthur. "It will be fine, Ren is such a nice boy after all."

Gretel gave a look to Gakushu telling him to talk with Ren again and she left the kitchen, leaving Gakushu.

"I know." Gakushu said sounding defeated, knowing that he could never win against Gretel. After all, big sister knows best.

He glances from the kitchen door's windows to see his very first (human) friend and all the happy memories he spent with him flashed into his mind. He faintly smiles as the memories went through his mind.

Okay, Gakushu will do it, he will talk with Ren again!

But…

But what should he say!? Gakushu cheeks flushed, and as much as he acted like a cold leader, deep down inside, he's a cinnamon roll at heart.
What should he say after he has been ignoring Ren for the past week?!

And all of those schemes he did against class-E was for the greater good, and he didn't want to have the entire school population in hospital or the area to be destroyed. And don't forget the trees, Gakushu does not have a temper!

Rilliane had been encouraging him since yesterday to show more of his true self and not the mask he has been using for 4 years as the 'perfect' son. Gakushu wasn't so sure if he could put back the mask on after it was repeatedly cracked this week alone.

*Maybe, it will be better to put down the mask forever… Well, at least around Ren.*

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Gretel left the kitchen, which easily caught the attention of the hazel haired boy. "Arthur, do you want to go to the drink bar with me?" She asked the tall blonde haired male, and he went with her request.

Gakushu soon came back from the kitchen, and back to the table after Arthur went off with Gretel to pick out some drinks. This left only him and Ren at the dining table, both not too sure of what to say.

"Is it your first time here?" Gakushu asked as he tries his best to remain eye contact with Ren.

Ren answered with a nod. "Yes, I am actually quite surprised that you actually dine here." The hazel haired boy gave a nervous chuckle. Gakushu could not blame him for that, as it was membership required and it is very expensive to those who were not a reaper. Not that Ren or anyone human knew that anyway.

Gakushu went to grab the menu booklet again to bury his face in. He could obviously tell that Gretel and Arthur were spying on the two from the bar.

So Gakushu was going to try to be nicer to Ren then he would if he was back in the main school building. Hopefully Gretel won't worry too much about this.

"I miss you, you know?" Ren said, getting straight to the point. Gakushu was lost for words and he felt his face going red, similar to the shade of Karma's hair. He couldn't allow this to be shown to Ren, not yet, that is.

"It has been a while after all." Gakushu calmly answered with an air of professionalism and went to change the conversation, "You should try the pork chops with raspberry sauce."

What Gakushu or Ren didn't know was that the all dining tables had been wired and taped. Now the entire staff of Midnight Alpha and the two other blonde reapers were listening into the conversation. Gakushu has almost forgotten that the restaurant was reaper run.

"The Strawberry is doing it! He's becoming friendlier to Ren-kun." Gretel whispered to Arthur as they hid behind the bar, watching the two boys from afar. "He's recommending one of his favourite dishes!"

Arthur nodded, as well as the bartenders, who watched the scene being played out. However, Ren didn't think the same. Ren thought that Gakushu was only pushing him further away as this was not how Gakushu would normally act back when he was in the main building.

"I really miss you!" Ren stand from his seat. "I really do!" Seeing that they were the only ones at the restaurant apart from the staff, Ren felt the need to slam his hands on the table to lean in closer to Gakushu.
Gretel and the rest of the female reapers who were working at the restaurant mentally squealed.

'Has Ren always been this dramatic?' Gakushu pondered. And why does it reminds him of Rilliane concerning about her tests? Why did he feel so embarrassed over this?

"I miss you too." Gakushu carelessly blurted out, and immediately placed his hand over his mouth, feeling his face go red.

Ren had his mouth wide open from Gakushu's little statement, but then he quickly remembered how Gakushu had been ignoring him and all of his calls and texts.

"Then why have you been ignoring my calls and text!?” Ren cried out. "You haven't been answering any of them!" Gakushu felt a stab of guilt going through his heart.

"I thought it would be best even we distanced ourselves, we live in two different worlds after all." Gakushu rashly said in a calm manner.

'Both literally and figuratively.' Gakushu added.

Gakushu stared at Ren as he continued his speech. "Things are different now, and I thought it was for the best given the circumstances."

Ren wanted to apologise as he felt that he was at fault for Gakushu's predicament, but he remembered Gretel's orders.

"You do not blame yourself! Gakushu-kun does not and I repeat! Does not blame you!" Gretel's words echoed in his mind. It was what she said to him earlier before entering back into the restaurant.

"I mean, I'm in Class-E now." Gakushu calmly stated as he tried his best to keep his face from turning into a tomato.

"But I'm not like Seo or Akari." Ren reminded as he slumped back to his seat, and Gakushu felt another stab of guilt. He knew that Ren was different from the two Class-A students from the start, but he was afraid of his reaction.

"I know." Gakushu said softly, and silence grew between the two as they weren't not two sure what to say next. He might as well just say the truth now, of how he really felt about all of this.

"I guess I was too scared to talk to you again. Finding out your reaction and all." Gakushu adverted his violet eyes away, and with a slight frown on his face, as if he were embarrassed and nervous.

Ren could only stare at Gakushu dumbfounded. Was that how Gakushu really saw things?

The Gakushu that Ren knew would never say something like that, but it would be the Gakushu that the Department knew. Even the way he spoke, and even though it was a small difference, it lacked the confidence that he could usually hear. Right now, Gakushu had the image of a puppy, or someone who was timid.

Gakushu right now feels so small. Nothing like the person back in the Class-A.

Ren was very confused until he remembered her words. "Gakushu is a very, very shy boy you know." Gretel's words from Thursday flashed back into his mind.

How much had Gakushu hidden his true self from Ren or everyone else?

"I mean look what I'm saying, it shouldn't be coming for a leader and all." Gakushu said, forcing out
a little chuckle.

"Cinnamon." A word echoed.

'Wait, what?' Ren thought, wondering if he needed his ears checked.

Ren swore that he could now hear some chanting in the background. "Cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon." 

Ren looks around to find the staff in the background spying on the two, from the cooks to the waiters. Gakushu just ignored this as it is a common occurrence for him.

Sadly for him, it was a common occurrence.

Gakushu sighed, "Things were much easier to say back in Class-A." Finally he let his face relax and quickly followed with a blush. "Why was it so much easier to talk as the emotionless son?" The Strawberry has now fully revealed his blushing face to Ren.

"What do you mean Gakushu?" Ren curiously asked, stunned to find this side of Gakushu Asano.

Gakushu hid his tomato shaded face with his hands, "If you asked Gretel or Arthur or anyone I am friends with, they'll know." He peeked at Ren though the gaps of his fingers, and Ren felt his heart beat wildly from seeing how cute Gakushu was.

Wait, Gakushu has more friends! How many more secrets Gakushu has been keeping from him!? 

"Cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon, cinnamon." The staff continued to chant in rhythm.

Gakushu gave a look at those who were chanting, they stopped their chanting and went back to work while whistling innocently away. Ren could now see that they were Gakushu's friends, but he noticed that there was an obvious age gap between them and Gakushu.

"If you told them how I act in the main building, they would certainly laugh." Gakushu let out another sigh, shocking the hazel haired male more.

'They would!?'

Gretel decided to come back to the table to give some extra moral support to Gakushu. She could see that Gakushu was having some difficulties on communicating with Ren. In her mindset, if she and Arthur were there, then he could have had an easier time to express his true self.

"It is true though." Gretel spoke up, she came back to the table with glass cups and a jug of cola. Arthur followed along with a jug of strawberry flavoured soda. "An was sobbing for two full hours after seeing you act so 'cold' to your classmates during that trip last year."

An was often on the short end of the stick when she had to be transferred for a short amount of time to fill in spots temporary similar to Arthur and his luck around paperwork duties.

"I remember, she told me you were acting rebellious then." Arthur said like there was a light-bulb moment flashed into his head. "She hoped that the bag of candy would give back the cinnamon roll we all know and love."

An, from the Australian division, acted as the very close and fun cousin for Gakushu, as well as for Mark, Johnny and James who also acted as the many cousins Gakushu had. It was quite a shock for
ever reaper stationed at Kunugigoako town that Gakushu didn't act as his cinnamon self during school.

'That is not definitely how you told me.' Ren thought to himself, he remembered the trip that acted as a reward to those who scored the highest in school. Gakushu was acting like how the Chairman's son would act, professional and somewhat emotionless.

Ren was in his room at the hotel reading his poetry book when Gakushu came in with a massive bag of sweets in his arms.

"How did you get that?" Ren's eyes almost popped right out from his sockets while Gakushu just looked calm as he stood up straight.

"I was only talking with a shopkeeper nearby and she just gave me this." Gakushu handed the bag over to Ren. "I was hoping that I could share this will you."

"Sure." Ren answered and quickly Gakushu spilled all the contents of the bag to the floor. All Ren saw could saw that it was all strawberry flavoured, he thought that the shop keeper had cruel sense of humour.

Giving Gakushu strawberry flavoured sweets because of Gakushu's strawberry blonde hair. What Ren didn't know that he was half right, as it was a continuing gag for Gakushu.

He always wondered how Gakushu never got sick from all of the sweets he ate. He thought that under the large amounts of sugar that he was hallucinating the sparkles emitting around Gakushu.

The flashback ended quickly as soon it began. Ren could now stare in awe at the sight Gakushu was, and he could even see that his ears were turning red like cherries.

"Cinnamon roll?" Ren hesitantly asked.

"Gakushu here is probably the most innocent being to have ever existed on Earth." Gretel said, letting out a giggle as she went back to her seat. Arthur followed the same and sat opposite in direction of the blonde girl.

"Am not!" Gakushu yelled back at Gretel.

"Denial." Both Gretel and Arthur sang, further teasing the strawberry blonde boy.

Ren wasn't so sure what to say next. Should he be sad that Gakushu hadn't been true to him? But Gakushu just wanted to act as the perfect leader that everyone in school expected him to do. Ren was his closest friend after all.

The Gakushu here seemed to be more relaxed and openly expressive of his emotions and thoughts. This deeply contrasts the Gakushu when he was in Class-A, as he acted as more of the emotionless leader.

'What would that person do?' Ren thought hard to himself. Was this how that person described as the mask some people put on?

After using that analogy, Ren could not blame Gakushu for hiding behind a mask because he is the same, wasn't he? Ren didn't want to lose Gakushu, as he couldn't afford to lose another person important to him.
After all of his thinking, all Ren could managed to say was his honest opinion, "You are still you, no matter what."

Gakushu gave a hopeful look to the brunet. "It doesn't matter if you are in Class-E, A or C. It doesn't matter because Gakushu is still Gakushu." Ren continued his speech.

Maybe Ren ask Gakushu about that one thing, even though Gretel was completely against it. "So you aren't angry at me?" Ren asked Gakushu, "You aren't angry at me that you are in Class-E?"

"Why would I be angry at you?" Gakushu innocently responded, "I don't see why I should blame you if it was my fault, not yours."

"Then we can be friends again?" Ren gave a hopeful look to Gakushu.

Gakushu gave a wide and warm smile. "We were already friends Ren, from the very beginning." His dazzling smile almost blinded Ren's hazel coloured eyes.

The cuteness levels were going off the charts and Ren felt a warm liquid coming out from his nose. Ren quickly panicked and desperately tried to find some tissues when a box was placed next to him.

"Here." Gretel said as she handed box of tissues to the boy. Ren became frantic, fearing that he would be now viewed as a pervert.

"I am so sorry-" Ren stopped his sentence when he looked up to Gretel, where she too held a bleeding tissue on her nose, and so did Arthur. All Ren could do was stare at them blankly.

"Gakushu has always been cute than cool hasn't he." Gretel whispers, and Arthur nodded. Gretel clapped her hands together, with a smile on her face. "See Gakushu-kun, it worked out well didn't, it?"

Gakushu let out another blush which left Gretel and Arthur laughing, and Ren soon joined with the laughter when Gakushu joined in as well.

Sometime later in the night, Gakushu decided to walk Ren home.

More like he was forced by Gretel.

Ren was quite happy that he was back on speaking terms with Gakushu again, but he still felt that he needed to know more.

That one reason that Gakushu gave out couldn't be the only reason, right?

The strawberry blonde let out a yawn, surprising the hazel haired boy. Gakushu rubbed around his eyes, Ren remembered that Gakushu had eaten a look of food which probably made the boy feel a bit more tired.

Ren wanted to know more about Gakushu, and he felt hurt that Gakushu didn't trust him a bit more.

"Gakushu…?" Ren spoke.

"What is it Ren?" Gakushu replied back.

"Gakushu, did you not trust me?" Ren stopped walking and turned to Gakushu, who was stunned by his words, staying silent.
"You know that I was different from everyone but yet…" Ren choked out his words, Gakushu pretended to find the ground more interesting. "Yet, you hid behind an act."

"You didn't have to be scared around me!"

"After being friends for 4 years-"

Ren suddenly heard a snuffle, and he looked at Gakushu, whose mouth started to wobble.

"I was really scared!" Gakushu let out a cry and all of his tears spilled out, shocking Ren.

"Why would anyone want a leader who is weak or scared!?" Gakushu sobbed his words out, and Ren instantly felt a stab of guilt going through his heart.

"Please don't cry!" Ren said, frantically waved his arms around, he had never dealt with a crying Gakushu before.

"I'm not crying!" Gakushu yelled in denial, but he continued to cry anyway. "I was scared of what you would think of me!"

"It was bad enough that I transferred to Class-E, I know that you won't do things like Seo but I couldn't help it!" Gakushu rubbed his eyes with his sleeves and cried even louder.

"What would happen if you find out that I'm a cinnamon roll?!"

"Everyone will eventually leave me!" Gakushu let another reason let loose from his mouth, a lifetime of a human is a blink for a reaper like himself.

Ren suddenly leaped in to pull Gakushu into a hug, but quickly realising who he was just hugging and froze with his arms wrapped around the smaller boy.

Now that Ren realised it, Gakushu was a bit small around his arms. Ren felt his face heating up, Gakushu stood rigid from the sudden contact from the slightly taller male.

There was some silence between the two until Gakushu spoke. "Hey Ren?" Gakushu whispered so softly that Ren could barely manage to hear him.

"What is it Gakushu?" Ren asked, he couldn't think what else to say next.

"Am I that weak?" Gakushu couldn't help it, but Ren had a similar vibe to Rilliane's. He couldn't help but ask Ren what he had asked Rilliane after his emotions were toyed yesterday.

"No, it makes you human." Rilliane's answer echoes, her answer was almost poetic.

"No, you're not!" Ren replied back defensively and pulled him closer into his arms. "Being true to yourself with others and not just hiding behind a mask takes lots of mental strength."

"You are strong! Strong to be able to show your tears!"

"Being weak can never be a crime, I won't allow it!" Ren added with conviction. Gakushu was amazed by the determination in his tone.

There was some silence afterwards, the two stood there unmoving until Gakushu spoke up.

"Sorry that I messed up your shirt." Gakushu muttered.
"It doesn't matter, it's only a shirt anyway." Ren bluntly replied back and it made Gakushu smile sightly.

There was silence again between the two until Gakushu broke the ice. "Ren… you're kind of suffocating me." Gakushu uttered and Ren's face quickly turned red.

"I am so sorry!" Ren quickly let go of him, his face burned from the knowledge that he was actually hugging the Chairman's son and the fact that he was also cute. Everything Gakushu did was so utterly adorable.

Gakushu quickly let out a chuckle, as the sight of Ren was so amusing. Ren joined in as it helped to lighten up the mood.

Laughter filled in the night as well as happiness as the two continued their walk down the street, happiness in their hearts.

It was that then and there that Gakushu promised to himself that he would be at Ren's side, until his timely death. Even though it would hurt, it would be much more painful if there are regrets.

Even if it would hurt, at least he wouldn't have any regrets. He would have the happiest of memories of the time spent with his friend to look back to, his first friend.

He would have more of a reason to work harder for his forgiveness, that one day he would reincarnate and be with him once again.

Together with his father, Ren and everyone in his group of reapers like the one he saw in his dreams.

"So how's Class-A?" Gakushu innocently asked, he has been wondering what has happened to the class he once lead.

"Where do I even start?!" Ren cried out, exaggerating his voice.

It felt that all the unease had gone away, it felt more relaxing. Gakushu was easier to talk to, no longer talking as if he was a superior but instead as a friend.

Ren really like this side of Gakushu, his truest of self.

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Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven.'

"Why wasn't I informed?"

"Why is he carrying a gardening tool?"

"You can't exactly work together if the other is dead."

"Um… Gakushu-san. Do you hate Class-E that much?"

"Although we have no problems of having children in our ranks."

"How interesting."

Chapter: Representative.
"Why do I feel some sort of dread Arthur?" Gakushu felt a shiver going through his spine all of a sudden. The two were at the gym which happens to be reaper run, you got to love these convenient places where Gakushu can easily talk about topics relating to the Department.

The two were practicing a new song and dance performance ready for next week contest. However when news got out to the other contenders that Candy Fest was joining in, everyone else chickened out so the group decided to have the contest converted into a concert. The contest had been placed for next week in case someone joins.

"Possibly Gretel is finalising one of her plans for you to wear that dress she's designing." Arthur grimly suggested, it was so difficult for the blonde male to always protect the little Strawberry from Gretel's little clothing experiments.

"Which one?" Gakushu turned pale with a twitching smile, as he turns away from Arthur.

"I saw plans for a Victorian style dress." Arthur said and was getting nostalgic about it for that era's clothing, as he always preferred his suits and ties after all. It made him look and feel that he was professional and worthy of Gretel's grace.

It was one of Arthur's oldest habits, he did served under Gretel after all. Gretel and her half saved him from uncertainly of poverty in that orphanage he once stayed.

His loyalty was so strong that he committed his unforgivable act by stabbing himself with a sword, laying in his pool of blood next to Gretel, after she too committed her unforgiveable act. In attempts to reunite with her in death.

"Please hide me when the day comes." Gakushu said with a hint of fear in his voice. Gretel is so scary with that complex of hers. And a Victorian dress means that a certain someone has to wear a corset.

"I will." Arthur complied and gave the boy a pat on the back to reassure him. Suddenly Gretel jumped into the room with bags of food.

"I got mochi! And it is strawberry flavoured!" Gretel sang and Gakushu let out his famous sparkles.

"Yay!" Gakushu cheered, at least the mochi would put him off of his earlier thoughts.

*Mochi now, dress later!*

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"Who knew that Gakushu could dress so cutely?" Kayano pointed out as she and Karma hid behind bushes. They somehow had gotten over the shock of Gakushu's casual choice of clothes, they always had the mental image that he would come in a suit.

It was a wonder that Gakushu hasn't use it to his advantage, he would had the entire school his
control… Well more control than he had.

"Do you like sweets Gakushu-san?" Nagisa's voice emitted from the transmitter. "But I never see you eat sweets when you are in the main building?"

"I was never really allowed because of the Chairman." Gakushu answered. Kayano felt almost sorry for Gakushu as she had a sweet tooth herself. But who knew that some like Gakushu loves his sweets, it seems so wrong but at the same time so right as well.

Karma realised that Gakushu was acting a bit too relaxed, the Gakushu they know was far too stiff and robotic. Later the date left the café and headed for the local park. There were too many differences with Gakushu acting in both Class-E and A and the Gakushu acting in the date.

That café scene with the workers inferring with the fate was basically summed up as 'the fuck.' The three came to the conclusion that Gakushu was a regular customer and knew of the employees. It was a plus, as it gave Karma another nickname for Gakushu, Shuuie.

Later they learnt that Gakushu likes to do baking and play soccer, nothing noteworthy for blackmail material. In fact, it just made him seem less of the Chairman's son and more of a normal student.

"I was so into my baking too much that I didn't realised that I made enough cakes to supply a bakery." Gakushu said and Nagisa let out a giggle.

Kayano now feared for Nagisa's safety, laughing at Gakushu's mistake was a possible death sentence, while Karma was just amused from the story of Gakushu emitting a fault of his.

Karma and Kayano thought that they needed their ears checked when they heard Gakushu laughing back.

"It is quite funny isn't it?" The strawberry blonde chuckled along.

The perfect son has emotions!? And his laughter created a warm feeling in the two.

How is this even possible? Has the world ended? Are pigs going to fly now? Gakushu is actually laughing and it is not the type of evil laughter when he was scheming.

Karma thought that Gakushu should do that more often until he pinched himself for thinking such a thing.

And when the date came to the end, there was no positive feelings in the three afterwards. Nothing was accomplished as Gakushu now knew of Nagisa's secrets.

Gretel and Ivanov pair, after Gakushu saved Nagisa from being killed from Gretel's wrath. The way Ivanov looked at Gakushu gave Kayano an uncomfortable feeling, it was as if the tall male didn't buy Gakushu's story. But if he did knew, he didn't press on.

Karma and Kayano couldn't see Gakushu's expression as he talked to 'Hana' who he now knew as Nagisa. "Don't, Hana. Or should I even call you Hana. Well Nagisa?"

It greatly shocked the three, how did Gakushu found out? They quickly received their answer. "Midst in the chaos, I spotted Karma and Kayano hiding and just connected the dots." Gakushu must had really good eye sight to even spot the hiding pair, how perfect can he get?

Gakushu would had laugh if he heard that, although it would just bring confusion to the three. He was only glancing around, thinking whether or not to let Gretel tear the girl into shreds. The two
class-A students at least only gave him insults but this person…

It was then and there that Gakushu spotted a speck of red and green hair hiding behind some bushes not too far from the scene. He made the conclusion that it was their plan along.

'I should have expected this. I have no place in that classroom to begin with…' Gakushu thought to himself before stepping into the scene when Gretel slipped out of Ivan's grip.

"Do you really hate me that much? Do you despised me that much?" Gakushu asked as if he was speaking to all three. He is going back to his Class-A attitude. Nagisa obviously answered with a 'no' but Gakushu continued on.

"Then why did you decide to play with my emotions? Was it that funny to you?"

"Then why did you all went into some much effort for this? Do you really want to become an assassin that badly?"

The more Gakushu spoke, the more guilt was built upon. Gakushu really wanted the three to feel bad about themselves.

"If so, then you did a brilliant job. You could easily drive someone to their deaths with a bit more practice." Gakushu let out a cold and bitter laugh, it turned the air around the area icy cold.

'We got the idea already.' Karma irritatingly thought. Gakushu was really going out of his way to make the three feel bad about themselves and it is working.

"I should have expected this from Class-E. After all, it is a class filled with mindless puppets waiting for their government's whims."

Karma was about to leap out from the bushes but Kayano immediately wrapped her arms around his waist to restrain him. She ushered him not to make things any more worse.

"I will see you on Monday." Gakushu's last words before he walks off.

Seeing Gakushu walked into the distance with an emotionless mask. Nagisa could never forget out Gakushu managed to let a single tear escaped from his violet eyes.

Gakushu Asano has feelings you know? And the three learnt it the hard way.

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Chapter 9: Mother

Who is Ivanov to Gakushu? Gakushu has a sister? How did Ivanov steal Karma's knife?

Nagisa thought back to Gretel and compared her to Gakushu. Similar height, facial structure and the fact that Gakushu could calm her down and prevented her from tearing the blue haired boy into shreds was strange.

Nagisa walked back home and the image of Gakushu never left from his mind. His bitter smile wavered and that single tear escaped from his violet eyes. Gakushu felt so innocent when he was in that café eating his sweets and smiling so sweetly. Nagisa probably had broken what some sort of trust Gakushu had on Class-E or on other people.

He felt like a normal person and Nagisa had to ruin it all. He could remember the pain in the boy's violet eyes even though he tried to hide them.
It was not a surprise that Nagisa felt guilt for his actions, but there was no other choices for him. Gakushu would surely never understand what he went through. Surely Gakushu would look at him in disgust or sneer at him.

Gakushu really did raise several questions. Thinking back to the Gretel, they really do look like siblings.

Gakushu, who are you really?

Gakushu did said that he liked sweets, maybe he should buy something for him to act as to break the ice when he goes to apologise to him on Monday.

Lucia was in a café with her beloved Wolfie ordering some food before dinner. At this time, majority of the reapers stationed at Kunugigaoka town usually ate at the café Gakushu and Nagisa was there earlier. The sign at the window placed reads 'Membership only.'

The blonde German heard some chatter from the excited reapers, who were talking about Gakushu.

"Did you see Gakushu today? He was so cute!" An working the waitress whispered to another reaper who earlier was doing the shift at another café.

"And that date of his!" Another female reaper squealed and many other reapers joined along.

'Date!?' The thoughts of the German couple merged. The entire café was having a conversation about Gakushu's 'little' date.

An was showing the two pictures of Gakushu's date, a girl wearing a white dress and has long blue hair. Wolfie mentally gave the boy the thumbs up. Lucia was begging An to send her the photo of Gakushu wearing his dog-eared hat.

The atmosphere in the café is almost like a party in celebration for Gakushu.

"Our little boy is growing up!" Lucia ushered to Wolfie. "We are going to drink tonight!"

The conversation came to a halt with Gretel walked into the café. Quickly afterwards, everyone came rushing to the blonde girl, asking what happened after the date.

"How did it go!?!" An pushed away the crowding reapers surrounding Gretel.

"Did they kissed? Tell me they kissed!" James excitedly asked. All the female reapers including Lucia squealed and getting in touch with their inner fan-girl.

"It is official?" Johnny screamed out from the masses. Gretel only smiled and remained in silence, which builds more of the reapers' excitement.

"Tell us Gretel!" Everyone looked at Gretel as their hold onto their breaths as they waited for her answer.

"Hana betrayed Gakushu." Gretel bluntly answered with a smile, a fake smile that is. It was easy to see that she was not happy, not one fucking bit.

"Eh?" Basically the response of everyone in the café. Mark who was holding the serving tray, dropped it to the ground and many jaws were dropped.

Gretel gave a shrug and continued her explanation, "Hana turns out to be a gold-digger who was
only going out for only his father's status."

"The cinnamon roll cried himself to sleep." Gretel pointed out, adding more fuel to the growing hatred brewing amongst in that certain reaper-run café.

"Aunty Lucia is coming!" Immediately Lucia screamed as she stormed out of the café with Wolfie following beside her.

"Uncle Wolfie is coming!" Wolfie yelled and the two ran into the distance.

"Gakushu is at my place!" Gretel yelled to the running pair.

It was that then and there that all of the reapers who were stationed at Kunugigaoka town planned for the demise of this 'Hana' character.

Screw the paperwork! Gakushu is far more important!

Everyone can share the load on the papers, it was only one person they needed to kill. Now to find her is another question.

Maybe Antonio can help as he was a part of the Identification Division but it'll still be very difficult as they only had one part of the name and there are tens of thousands of Hana's.

How dare that Hana bitch make the cinnamon roll cry! Gakushu the cinnamon roll! Now he would act extra cold to his class now!

Many reapers, both those who and weren't stationed at Kunugigaoka town were buying multiple of gifts for the strawberry blonde boy. Maybe a surprise on Monday would be the best? And of course it would be strawberry themed. They made sure not to mention that 'incident' around him again as it would upset the boy greatly.

Meanwhile Arthur was dashing through the Central building of the Department with bags of gifts brought from New York City. Mainly of the bags were filled with gourmet chocolate from MarieBelle.

"Big brother Arthur is coming!" Arthur yelled as now he was out in the human realm in Kunugigaoka town running down the streets.

Arthur's overprotectiveness kicks in. He arrived at Gretel's place, fumbled through his keys to open the front door. He opened it and almost slammed it close, he ran into the living room heavily breathing.

"I'm here! I'm here!" He came breathing heavily.

Chapter 10: My first friend.

Ren waited outside of the restaurant Midnight Alpha, he was amazed that Gretel even chose this place. Membership was very expensive and even then it was harder to get acceptance in their attendance list.

'This is the place, right?' Ren thought to himself as he waited outside of the gourmet restaurant. Surely he gotten the wrong place, but Gretel soon walked out of the doors.

"So glad you came." Gretel greeted the boy in typically European fashion, she kissed both the cheeks of the hazel haired boy.
This of course left the boy blushing. "How did you even get into this place?" Ren asked Gretel who gave him a wide smile.

"Connections." Gretel sang, placing her hands in the air.

"Gakushu is inside." She pointed her hand to the door.

"R-right!" Ren stuttered, he wasn't supposed to be this nervous and especially around girls. Gretel could easily see how hesitant and nervous the boy was.

"Ren repeat after me." Gretel snapped the boy out from his nervousness, it was a plus as it caught his attention. "Gakushu does not blame me."

"…Um…" Ren could only blankly stared at blonde female.

"Say it." Gretel ordered, she crossed her arms. Although she was much smaller than Ren, the weight of her presence made her somehow bigger. "Gakushu does not blame me."

Eventually Ren caved in and did what she said. "Gakushu does not blame me."

Gretel asked for him to repeat it again. "Gakushu does not blame me."

Gretel huffed her cheeks in satisfaction, "You do not blame yourself! Gakushu-kun does not and I repeat! Does not blame you!"

"Do you understand?!" Gretel asked and got the answer she wanted, Ren nodded his head furiously.

"Good." Gretel who was proud of herself, opened the restaurant doors to let the boy in. Ren was quite surprised with Gakushu's new appearance but his poetry side was telling him, it was a new beginning for Gakushu and him.

"So you are telling me that you are actually Ichigo from the Candy Fest band." Ren cried out in surprise, he stared at all three.

Gretel, Arthur and Gakushu were actually idols!?

Gretel and Arthur he could see, in fact Ren belittled himself for never making the connection. But Gakushu as Ichigo?

"Do you want me to say? 'Hey Ren guess what, I'm in an idol band who takes on the stage name that means strawberries and wears a blonde wig whenever about to perform'." Gakushu jokingly answered, Gretel and Arthur let out a laugh while Ren sat in uncomfortable silence still trying to get used to this side of Gakushu.

"Would you honestly believe me?" Gakushu huffed out his words and continued to devour his steak meal.

"Don't know, you sort of had an Ichigo vibe going on there. You do kind of look like him?" Ren nervously answered.

Gretel soon came to interrupt the conversation as she waved her arm up, "I know! Ren I have been meaning to add one more member to our dancing group."

Ren was surprised by the panic and worried looks from both Arthur and Gakushu who ushered him not to do it.
"Um…" The brunet uttered. Gretel looks on at Ren as she clapped her hands together.

Gretel ignored Arthur and Gakushu, who was gesturing Ren not to do it or else he would die. Arthur was shaking his head and making an x-shape with his arms, while Gakushu was making slit-neck movements.

"I want to spend more time with you guys so I'm up for a challenge." Ren confidently stated and the two males let out a painful groan.

"Oh now you two, of course I would go easy on Ren-kun." Gretel said, she puffed her cheeks and went back to finishing her meal. The two males sighed in relief but still had the look of worry.

What had Ren gotten himself into?

"Now that Gakushu-kun has showed Ren-kun his truest of cinnamon-ness self." Gretel was about to finish her sentence until Gakushu interrupted.

"Only when there is no people around or when I'm with you guys." Gakushu replied

"Gakushu." Arthur worded, going back to his neutral face.

Man does Gakushu still have some trust issues. Even then, what he agreed yesterday was to show more of his emotions, it is just only in front of his friends or those from the Department. And that is a given, Gakushu made no promises on showing his true self to everyone else.

Also that reason Gakushu gave out yesterday was more for Ren, who he just learnt of Gakushu's cinnamon side. Everyone else who is human was in the dark.

Some of the reapers stationed here would say, "How tsundere of him."

Gakushu would probably still act a bit cold around Class-E, maybe slowly reveal his cinnamon side? Gretel would discuss with the others, to create a plan to showcase Gakushu the Cinnamon roll.

'Baby-steps, Baby-steps.' Arthur and Gretel's thoughts merged.

"Right now I am happy enough with you guys." Gakushu came the group a warm smile and Gretel felt a squeal escaping from her. Arthur took a picture of this moment, adding another for the Gakushu diary.

_Smiling in front of friend._ Arthur captioned the photo, Ren just blankly stared at the blonde male.

"I will send you the photos." Arthur turned to Ren, Ren who glanced back at Gakushu was reacting to none of this. Probably was a normal occurrence for him, which sadly it was.

"So, how's Class-E. I really hope that the rumours about it isn't true." Ren attempted to change the conversation.

"The best way to describe it is that it is very relax. It is not the hell on Earth you would think it would be." Obviously Gakushu can't reveal to Ren that his teacher was an alien who destroyed the moon, which was now repaired by the organisation Gakushu, Gretel and Arthur works for. Or that his class were being trained to become assassins to kill their teacher with green rubber knifes.

Gakushu just hoped that was where the strangeness would end. He stopped his thinking on that subject matter to prevent another headache.

Gakushu couldn't wait for desserts to come soon, his urge to eat cake had surfaced once again.
Gretel and Arthur observed or spied from a distance on Ren and Gakushu. Gretel felt her inner shoujo connecting when Ren leaped in to hug the crying Gakushu. She almost let out a squeal.

The blonde female reaper was even recording this moment on her phone. Arthur followed Gretel to make sure that she won't go overboard. The last time which was only yesterday when Gretel went out to spy on Gakushu without him around, she almost kick someone's head off.

"You know, I was about to ship Gakushu with that Karma Akabane character." Gretel whispered to Arthur. "But this will do just nicely."

"What!? Why?" Arthur no longer kept his usual neutral face was shocked by Gretel's statement.

"You don't trust my judgement, Arthur?" Gretel puffed her cheeks in anger and looked away from Arthur to which he sighed.

"I don't trust this Karma fellow." Arthur said, his over-protectiveness kicks in.

"Something screams to me, wasabi." Arthur pondered, that was the first thing that in his mind when he first met the red head. Or it could be because of Grell Sutcliff.

"How did you even make the connection in the first place?" Arthur said, he rubbed the temples of his head.

"Karma-kun's hair is red, strawberries are red and Gakushu loves strawberries." Gretel bluntly answered and continued on to watch the scene of Ren hugging Gakushu,

Arthur let out a heavy sigh. 'I think it is time to go.'

"Okay, let's go now." Arthur turned to Gretel, grabbing her hand.

"But Arthur~" Gretel let out a whine, she unleashed her puppy-dog eyes which had no effect on Arthur, who only gave his usual neutral face. While the inside of Arthur was some inner conflict, he is using all of his mental strength to not fell for her ultimate weapon.

"Now milady." He said in a firm voice. Of course Arthur would have the courage to test against Gretel's infamous temper, he was her anchor after all.

"Fine. I told you to call me Gretel." Gretel begrudgingly uttered. She quickly let out a cute yelp when Arthur went to pick her up as if she was a bag of potatoes.

"What are you doing Arthur?" Gretel let out a blush, as she was surprised by this gesture.

"To make sure you won't leave from my sight." Arthur said as it was the most normal thing.

"Put me down." Gretel attempted to kick her legs but Arthur hold his hand firm on them.

"When we get back home." Arthur spoke and he walks back with Gretel over his shoulders. What Gretel didn't know was that Arthur was blushing like mad.
Gakushu has a temper as much he likes to deny it.

Temper

*Remember when Lucia said that she was still surprised that Class-E's building was still standing, after she first headedly witnessed Gakushu's temper. This is that story, it was a year after Gakushu became a full-fledged Grim Reaper.*

Lucia was walking down the hallways after completing her teaching shift, she was walking to meet Ivan for some drinks. She was currently making plans for honeymoon trip with her beloved Wolfie and she quickly remembered Oktoberfest, the world's largest Volkfest.

Last year's Oktoberfest was awesome! She couldn't wait for that day to come around again, maybe she should drag everyone from their friendship group along?

Johnny, Mark, James and An were currently planning for their trip to Australia's AFL Grand Final, they too were planning to drag Gakushu along. Rilliane was secretly meeting with Thomas, Wolfie did his usual work in the Forensic Division, Ivan was messing around and was bored out of his mind.

Suddenly as Lucia continued to walk the halls, something smashed through the walls and impacted the lockers at the end of the hall. It only just missed her by an inch.

Lucia could only blankly stare as she leaned forward to see many holes going in the same direction. It reminded her from that certain scene from the Incredibles. Other occupants from the other rooms did the same and looked back to find out who made the damages. And then Gakushu was walking out through the holes on the wall, closer to the battered person at the end. Who she just now realised that it was Grell Sutcliffe from the English Division and he was moaning in pain.

Gakushu's face was covered in icing and he bared a look at screamed, 'I am so fucking pissed.' He walked to where Grell was lying in pain and started to stomp on him.

Lucia held a poker-like face as she watched Gakushu beating or stomping the living shit out of the red-cladded reaper.

*Now, let us go back a bit to see how this came to be.*

Gakushu was cheery as ever as he walked down the halls of the Department, he was attending to a class reunion of those who graduated last year. He was humming his famous pudding song.

"Pudding, p-pudding~ Pudding! Pudding parade!"

He was almost practically skipped his way to the class reunion. The reason why he was so happy was because he spent the entire night previously baking the perfect cake for such a special day. He arrived at the door and swiftly opened it.
"Guys, I made some cake-" Gakushu cheered, Grell earlier was doing his Romeo and Juliet act for a poor male reaper who visibly paled. When Gakushu just entered the room, Grell accidentally kicked the cake upwards and it smashed right into Gakushu's face.

The cake soon fell to the floor with Gakushu covered in icing. There was silences as everyone in the room knew how much Gakushu loves his sweets. Everyone but Grell took a step back, in fear of what Gakushu was going to do to Grell Sutcliffe.

Gakushu did graduate from his reaper classes in a month after all, and everyone didn't want to face the wrath of Gakushu Asano, which was rumoured to be very similar to Gretel's.

Grell was booming in laughter, not knowing of what he had unleashed. Everyone but Gakushu prayed for this poor and forsaken red soul.

Gakushu stared down on his cake… his cake. The cake he had worked on last night for this very moment was now ruined. His eyes darken and no longer there was a smile on his cute little face, but instead it was replaced with a thin frown. He swiped off the cream from his glasses to reveal the darkening of his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes.

"Grell." Gakushu almost growled under his voice, Grell snapped out of his laughing fit and looked at the Strawberry. The red haired Grim Reaper had now realised of what he had just done. Gakushu was famous in the Department for his love or obsession of sweets, everyone in the organisation knew that.

"G-Gakashu!" Grell exclaimed, he put up his hands defensively as he paled. "W-wait! We can talk over this!" Grell swore that he saw a dark aura emitting from the small boy. The killer intent was strong in this one.

However it was too late, Gakushu walked up to the red head. "W-wait Gakush-" Gakushu then and firmly grabbed his collar and threw him right over his shoulders. Grell impacted the wall and flied right out through the many walls of the Department. Everyone in the reunion had their mouths wide open.

Lucia at the end of where Grell finally landed was in a state of shock.

Gakushu in a businessman like manner walked out of the holes on the walls he just made, closer towards the down Grell as he ignored the various stares from his fellow reapers. When he stood right in front of him, he began to stomp on him.

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Now back to current times.

Gakushu continued to stomp on Grell, mainly on his face. There was a kick occasionally to the stomach but Gakushu has yet to use his hands to strangle the poor Englishman clad in crimson red.

Everyone swore that they heard a rib being cracked. "Crack, crack, crack." Okay several ribs they corrected themselves. Lucia looked to the boy and saw that he was covered in icing,

Lucia peeked back at the holes on the wall and saw on the very end that there was a smashed cake on the floor. She had quickly connected the dots, if Gretel's Gakushu complex was terrifying enough than it was on the same level of Gakushu's sweet obsession. Gakushu got into a fight with Ikeda because he stole his chocolate bar last time.

"Gakush-" Grell attempted to call out to the boy however he received another stomp of his face, to further the pain, Gakushu grinded his foot on his battered face.
…Ow.' Lucia and everyone thought as they watched the continued torture of the red-head.

Gakushu soon lifted his foot up from his face and went off, leaving Grell moaning in pain. Lucia froze and everyone who just watched the torture froze in their place.

'What just happened?' Everyone's thoughts merged, this was going a bit too fast to process.

Gakushu quickly came back as he took off but this time, he was hiding something behind his back. Gakushu came to the red head and pinned his foot down on the reaper's face to prevent him from escaping.

Lucia panicked when she found out what Gakushu was carrying Grell's Death Scythe, the red chainsaw. "Gakushu! Let's put down that chainsaw slowly." Lucia held her hands up as she gestured to the strawberry blonde boy to calm down.

More jaws were dropped, 'Gakushu was carrying what now and how did he get Grell's Death Scythe in the first place!?'

Gakushu slowly turned to Lucia with a cold smile plastered on his cake covered face.

'Why does he makes it so intimidating?' Everyone thought.

"I hope that you don't mind if I painted him in red he so adores." The strawberry blonde pulled out the red chainsaw from behind his back.

"Gakushu, please! Let's talk this out!" Grell cried out but Gakushu only gave a deeper grind to his beloved face.

"You know, it's been a while since I vented a bit." Gakushu said and he started the red chainsaw. "It has been going so well for me lately, or well." Gakushu almost sang his words out nonchalantly. He let out a heavy sigh as he glared down at the red head.

"Stop- argh!" Grell was stopped when Gakushu let another kick, but this time to his stomach. Gakushu felt pleased with himself when he heard another crack.

"You just had to ruin that cake that I spent all night making it." Gakushu held the weapon high in his hand as the blades rotated.

"Gakushu! I beg of you! Stop!" Grell begged but Gakushu gave him a smile. He pretended that the roars of the weapon drowned out the pleads of the red-clad reaper.

"I don't want to." Gakushu sang and Grell let out a scream as the strawberry blonde boy swan the weapon down. It didn't make contacted with his flesh though, in the way was a long metal rod. The chainsaw's blade stopped running and the rod retracted back to its original owner.

"I apologised for interrupting this scene." A voice called out and everyone's head turned in the direction of the voice. It was William T. Spears.

"I have come to pick up Grell Sutcliff." Thomas said without any emotions in his voice and with a frown on his face.

"Oh, William!" Grell slightly raised from the ground, he supported his body weight with his arms. "Will! Did you come to save me?!" William step forward and stepped onto the back of Grell's head, forcing his face to taste the floor once again and he let out another pain filled groan.
Everyone looked in horror and amazed of how a Grim Reaper could survive after so much abuse. This felt really similar for Grell, just replaced his Sebby with Gakushu.

"Grell Sutcliff. It looks like you have destroyed some property." William spoke in a monotone like manner. The reaper inspected the damages behind Gakushu.

"Wait, that was Gak-" William stomped on Grell's head to silence him.

"You cannot blame a boy who just been a reaper for just a year nor if he has a temper." William pushed his glasses back while he ignored the protest that came from the Cinnamon Roll.

"I do not have a temper!" Gakushu yelled in denial, his face flushed like cherry tomatoes. Lucia had took a photo of this moment. William almost gave in of the cuteness Gakushu was emitting.

"Oh, Asano-san." William turned to Gakushu, he grabbed a napkin from his pocket and started to swipe the icing off from Gakushu's face. "You had something there." William could feel underneath the napkin of how bouncy and soft Gakushu's cheeks were, he had to resist the urge to pinch them. And afterwards he popped a custard puff on his mouth. "A gift for your troubles. It's custard choux cream, how are they?"

"It's so and so." But Gakushu's words contradict his expressions, as he happily munched onto his pastry and grabbed the box that had more of the pastries from the senior English reaper.

"I was almost killed-" Grell complained but William pulled him by the hair, and threw him over his shoulder and slammed him onto the ground. Lucia worded out an 'ow' while Gakushu was too busy munching on his custard pastries.

"Shut up." William said and Grell moaned in pain before he was dragged off.

On that day, Gakushu managed to break Grell's nose, both of his arms and legs, fractured his spine and other internal injuries. And that was Lucia could think from the top of her head.

That was the day when Lucia learnt the extent of Gakushu's temper, Gakushu spent the entire day continuously apologising to the Board for the damages he caused. The Board only shrugged it off, Gakushu was stronger than a usual reaper so they expected something like this to happen eventually.

And besides, it was difficult to resist when Gakushu or otherwise known as the Cinnamon Roll, who had the face of a tomato when he looked back at the damages he just caused.

"Not again!" Gakushu cried out as he panicked when he looked back of the damages.

Lucia was surprised that this amount of damaged hasn't happened at Gakushu's school yet, some burst soccer balls here and there and maybe a dent in the wall was… very mild. She and Gakushu were praying that Gakushu won't manage to put the entire school in the local hospital.

The blonde German thanked Ren for doing such a good job on being Gakushu's anchor. What she didn't or anyone in his group of reaper friends knew of the schemes against Class-E Gakushu had been doing to exert much of his anger in his final year of middle school.

Everyone in the Department would have a heart attack when they found that Gakushu didn't act as his cinnamon self during school or around his classmates.

And many did and many cried, just like An when she thought that her Cinnamon Roll was acting 'rebellious'.
Representative

Chapter Summary

The Department has come to see the class but Gakushu was relieved that it wasn't Grell.

Representative

It was a new week for Gakushu, as this would be his second week he had spent with Class-E. Gakushu was already set for the day with his school uniform worn neatly and precise, and his school bag was at the front door waiting to be picked up.

However there was one thing missing from his usual routine.

“Arthur, have you seen my contacts anywhere?” Gakushu walked into the bathroom where Arthur and Gretel were brushing their already whiten teeth. He was wearing his black glasses instead of his coloured contacts, which revealed his chartreuse phosphorescent reaper eyes.

Arthur shook his head, “No I haven’t.” The blonde male answered, he then spit out the toothpaste solution and rinsed his mouth with the tap water.

“I have a spare pair.” Gretel pointed out, and she opened one of the draws and grabbed a capsule-like case. Throwing it to the boy, Gakushu easily caught it, and Gretel went back to rinse her mouth and clean her toothbrush.

“Why do you have contacts that has my eye colour?” Gakushu asked as he opened the case, containing the violet contacts to hide away his reaper ears.

“In case you wanted me to create an alibi for you or if you lost a pair, things happen you know.” Gretel answered. Gakushu stood next to the pair as he puts on his contacts.

“By the way, a Department representative is coming to your class today.” Gretel continued the morning conversation before doing her morning shift, brushing her short blonde hair in front of the bathroom mirror.

“Why wasn’t I informed?” Gakushu asked as he slightly turned to her, and Gretel shrugged.

“It was last minute, just got the news this morning to past it to you.” Gretel answered back as she placed the hairbrush back into the drawers.

“Who’s coming?” This time Arthur spoke, who was still brushing his already white teeth.

“Don’t know, probably someone who isn’t stationed from here to avoid suspicion as per usual.” Gretel casually pointed out.

For today, Lucia and Ivan were doing the surveillance shift together. There was no need to mention Wolfie since he was always working at the Forensic Division.
“Rilliane is struck in another conference again, so that’s how I found out that someone from the Department is coming to check your class.” Gretel mentioned as she finally put on her headband that had it’s bouncy white ribbon on top.

“I see, I’m off now!” Gakushu said to the two, and walked out of the bathroom and grabbed his school bag on the way.

“Have a good day at school!” Arthur and Gretel sang and Gakushu was soon off for school, with some sweets in hand.

Gakushu couldn’t worry about how to talk to his class after that dating incident, now that he had to worry about the Department representative coming to class. He just hoped that it wasn’t Grell and his beloved chainsaw.

He received a text from Ren and this time, he replied back to it as he walked to school. ‘See you after school, Gretel wants to test your abilities.’

‘I hope it isn’t bad as you made it to be.’ Ren answered back.

‘You are going to die.’ Gakushu bluntly answered, as Ren was up against a girl named Gretel.

‘Don’t say that!’ Ren quickly replied back, and it almost let a chuckle come out from Gakushu. If he wasn’t in a public space or without his disguise, he would had laughed. He finally arrived at school and coincidentally, Ren arrived at the same time.

Gakushu gave the hazel haired boy a smile and a wave, and Ren did the same before the two went off in their separate ways. After all, Gakushu was in Class-E and Ren was in Class-A. As soon Ren was out of sight, Gakushu placed back on his mask as the perfect son although it was cracked.

Just because Ren could understand him, doesn’t mean that everyone (who was human) would do the same.

Gakushu was the last one to enter to class and surprised everyone because of his new haircut. He walked to his desk and set his bag on the wooden desk while ignoring the stares of the Class-E students.

They stared at his slightly now short strawberry blond hair, the front of his bangs layered on top of each other. No longer his hair covered the right side of his face but now was evenly spaced to show more of his eyes, though his hair still covered most of his forehead down the middle.

The thoughts of the entire class were, ‘Why does he look so fucking adorable? Why does it come so natural to him?’

Meanwhile, in the surveillance room, Ivan and Lucia cheered on for Gakushu like the uncle and aunt they were. “Show them your cinnamon-ness!” They chanted, and were going to be disappointed later when Gakushu still used his act around this class.

“Good morning Gakushu-san, nice hair-cut.” Isogai nervously said, and Gakushu turned back and was about to say his thanks until he saw a huge electronic box sitting at the back of the room. It then turned on to reveal a girl.

Gakushu could only blankly stare while he was internally screaming. Can’t he at least have one normal thing in this fucking class?!
“Hello, I’m Ritsu. It is good to meet you Gakushu Asano. I haven’t been around this past week because I was getting some upgrades.” It or she answered back to him. Gakushu stared at the machine before he gave it a wave and a nod.

‘It talks, it talks.’ Gakushu could only now ignore the device, so he turned his head around away from the thing named as Ritsu. Although he kept onto his professional and calm appearance, he was mentally screaming.

He felt that today would be the day where he added tree no.102 and 103 to the tally. It had been going so well for him, for he hadn’t killed any trees in 6 days. He really wanted to punch a wall that was right next to him, but he knew that it would immediately shatter upon impact and it would leave a gigantic hole in the classroom.

He could only just pray that the Department representative would come sooner, so that it would at least provide at something normal for him for today.

Ivan had already sent in a report to the scientific side of the divisions. It was to see how advanced it is because after all, Grim Reapers must be ahead of human technology at all times.

And if that level of advancement was too close to a reaper’s, what would you expect from this outcome?

Going back to Gakushu, he secretly pops in a candy into his mouth, and upon tasting it, he had found out that it was strawberry flavoured.

‘Please grant me some sanity!’ Gakushu really wanted to slam his head onto the table, but knew that it would shatter from the sheer strength of a reaper. He couldn’t wait until after school where he could talk to Ren again.

“Hello boys and girls!” Korosensei came dashing into the room. “Oh, Asano-kun! I see you got yourself a haircut.”

Gakushu only gave his thanks and went back to set out his books. The teacher started to do the roll-came when Karasuma came into the classroom with a man following right behind him

Gakushu didn’t express any sort of shock when he first saw him, as it was Thomas Freeman. The tall male had black hair slinked back with gel. He was wearing the simple black formal suit, white collar shirt buttoned high matching it with a black tie. Yes, he would be a text book example of a typical Grim Reaper.

Behind his glasses where the same eyes Gakushu knew too well, the famous chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. Gakushu could tell that some of the Class-E students felt a shiver going down their spine after seeing such a sharp colour piercing into their very soul.

What did surprised Gakushu was that Thomas was actually holding his Death Scythe in his black gloved hands, the same weapon that was modelled after William T. Spear’s.

It obviously sparkled some conversation among the class.

“Who’s he?”

“He’s hot.”

“Look at those eyes!”
“Why is he carrying a gardening tool?”

What interested Gakushu was the fact that Thomas Freeman was wearing normal clothing because the whole class could see him.

Everyone in class became quiet after the reaper spoke out. “I am from the Department and I will be assessing your abilities for today.” Thomas said without any emotions in his voice, and with a frown on his face.

Gretel was right, Thomas was a bit of a stick in the mud…

Everyone was quite shocked of the sudden appearance from the Department, excluding Gakushu, of course. Although he didn’t expect for the arrival to come this early, at least Freeman was providing something perceived as normal for Gakushu today from all of this madness.

Kayano was sweating buckets because holy crap, it was the Department! The very organisation that fixed the moon, so the presence that the black-clad representative had was unsettling. ‘How powerful are they?’

Nagisa was confused, but he was also interested of why someone from the Department came to their class. And this early as well.

Karma, being Karma, was amused as to why someone from such a high-class organisation was visiting their class so early, even though they were the ones who trying to kill Korosensei first.

“What a surprise!” Korosensei said as he waved his tentacle arms around. “I haven’t been informed about this.” The alien teacher gave a glance at Karasuma, and he too gestured back to the teacher that he didn’t know anything about this visit.

‘I know that feeling.’ Gakushu thought to himself, as he just got the news this morning through the suffering of Rilliane having to endure another meeting.

“It is what you would call a surprise inspection.” Thomas replied back, repositioning his black rectangular glasses by using his Death Scythe. He stared back at the class coldly, with his hawk like eyes, the colour making it even more eerie. Gakushu was unaffected by his gaze, but he wasn’t showing it as he just copied the expression of his classmates, while adding his own take by keeping of his image here.

“You can call me Thomas.” He said and he walked to the back of the classroom with his book readied in his hand. “I will be at the back and observe your daily routine.”

Why the Department feel the need to directly observe the class even though there were already cameras around the place was beyond Gakushu’s information, but who was he to question the same organisation he works for.

Now many others would have questioned why Thomas was carrying a pruner, a gardening tool, but Gakushu couldn’t judge the senior reaper. He had a key-theme weapon that was currently de-sized and acting as a key-chain for his phone.

Today’s first period was English, to which Gakushu already finished his work, so he glanced back at Thomas who stood at the back of the room.

Thomas had interacted with no-one as he silently stood at the back at the class, writing some notes down in his book as he observed the daily routine. His constant observation made many other students feel uncomfortable and tense under his hawk-like gaze.
Thomas, out of the whole time, only gave Gakushu a response, he gave a wave before Gakushu turned back to his desk. With nothing to do, he decided that he might as well work to add more for his poetry notebook.

Just then, the memory of Gretel blowing that candle lit came into his mind. “A lifetime of a human can just be a blink to us.”

He flipped the pages of the notebook to the short poem he titled, ‘Blink.’

“When a little seed planted finally takes root, then surely I will be more of an adult than I am now.
When it grows significantly taller, then surely would I be the only one around that would be alive?
Would the people around me still be alive?
When it grows a lot of leaves, then surely the world will changed a lot than it is now?
When it becomes a fine, large and finally wise tree. Then surely my sins has been forgiven? Will my sins be forgiven then?
Throughout the span of a millennium and the ever growing world, it would just be a blink to you?
Won’t it little seed? It be just a blink to you? Just a blink…
Oh surely, surely…
Until the day I am forgiven, I am bounded to this world.
I must work hard as punishment of my sin.

Until the day I am forgiven....’

Soon enough, Gakushu was already planning out the melody for the song, soft piano and violin music to match the lyrics. And he did just that, writing out the composition as he waited for recess to finally come.

It was boring without Gretel as he did science for the second period. At least he had Ren to talk to back in Class-A during the lessons, but he had to endure this boredom that was plaguing him.

It sucked to be a prodigy in everything sometimes. Gakushu underestimated how much free time he has now to spend.

The next period after break was PE, and everyone changed into their sports uniform before waiting outside for the inspector to come out. Everyone student of Class-E wasn’t sure about what the exercise was going to be as the representative was the one that planned it out.

Sooner or later, the black clad representative finally came out. “I hope that you do not disappoint.”

Many students were pumped to show off their skills, to show him that they didn’t need the Department’s intervention. On the other hand, Gakushu was trying to control his reaper-influenced strength.

“Okay class! I want to assess on your speed. All of you will be partnered.” Korosensei called out.

“Asano-kun, you are be with Nakamura.” Rio let out a groan, but Gakushu looked indifferent as he
looked off to the sidelines. Other students looked at her with sympathy but Gakushu glanced at Thomas.

Was this why the Department felt the need to send in someone from the Identification Division? What Gretel managed to find that was important was that Thomas was in the Identification Division.

Sure, the cameras don’t spread much of outside the classroom, but they had Gakushu’s reports on them when they do PE… Wait a moment, Thomas was in the Identification Division! For a split second, Gakushu’s violet eyes widen.

Thomas seemed to spot the slight change in Gakushu’s expression and smiled back at him, ‘So that is why he is here.’ Gakushu thought to himself, it was not a surprised as Gakushu can’t reveal his true purpose for being in Class-E.

Worried that Gakushu was looking suspicious if he stared at Thomas too much. Gakushu turn to look elsewhere and saw that the trees are taller than usual, maybe he should use them to his advantage.

He could go a little bit fast, he still wanted to win this little game. Gakushu had a competitive personality after all.

“Get ready, get set… Go!” With that, everyone was off.

Gakushu assessed his partner’s speed and saw that she could sort of catch up with him if he was up in the air. Gakushu jumped to the nearest branch and swung his body upwards to land on the next branch that could withstand the force.

Rio was obviously surprised by the technique he was doing, she could barely manage to keep up with the boy, and now he was going even faster. His movement were both wild but gracefully at the same time.

Gakushu started to jump from branch to branch, tree to tree and was getting closer to the finishing line. He was much quicker now that he was no longer at ground level.

However, he started to notice that his eyes started to water, and it was strange because it never happened when Gakushu was running or jumping in the air. He could feel that his contacts started to slip away and move around off centre.

It was getting unbearable, and he squint his eyes to attempt to keep the contacts in place, but this didn’t work. He was getting worried if they would somehow popped out from his eyes and leave him blind to his surroundings, as well as revealing his secret to the class. That was a big no-no.

In this moment of distraction, he miscalculated his jump and his foot slipped off from the next branch. In split second, he managed to grab onto the branch.

Gakushu let out a sigh as he got in touch to his human side, as he really didn’t like to make mistakes. Gakushu firmly grasped onto the branch as he tried to lift himself up, but then the branch snapped.

‘…Shit.’ Gakushu final thoughts before he fell and landed onto the ground.

‘Tree 1, Gakushu 101.’ Gakushu couldn’t even blame the tree, as he did killed 101 of its comrades. Or was it 103?

Gakushu landed on the ground, and he winced a bit from the shock rather than the pain, as the fall didn’t hurt for him. When he opened his eyes, he found that his vison seemed unfocused and the
world became blurred around him. He could barely made out the outline around him.

His contacts slipped out and went to the side of his eyes, now revealing his chartreuse phosphorescent coloured eyes. It was then and there that Gakushu realised that Gretel had given him RGP, or rigid gas-permeable contacts. Contacts that are made of slightly flexible plastics that allow oxygen to pass through to the eyes.

“Gakushu! Are you okay!” Rio ran to the strawberry blonde who seemly was his sitting where he just landed as if nothing happen. Even if he was an ‘arrogant bastard’, he could had been seriously hurt.

“I’m fine.” Gakushu panicked a bit and he hurried to reorganize his contact lenses. He could hear Rio approaching to him and fast.

“Bullshit!” Rio yelled, and quickly Gakushu stood up and started to walk again. He managed to place his contacts back on without the girl even noticing that he had contacts to begin with. They were applied back to their rightfully place and Gakushu was able see properly again and hide his true eye colour.

“See, I’m fine.” Gakushu said. However Rio didn’t looked convinced and took out her phone.

“Ritsu, scan him!” Rio yelled to the phone while Gakushu could only stare blankly back.

“No fractures or broken bones.” Ritsu reported, and Gakushu mentally screamed from the mere thought that this Ritsu was in every student of Class-E’s phones as an app. More problems for him and a reminder for Gakushu to update on his own customised phone more frequently. And also to report this to the Department.

Rio gaped at him like a fish, how can he not have any fractures? There weren’t even any bruises detected! Rio knew that it was quite a landing for Gakushu and that he was just walking it off.

“We should get going.” Gakushu acted like the leader again, which made Rio slightly irritated about it.

‘Telling me something to do.’ Rio bitterly thought, and she let out some of her bitterness when she spoke to Gakushu. “Can you show down a bit? I could barely kept up.”

Gakushu only blinked at her and slipped out some of his cinnamon-ness. He scratched the back of his head and Rio felt blood rushing to her face from how cute he was.

“Sorry about that.” Gakushu apologised, while Rio was recovering from the shock. He was used his phone as a mirror to make sure that the contacts were back on properly. He almost let a sigh of relief when he saw that both of his eyes were purple, like amethyst, instead of chartreuse phosphorescent.

Gakushu reminded himself not to go to fast as he placed his phone back into his pockets. Sometimes he had forgotten that he was surrounded by humans. Although he thought that he was going slower than usual, he wasn’t human after all. It was true that he was going a bit slow in Grim Reaper’s standards.

Of course this greatly shocked Rio, as it was the almighty Gakushu apologising, and it was for being able to run faster!

Gakushu was took a glance at Rio and saw how she struggled to keep the pace up with him. What bothered Gakushu was that the task required a pair to reach the finishing line in the short amount of time.
It was almost impossible for the two to have the same level of skill, as the most obvious thing was that she was human and he was a reaper. The level was already off balanced, unless… of course!

Gakushu had an idea, but he wasn’t sure that Rio would go with this, after using his mask of the Chairman’s son for around four years. Class-E didn’t had the best image of Gakushu, but Gakushu didn’t mind that too much. Surely it would be much worst for him if they found out that he was actually a Cinnamon roll instead.

“I am sorry about this.” Gakushu quickly said before going to pick up Rio bridal style, and he did it effortlessly as well. To him, she weighed as much as a feather.

“What are you doing!?” Rio yelled as she blushed like a tomato. She tried to attack her way out of his arms but Gakushu easily dodged them.

“It is going to be quicker if I carry you. If you want, I could do it piggyback style.” Gakushu suggested without a second thought, and Rio could only stare back at his violet eyes, seeing no malicious intent in them like she would usually see when he was planning something.

That part wasn’t really true, the malicious glint in his eyes were actually more of a subtle ‘I’m angry and need to vent somehow without putting the whole school in hospital.’

“Then I want the other choice!” Rio would had never complied with his suggestion if Gakushu hadn’t look so innocent, if that was even possible. It was also much harder to see that this was the same Gakushu from Class-A with his new haircut.

However, if you asked the Department then they would answered, ‘That is definitely our cinnamon roll.’

Now Gakushu was carrying Rio piggyback style, and when Rio told Gakushu she was ready, Gakushu sprinted through the forest. Gakushu and Rio quickly arrived at the final destination and surprise-surprise, they were the first and flare was shot in the air by Korosensei.

“Here you go.” Gakushu said as he and Rio popped out to the grassy grounds, Rio being amazed by his speed and strength. Korosensei came to the two with that grin plastered on his yellow and circular face. Gakushu swore that he was going to need some sunglasses from how bright yellow his teacher was.

“Good job.” Korosensei cheered as he patted the backs of the two winners, “But Asano-kun, I wanted you to work together with Rio. Not doing all of the work yourself.” Korosensei lectured on, and Gakushu mentally groan because he was had a similar conversation with his group of reaper friends just a few days ago. Not on this subject matter, but still in concerned for the strawberry blonde.

Korosensei then lectured on how important teamwork was, how he shouldn’t burden all of the responsibilities, etc. It wasn’t Gakushu’s fault that he had a competitive personality and found out the true purpose of this exercise.

Rio, to be honest, didn’t care because it got her first place. Gakushu mostly tuned out his teacher’s lecture, pretending to listen his words and simply uttered a, ‘yes sir’.

Thomas Freeman came to the three, applauding as he held a small smile on his face. “I see that Gakushu-san here has found out the purpose of the exercise.” He said, smiling to the boy, but Gakushu kept onto his professional manner.

‘There was a purpose?’ Rio fixed her gaze back to Gakushu, who was giving no reaction that
someone from the same organisation that fixed the moon was talking to him. She thought it was just to see who could finish it the quickest.

‘You made it too obvious.’ Gakushu thought to himself as he eyed at Thomas.

Eventually everyone came to the finishing line, and some people weren’t surprised that Gakushu obtain first place. Karma looked unamused that he came second place again. Terasake had made some rude comments about the boy until he was slapped on the back of the head by Okuda.

Gakushu stayed silent for the rest of the time. He held no emotions on his face, just a blank look with a slight frown.

“Now that everyone is here, Gakushu could you please tell us the purpose of this little exercise?” Thomas asked as he shifted his head towards Gakushu.

Everyone’s eyes and attention were now focused on the strawberry blonde boy, and Gakushu mental sighed once again from all of this unwanted attention he was receiving.

“The purpose is to ‘take up the load’, for example if someone is injured then the other must take on all of that person’s responsibilities.” Gakushu answered without a hint of emotion in his voice, in flavour instead of acting more like a businessman.

It was amusing to Gakushu that Thomas had managed to slip in one of the Department’s ways and made it human into this exercise without any of the teachers knowing. He was sure that they would have a fit if they found out that the class was being taught of the Department’s way.

It was a common practice to take over someone else’s shift and especially more so in the Retrieval Division. Gakushu has done it before, such as when he took over Gretel’s shift or Lucia did his shifts after his ‘first suicide’.

Reasons for it could be: after experiencing their first suicide, having an episode or otherwise known as a breakdown, to prevent suspicion when on a recon mission and many other reasons.

“But what about team work?” Isogai nervously spoke out. “What about everything we just learned this past year?” The other students mumbled in agreement, and Korosensei felt a bit in pride in himself that when his students preferred working together instead of doing it alone. Now, if he could to teach Gakushu about it, then that would be a plus.

“You can’t exactly work together if the other is dead.” Thomas coldly remarked. Some flinched from how blunt it was and others shivered of how casually he spoke, as if it was an everyday occurrence. Gakushu was slightly amused, as it couldn’t really applied to him as Grim Reaper were immortal beings.

“Looks like Gakushu is the only one winner of this game.” Thomas then went to the boy to pat his head and his reaper eyes slightly widen.

‘Rilliane was right, his hair is really soft.’ Thomas was pleasantly surprised as he felt the strawberry blonde silky strands through his fingers. He was getting a bit jealous of the boy whenever Rilliane talked about him, but now he could see why this boy was gathering so much attention at the Department.

Everyone stood there an uncomfortable silence, Nagisa paled and Kayano stared blankly. Almost everyone else either wanted to faint or had their jaws wide open. Gakushu was getting patted like a puppy!
Korosensei had a poker face plastered on his hug yellow globe for a face. Why does it look like Gakushu was used to this sort of treatment?

What was surprising that Gakushu was barely reacting to this gesture, but he twitched his mouth ever so slightly that went unnoticed. ‘You win this round Freeman! Just because Rilliane is going out with you!’

Everyone furrowed their eyes on the once Class-A student who just ignored their looks. He slapped away the reaper’s hand and processed to walk back to the Class-E building.

Gakushu couldn’t wait to eat his sweets, and he could barely stop himself from humming his famous ‘pudding song’ as he walked back to class.

It was now lunch time, and Gakushu sat alone outside besides a tree, relishing in the moment of peace. He was eating his pudding as he read another language book, this time refining his Italian. He really needed to make a list of all the languages he was fluent in.

‘There was English, Spanish, Korean, German, Russian, Portuguese… and also French and Chinese.’ Gakushu created a mental list as he pondered on.

Rilliane wrote a poem in his notebook but this time it was in Italian. ‘Feli helped me in the Italian part, thought you need something a tiny bit harder.’ Rilliane wrote, the extra note in English.

‘And the golden light softly embraces me as I close my eyes. Rest, rest in peace.’ He read to himself.

Gakushu read one of the lines, he really liked the sound of ‘Rest, rest in peace’ was in Italian.

“Riposa, Riposa in pace.” Gakushu hummed under his breath, liking how it rolled off his tongue. How morbid of him. No matter what Rilliane wrote, it always gave him a warm feeling. He always wanted to smile whenever he read her work.

His ears shifted a bit due to his reaper-enhanced hearing, although he was still wondering if it was a good trade-off for his once good eye-sight. Gakushu could hear someone approaching him, cautiously and slowly, as well as the rustle of a plastic bag.

“Hi Gakushu-san.” A voice spoke, and Gakushu popped his head out of his language book to find Nagisa standing right in front of his, looking very nervous as he was staring at death. Technically that’s true.

“Is there something you need?” Gakushu asked, he took another spoonful of pudding. He has put that dating incident off from his list, so he wasn’t angry about it anymore. It didn’t affect him that much anymore because Ren and the group had fully healed him from that incident.

He did hope that Nagisa, Karma and Kayano would apologise for the incident. Just for some official closure to make it easier to move on. And Gakushu got his wish.

“I wanted to apologise from Saturday!” Nagisa sincerely bowed down to him and hold out a plastic bag. Gakushu took a quick peek and saw that it was filled with all kinds of sweets.

‘He must felt really bad about it.’ Gakushu could see all sorts some sweets and chocolates, and he had even spot a lindt branded chocolate box in the pile.

“I am so sorry, please forgive me on behalf of Karma and Kayano!” Nagisa loudly apologised, and Gakushu muses of how Nagisa took something out of the exercise that Thomas planned out.
Ivan, who was listening through the surveillance equipment, smiled to himself, as it was a part of Gakushu’s personality to forgive others if they admitted their wrongdoing. He wasn’t the type to hold grudges. He was just more cautious around them like Grell or Ikeda.

Now Nagisa, and probably the whole class, had to work again to gain back Gakushu’s trust. Gakushu was getting uncomfortable of how Nagisa was continuously bowing down for forgiveness. He had already forgiven him when Nagisa first said his apologies.

“Okay, okay I forgive you.” Gakushu said without hesitation, and Nagisa looked at Gakushu and could not believe his ears. He assumed that Gakushu wouldn’t forgive so easily and hold a grudge after knowing the boy only through his image as the Chairman’s son and his past actions against the class.

“Please take a seat, it’s free.” Gakushu offered a seat on the ground in front of him.

Nagisa shifted a bit so he could sit right in front of Gakushu, who was looking through the bag of sweets. After learning from that date experience, who knew that Gakushu has a massive sweet tooth?

“I didn’t know what I should get and you already had-” Then Nagisa remembered that he didn’t know what type of sweets Gakushu would like and only brought what Kayano would like instead.

“Then we can share.” Gakushu quickly said, cutting Nagisa off. “What do you want, the packet of kit-kats or the pocky?” Gakushu offered as he held the chocolates in both of his hands.

“Um… I’m fine, it’s all for you really.” Nagisa nervously answered and Gakushu gave his thanks. After finishing his pudding, Gakushu went onto snacking on the kit-kats and he first went to the strawberry flavoured ones.

“I have been meaning to ask you about it though, why did you do it?” Gakushu looked straight into the bluest of eyes. He had been doing some note-taking of his classmate’s personality traits to pass the time during class, and he knew that Nagisa would had never do such a thing unless he had some push from the red head version of Ikeda, Karma Akabane.

‘Nah, even Ikeda won’t do anything like that.’ Gakushu corrected to himself.

“I know that it isn’t part of your personality to do it these types of things. Was it Karma’s doing?” Gakushu curtly asked without some emotions in his tone as he munched onto his kit-kats. It gave him the presence of a parent instead of a 14 year old boy. “He is the one who set up that whole thing to begin with.”

“Karma was doing it to only keep me safe.” Nagisa went defensive for Karma, as he didn’t like how Gakushu assumed Karma’s role, although he had every right to do so. Karma did plan for the date, but it was still to protect his friend from potential taunting. Although that last detail at the end of the date was very cruel…

“We really didn’t have a choice. I mean, you found a picture of me in a dress and I thought you would think that I was weird.” Nagisa tries to make his words sound more nicely than it should be.

The blue haired boy wasn’t uncomfortable of telling the whole story behind it even if everyone else knew about it. He couldn’t look eye to eye with Gakushu’s violet eyes, so he glanced down to the ground to avoid his gaze. Gakushu only blankly stared at Nagisa and went to his plastic bag of sweet to grab a chocolate bar.

“I think you need some sugar.” Gakushu simply answered and he handed the blue haired boy a
chocolate bar.

“Eh?” Nagisa responded as he looked back to Gakushu. He was bewildered by his words and offering. Gakushu could tell how awfully confused the blue haired boy was.

“Think about it, one of the skills of an assassin is to hide away and especially when on the run. What better way than to dress up as the opposite gender? Taking another identity?” Gakushu calmly answered and picked up his book he had placed down earlier. He sighed to himself, which surprised Nagisa. “You guys overthink too much.”

“You are in a class that is training children to become assassins.” Gakushu finished his sentence as he bit off his chocolate, creating the snapping sound at echoes on. “You could have made an excuse that this class was teaching you to cross-dress.”

Nagisa slumped his head down. Why didn’t he thought of that? “I never thought it that well.” He chuckled weakly as he was still uncomfortable with Gakushu’s presence. “You really think outside of the box.” He still had the image of Gakushu crying stuck in his mind, and he felt so bad about himself that hadn’t he thought it in the way Gakushu explained. If he had then he didn’t had to do what he did.

“I do and I apologised on what I said about the class from Saturday.” Gakushu quickly said, and silence filled the air once again. Gakushu continued to ignore Nagisa in flavour of perfecting his Italian so he could be more worthy of reading Rilliane’s latest work.

Nagisa could no longer bear the silence, and to break the ice, he changed the topic. “So, what do you think of Class-E?” Nagisa was interest how Gakushu’s opinion of Class-E had changed.

“Different is the best word to describe it. It is an understatement though.” Gakushu answered and he brought out another container that had a slice of strawberry shortcake.

“How much sugar can he eat?” Nagisa stared at the cake and back to Gakushu. He knew that Gakushu has a sweet tooth, but this was too much.

“I have a teacher who is bent to destroy all life as we know it before the end of the year, another teacher who is a government agent and a teacher who kisses both girls and boys. What’s next? We are attacked by Death itself?” Gakushu took a bite on his strawberry shortcake and went back on refining his Italian.

“Actually, we had to face an assassin who calls himself Shinigami.” Nagisa pointed out and Gakushu choked on his cake. Meanwhile in the surveillance room, Lucia and Ivan spit out their drink after hearing such a revelation.

‘Please don’t let it be Grell.’ The thoughts of the three reapers merged. ‘Please don’t let it be Grell!’

The mental image of Grell saying his catchphrase appeared in Gakushu’s mind. “I am a butler of Death-desu.” Grell’s British accent echoes on and Gakushu had to suppressed a twitch in his eye.

Gretel told the group that Jack the Ripper was actually a collaborated act of Grell and a human named Angelina Dalles.

It created one of the biggest unsolved cases in human history and a headache for the English Branch. And another headache came with the Undertaker incidents, t and Gakushu thought that he Victorian era must had been very eventful.

Gakushu looked at him as if Nagisa grow a third eye, and Nagisa felt his face going red from how
adorable the cinnamon roll was.

Gakushu mentally sighed to himself, he was being irrational. If it was an actual Grim Reaper, then everyone in this class would already be dead. “Is there anything else you like to add?” He began to drink his strawberry milk after popping a hole with the straw.

“There was a time where half the class was poisoned by a former teacher on that school trip we won.” Nagisa nervously added and as predicted, Gakushu spit out his drink at the same time as the Russian and German, who were in the surveillance rooms.

Luckily it didn’t sprayed on the blue hair boy. Nagisa was quite surprised of his reaction but at the same time, he couldn’t blame him.

Gakushu’s head was spinning with information, it was just as the same back when Gakushu first learnt about Class-E’s secret and the existence of Korosensei. ‘Don’t think too much about it or you will be in for a painful headache.’ Wait… school trip! The one where he did a ‘bet’ on from the first set of exams!

The one where Rilliane suggested to give Class-E an excursion after feeling some sympathy for them. However Gakushu wanted to keep up with his act as the perfect son up due to personal reasons, so he decided to give them the trip as a gift through a bet. He prayed to his superior that Class-E would win, he even offered his slice of chocolate cake as a sacrifice.

“I should really stop eating and drinking before you told me all of this.” Gakushu uttered to himself as he swiped his mouth with a handkerchief.

Gakushu felt his mask cracked again from all of this absurdity. He really wanted to punch the nearest thing and most likely, it was going to be a tree. Lucky the effect from the sweets prevented him from doing so.

Gakushu consumed another packet of sweets in attempted to calm down more of his ‘non-existent temper’.

“Um… Gakushu-san. Do you hate Class-E that much?” Nagisa asked, trying to use the right sort of words that wouldn’t anger the Chairman’s son. When Gakushu looked back at him, Nagisa sort of panicked.

“I’m sorry, but you give the impression that you think that you are better than us.” Nagisa hastily added, and he felt that he was suffocating under the tense air as he waited for Gakushu’s answer. He couldn’t help but asked after it was deemed that Gakushu was making fun of the class.

‘Actually I never did to begin with.’ Gakushu mentally corrected Nagisa, his act as the Chairman’s son helped him to get through school much easier without looks and he never really thought about anything negative of the lowest class. Gakushu mainly focused on his work and shifts from the Department, which was far important than on a class who had been improving drastically.

Although it did spark some interest in the boy of how the ‘lowest’ class improved so much this year alone.

It was just Class-E is getting more on his nerves lately this year, so that he had to vent somehow without destroying the entire school or adding more trees to the tally. Class-E was the nearest thing that wasn’t a tree. Also, he didn’t ate any sweets during his time in the main building, which didn’t help. At least Ren was with him, so that prevented more damages to school property.

Gakushu shocked his PE class back when he was in the main building when he had kicked the
soccer ball, making it shatter into pieces from the impact of his first kick alone. And it happened again after he just destroyed the first ball…

With these factors added together, it was a wonder that Gakushu’s temper didn’t unleash and hell’s wrath didn’t come to the school as Lucia witnessed his temper first hand. She remembered that incident in full detailed, it involved smashed cake and cake to Gakushu’s face. And several holes through the Department’s walls.

Ren acted very well as the boy’s anchor.

“No, I just need more time to process all of this.” Gakushu replied. ‘And more cake.’

“I could never fathom that you improved so much in the past couple of months because you were a part of a secret government conspiracy.” Gakushu said, and he closed his language book, his answer making it so that Nagisa could feel that he could breathe again.

“So no, I do not hate you, or the class nor think you are beneath me.” Gakushu gave out his honest opinion. He then paused, and he looked at Nagisa before he stood up.

“I’m just different from the class.” Gakushu used the excuse since he first arrived to the class, and Nagisa looked at Gakushu worryingly. Gakushu was not who he seems, and he knew that he was holding back on his strength.

Not even from a background as Gakushu Asano could easily jumped over a building and continue chasing after a person. Not without specific training as in done here at Class End.

‘He used it again.’ Nagisa thought, taking note of this. He was about to use the story of how everyone in class didn’t get along with each other at first, but he couldn’t as the bell rang and Gakushu went back to class after he thanked him for the sweets.

When Gakushu walked past Karma, the red head noticed something different in his violet eyes. They no longer looked old anymore.

The bell rang to signal the end of lunch. Gakushu already packed up his things and went ahead to the classroom before he thanked the blue haired boy for the sweets.

Just two more periods left for him.

The last two periods were Maths, and Gakushu already finished his set work as always. Gakushu looked around to see Korosensei dashing to help each student thanks to his Mach 20 speed.

Gakushu was bored once again, so he went to work on his Italian and to memorising the poem Rilliane written for him.

“Asano-kun, finished again?” His teacher appeared in front of his desk, and Gakushu almost screamed and slightly flinched from the sudden appearance.

“Yes, I thought you needed to help the students more.” Gakushu replied and went back to his Italian book, hoping that the teacher would go away.

“I really don’t want to repeat the same speech from Tuesday.” Korosensei lectured on and Gakushu tuned out. The teacher was concerned over the boy’s work ethic with all of this outside work, first he was working on his German and now Italian, with an Italian poem! Gakushu was doing more work than most adults!
Gakushu couldn’t just say that he was usually does it for fun, as it was the reason most of the time.

“Um… I never knew that.” Korosensei sounded surprised as he looks at Gakushu.

“Knew what?” Gakushu uttered as he looked straight up to Korosenei’s beady eyes with a bored look.

“I never knew that you wear contacts, how long have you been using them?” Korosensei answered as he placed one of his tentacles on his chin. Gakushu’s eyes widen and before he could give an answer, someone came to interrupt their conversation.

“Um… Korosensei?” Ritsu spoke up, and Gakushu silently thanked ‘her’ for averting Korosensei’s attention away from him.

“Yes Ritsu-san.” Korosensei turned towards Ritsu, and even Gakushu glanced back as he was curious of what she was going to say. Gakushu knew that the Department has already tested on AI but it didn’t do the real thing justice. He just hoped that the humans wouldn’t deal with a Terminator-like plot in the possible near future.

“I feel a disturbance.” Ritsu said, everyone stopped doing their work and stared at her. Gakushu felt that he was going to take back that thanks.

“What do you mean?” Korosensei asked. Gakushu noticed that Thomas’s eyebrows had raised slightly.

“I think someone planted cameras in our classroom.” Ritsu answered, and it made Gakushu paled quickly assuming for the worse. Ritsu then had the classroom’s layout on her monitor, and showed where the wires and cameras placed by Lucia and Ivan.

Now Gakushu has the right to panic and he mentally screamed. Lucia and Ivan stared at their scenes in a dead state of shock as their reaper eyes focused on the machine named as Ritsu.

Korosensei looked around the class and suddenly pulled one of the wires that connected to the surveillance room from the walls. Connection was cut off now from the surveillance rooms. Everyone’s eyes widen from such a revelation.

Lucia immediately rang the heads of the Department as she watched the static on the screens. “We have been discovered, the humans have found our surveillance.” Ivan slumped down his office chair, after fixing one problem, another came to their table.

Korosensei was stunned of how thin yet strong the wires were, he pulled down more and more came out. “Was this your doing, Thomas-san?” Korosensei turned to Thomas who remained quiet for the whole time. The class felt the air went ice cold, Korosensei had a stare-down with the Department representative.

Everyone’s eyes are now on Thomas Freeman, and everyone was dead silence and was waiting for his response.

“Yes, it is true enough that I can’t deny it.” Thomas smirked, there was no point of finding it any longer.

“How long?” Korosensei asked. Korosensei was now no longer had the shade of bright yellow but instead, he was pitch black with a murderous look. Thomas looked at the being with a bored look, as if what he was seeing in front of him didn’t fazed him.
“I think it is more fun for you to guess.” Thomas sneered, as it would be less threatening if they found that they had the class under surveillance for almost a week. “We have the information we needed anyway.”

Information that can help to improve the education system which could also help prevent the potential suicides. Even if they didn’t have their extremely detailed insight of the class in every sense, they still had one extra card up their sleeves.

“Were you recruiting?” Korosensei uttered, but it only made Thomas laugh. Some shivered of how cold his laughter sounded.

“Such a human response from someone like you, worrying over the wellbeing of your children.” Thomas added and pretended flick away his non-existence tears. Gakushu somewhat agreed with his words.

‘That was awfully human.’ Gakushu reasoned. How strange for an alien creature to know of human values?

“Although we have no problems of having children in our ranks.” Thomas’s words made some students sick to their stomachs but their reasons were wrong. Nobody human knew that the Department was actually filled with the undead, those who committed suicide and as punishment were reborn as Grim Reapers.

Because even children can make the conscious decision to take their own life away, and Gakushu was the prime example as he joined the Department when he was only 10 as he overdosed on sleeping pills. Gretel hung herself when she was around 16 and Rilliane consumed her poison when she was 17.

“No, we are not recruiting. Even if we had, only one from this class would fit our requirements.” Thomas said and many had an idea of who that person was. It was the lucky Gakushu Asano. It was true to Freeman’s statement because he was already a member of the Department, not that the class or anyone in this school knew that.

It was not because he found the true purpose of the exercise that Thomas planned out, it was not because he was smart or strong. It was because he committed his unforgivable act.

“And again, I think it would be most fun for you to guess on who it is.” Thomas taunted the teacher, and he smoothly walked past. He turned slightly and fixed his sharp chartreuse phosphorescent eyes onto the teacher.

“I will be taking my leave now, but first.” Thomas pointed his gardening tool in direction of the teacher. Before Korosensei could react, Thomas made his first move and stepped forward to the alien teacher.

Thomas then struck Korosensei with his Death Scythe and what amazed the whole class excluding Gakushu was his deemed normal stylized pruner extended. The metal rod extended quickly and it clipped one of his tentacles off, then the magic began for those in the Department.

The cinematic records burst out from the wound, showcasing parts of the teacher’s life story. From his birth, to his first kill and to his eventual transformation as the being dubbed as, Korosensei.

Gakushu was stunned after learning the teacher’s backstory. He didn’t bother to hide his surprised as everyone else in class was surprised as well. While everyone else was surprised that Thomas successfully pulled an attack with a weapon that didn’t look like it had the material to harm
Korosensei. Gakushu was surprised for a completely different reason as he watched the records slowly dissolved.

Who knew that Korosensei was human to start with?

Thomas now had the information to find the real identity of this being. Those who work in the Identification Division specialised in uncovering personal details, including those with fake names. They are the ones who set out the files sent to the Retrieval Divisions for the daily soul collecting.

“How interesting.” Thomas almost purred, he retracted the metal rod back midway before it became fixed. Korosensei eerily eyed at Thomas who stopped after successfully pulled an attack, everyone else was dead silent and tensely waited for the next move.

In a businessman-like manner, Thomas left the classroom after he said his goodbyes. “Good day, it was a bit disappointing though.”

Then Gakushu received a text from Rilliane as soon Thomas left the build. The message read as, ‘Lyrics Karaoke Bar.’ Gakushu quickly left the school area without anyone noticing after the final bell rang.

He had a lot to say about today to Rilliane, it had been awhile since he talked with her in that karaoke room.

Karma couldn’t believe his own eyes when Thomas attacked Korosensei. Not because how he managed to attack him but what came next after the attack.

He saw filmstrips burst out from Korosensei’s injury and moving images in each frame. He thought that his mind was paying tricks on him but it felt too real.

Some humans can see Grim Reapers, it’s like someone who could see ghost.

If some can see the reapers, then surely they could see the Cinematic Records as well?

TEASER

Next time on ‘Until the day I’m forgiven.’

“I rather like it if you said that to my face instead.”

“Man, you have such nice classmates Shu.”

“What do you want pudding thief?”

“Thank you for not taking their side Ren.”

“Sorry, I was on orders.”

“You monster, how can you live with yourself??”
Chocolat

When Ren had finally joined Candy Fest, it was the most strangest experience... Probably because he wasn't used of Gakushu being a Cinnamon Roll just yet.

Gakushu had a lot to tell about in the Lyrics Bar to Rilliane. It was to mainly discuss about Ritsu and whether if her advancement was too near to current Grim Reaper technology. It was unsure if Ritsu was going to be destroyed as the Department doesn't know the full extent of her advancement. They came to the conclusion that Gakushu must obtained a sample of Ritsu for testing purposes.

Gakushu also had reported that Ritsu was able to scan bodies, if the Department sets out to eliminate 'her' then it has to be someone not already stationed here in Kunugigaoka town which also include Gakushu.

He had already received the mission for tomorrow, after telling Rilliane that Ritsu also lives as a phone app, Gakushu would receive a replica of his phone to download Ritsu. Afterschool, he would deliver the phone to the Department where it will be tested by the scientific side of the organisation.

Nearing the end of the little meeting with his senior and friend, he received a phone from Ren, asking where the Strawberry blonde was.

"Hello, sorry I wasn't with you after school Ren. I was busy with a small errand." Gakushu replied shyly, Rilliane took a photo of his flushed face. She had to stiffen a giggle, she was glad that Gakushu was back with Ren again.

It took her three months after to found out that Gakushu made his first 'human' friend when he went back to the human realm for his dispatch. It was only when Gakushu was talking about Ren during his nightly shifts of soul collecting with Rilliane. He was telling how Ren was similar to Rilliane in their passions for the arts.

She teased the boy. "This Ren sounds like your first friend." She pinched his soft cheeks, she remembered of how she missed doing this to Allen. 'So soft.' She was in blessed and Gakushu was struggling to pull off Rilliane's gesture.

Gakushu had his face as red as a tomato when he admitted that Ren was his first friend. Rilliane held a blank smile on her face when Gakushu confessed afterwards. Gakushu stared up to Rilliane and waved his hand in front of her face.

"Rilliane?" Gakushu muttered, he worryingly watched Rilliane who remained unresponsive.

Rilliane spent the rest of the night cursing at the blonde English reapers for keeping her out of the circle. She was Gakushu's mother god damn it! She ratted them out and obtained the holy picture of the moment when Gakushu became friends with Ren.

"Of course I'm coming, I was just getting some cake." Gakushu exclaimed and ended the call. Rilliane was already prepared and gave the boy two boxes of cake. One was strawberry shortcake and the other was blueberry cheesecake.

Gakushu happily thanked the hazel haired reaper and left the room, he left for the gym that happened to be reaper run.
Rilliane sat back down on the couch, she sighed heavily as she waited for Thomas to come. She looked back on the photo she saved on her phone, the picture of Ren and Gakushu of their first year at middle school. She felt a tingling warm inside of her, seeing that Gakushu made his first friend.

She looked to Ren back before he had his current hair style, back when his hazel brown hair was long yet neat. She mentally thanked him for staying by Gakushu's side. Although something nagged to Rilliane.

Why does he looks so familiar?

"I'm here," Gakushu shouted as he walked into the gym where Gretel and Arthur were supposed to be overseeing Ren's performance. "I got some cake."

Ren who was currently being measured by Gretel was about to open his mouth until he saw the two boxes of cake Gakushu held. And how Gakushu seems to be sparkling, Ren had to rub his hazel eyes when he saw the sparkles Gakushu was emitting around him.

"Gakushu, how are we going to finish all of that?" Ren asked, surprised by the vast amounts of the cakes Gakushu brought along.

"If you can't finish it than I can eat the rest of it." Gakushu stated without hesitation, "What did I miss?" He went to place his cakes at a nearby table.

"Nothing much, I picked up Ren-kun, came here and did his measurements." Gretel said as she started to pack away her measurement tapes. "Now we can finally start now that the Strawberry is here."

'He is going to die.' The thoughts of Arthur and Gakushu merged as they looked at Ren worryingly.

"Especially when we have a concert this Saturday." Gretel casually pointed out as she clapped her hands, Ren widen his hazel coloured eyes from this statement.

"Wait, what!" Ren called out but his cries went unheard by the three.

"Winner gets to write that song that Ren debuts in!" Gretel cheered and everyone else but Ren joined along.

"What! Guys?!" Ren attempted to catch the three's attention but they continued to ignore him. The three founding members huddle around and eyed at each other, waiting for the next move.

"Rock, paper, scissors!" All three members of their band group, Candy Fest sang. Both the blondes had scissor while Gakushu beat the two with his choice of rock. This was going too fast for the hazel haired boy to process.

"I win!" Gakushu cheered as he jumped up and down, he went off to write the song on the sidelines. Arthur kneeled in defeat as he slammed his fist to the ground. Gretel puffed her cheeks and she crossed her arms as she tried to come off as angry. This was going too fast for Ren to follow.

"You win this round Gakushu! The power of the cards will be in my hands for next week!" Gretel exclaimed as she pointed her arm to Gakushu, Gakushu was off on his own world writing the song, leaving Arthur and Gretel to assessing Ren's physical skills.

"Now let's test your dancing skills but with heels this time!" Gretel had a dangerous glint in her emerald green eyes. She hold a pair of high-heeled boots in her hands and had Ren re-enacted a
scene of the Cell Block Tango from Chicago.

Gakushu and Arthur was surprised that she didn't made Ren wear the outfit from that scene of the movie, but at the same time was very grateful. Ren had his face flushed in fifty shades of year when Gretel showed the video of the outfits the dancers were wearing in that certain scene.

The hazel hair boy now laid on the cold wooden floor face-down, already drenched in sweat as he laid close to death. He was surrounded by three reapers technically.

"Ren-san, do you need anything?" Arthur worryingly asked the tired boy.

"I need a moment to breathe again." Ren muttered, he could feel pain all over his body. So this was what Gakushu and Arthur was saying, he thought that they were only exaggerating but he was struggling to stand up. How do they survive after each practice?

Gretel went off to buy some drinks, which leaves Gakushu humming to himself as he wrote the debut song and Arthur was watching over Ren to make sure he doesn't breathe his last breath.

"I finished it!" Gakushu cheered and he ran to the two males with the papers in his hands. He beamed in happiness and sparkles, it almost blinded Ren from the happiness Gakushu was radiating.

"Already!?” Ren could only muster the strength to life his head up to look at the excited Gakushu holding the papers for his debut song. He could see how Gakushu was passionate over this.

Arthur peered over his shoulder as he was the tallest of the group, he mused to himself. "Peter pan theme I see."

"First one to go at the storeroom gets first choice on instruments!" Gakushu dashed to the storeroom where the instrument were usually held.

"Wait, Asano-kun!" Arthur called out but it was too late, Gakushu already opened the storeroom door and was immediately was swallowed by huge amounts of gifts.

"Gakushu!" Ren called out, he stands up and dashed forward to aid his friend.

'How cute.' Arthur thought as he watched Ren dug through the gifts sent from those stationed at Kunugigaoka town. Even though Ren barely had any energy left after his practice with Gretel, he immediately rushed to the boy's side even though he himself was in pain.

"Ren…” Gakushu managed to dig his arm out of the piles of gifts. "Help me." His hand was shaking as if he was waiting to be pulled to which Ren did so. Gakushu pulled out from the pile looking very pale and quickly failed to suppressed a blush.

"Thank you." Gakushu whispered, Ren was almost blinded from sheer cuteness once again. Ren glanced back to the gifts and noticed that majority of them are either red or pink or strawberry themes.

'Is that a giant pink teddy bear I saw?' Ren stared at the huge mass of pink fur waiting to be hugged. "Are these all for you?" Ren was slightly jealous of Gakushu's popularity, he was at awed of how many gifts Gakushu just received.

Before Gakushu could answer back, Arthur did the talking for him. "Yes but it is not from the fans."

"Everyone heard what happened on Saturday," Arthur added, now Ren wanted to know and Arthur also gave him an answer. "Gakushu went on a date, only to found out at the end that she was only
doing it because of his status." Thankfully Gretel wasn't around to detail her attempt on murdering that Hana character.

'…Damn.' That was all Ren could think of.

"It's okay, I'm over it." Gakushu bluntly stated as he goes through his gift, snacking on more strawberry flavoured sweets. 'Nagisa apologised, it's all good now.'

"Everyone is out for blood now though." Arthur calmly stated and Gakushu choked on his sweet. Ren stood by Gakushu to pat his back as the boy coughed some more.

"What do you mean everyone? I thought that you are keeping your identities a secret." Ren asked in confusion, he turned to the Englishman.

"Everyone is the crew we work with whenever we prepare for the stage." Arthur answered. Or every reaper stationed here. Ren let out an 'o'.

"I got the drinks!" Gretel came running back into the room with bag of cold drinks in hand. "Oh, I see that Gakushu has found his 'get happy' gifts."

"And I have to write thank you letters to everyone now." Although Gakushu doesn't seem bothered by it as he continued to eat his chocolates. Ren still didn't know how Gakushu never get sick from the large amount of sugar or how he remained so fit.

Somehow later, Ren was sitting on the floor legs crossed with the other three doing the same as all sat in a circle. They were discussing on the topic of what stage name Ren should have as they snack on more food and drinks.

"Since we are following a theme here, it has to be 'sweet'." Gretel pointed out and suggested that the original member to state their stage names to get an idea.

"I'm Ichigo, Japanese for strawberries." Gakushu said after swallowing a mouthful of cake.

"I'm Earl, short for Earl Grey tea." Arthur monotony spoke as he sipped his ice-tea.

"And I'm Hazel, obviously for hazelnut." Gretel cheered as she did a cutesy pose. She quickly came up an idea, "How about Chocolat? It's chocolate in French and it is for his brown hair."

"Sounds fine and sexy." Ren held a cheeky grin to the three. He joked, "It suits my soothing and smooth voice." He couldn't hold it down any longer and let out a laugh to which all four joined in as well. Ren quite like this, this side of Gakushu who was laughing so carefree.

*If only that man didn't exist… or the way he was now. If only that man acted like a father.*

What the three males didn't know that there was another meaning behind Ren's new stage name that Gretel has made. Strawberry and chocolate, what a nice and perfect combination.

"So what is the meaning behind your names?" Ren innocently asked the group and he snacked on his melon bread.

"Gakushu is Ichigo for his strawberry blonde hair and his favourite flavour happens to be strawberries." Gretel poked Gakushu cheeks, he looked embarrassed and pushed her hand away. Ren could see how soft and bouncy the Strawberry's cheeks were, he was attempted to pinch it.

"I'm Earl because I'm English and I like tea." Arthur said, going back to his neutral face.
“Mines Hazel because it sounds like Hansel.” Gretel said and everything went dead silent. You could see a pin drop after such a bombshell, Gakushu and Arthur froze knowing of her story behind it. Ren was just genuinely confused.

"Like the German folklore, I had a twin brother like from that tale was named Hansel as I was rightfully named Gretel. However he died in a motor accident and it's just a way for me to act as if he is still with me."

"It sounds so familiar doesn't it, Hazel and Hansel." Gretel lost her sweet girly voice and replaced was the voice more suited for an adult female. Then again Gretel is around 200 years old, not that Ren knows anyway.

"But that is in the past now, who know? I could be reincarnated to be with him again one day.” She quickly went back to her cutey voice as she stood up. Gakushu found that she had a hint of hope in her tone.

‘Is that why Gretel never experienced a breakdown? Was it because she still retains hope?’ Gakushu thought as he looked back to his own desires. As much he tried to deny it or bury it with the love he uses from many of his friends. Even if he gave out that dream on the day he consumed a lethal amount of pills, that his father would one day… one day.

He too still retained hope.

The three quickly took note of this change of conversation and proceeded to continue on with dance practice. It is not good to be too depressed all the time.

Gakushu had to help Ren not to collapse from exhaustion again. Gretel made him re-enact Bob Fosse's choreography, the Rich Man's Frug alongside of the band's crew who all were from the Department and stationed at the town, who were there to discuss the blue-prints for the stage.

It was a coincidence that the Candy Fest's crew, or otherwise known as the Backers, knew of the routine. But then again, reapers can have too much free time sometimes when they're not faced with shifts, meetings or paperwork duties. And the halls of the Department are overcrowded with new members which spread the work more and more evenly in many areas, as the work had lessen over the years.

Gretel and Arthur once had to collect two or more dozens of souls a shift back when they first started. It was rare for them to only collect five to ten souls all together per shift, but now it was too common. There even less work for the juniors as well especially in Japan, if you wanted to get more experience, you had to do a small transfers to either of the Americas or to one the African countries.

It was good to go to Disneyland though that year. Maybe he should plan a trip to Tokyo's Disneyland with Ren soon?

"You weren't kidding that I was going to die." Ren groaned as he was supported by Gakushu as they walked down the streets. Gakushu took one of the gym's hoodies as he wore the hood up, amongst with black sunglasses.

"She did compressed 6 months of practice in one day. I am surprised that you kept up the way you did." Gakushu looked at Ren with a look that said he was proud. Ren felt something warm in him as he saw Gakushu smiled. Although the sunglasses did bothered him, he hated the fact that they were hiding Gakushu's amethyst-like eyes.

"What's with the glasses?" Ren asked. He had to suppress a blush when he inhaled the scent of
strawberries for being too close of Gakushu.

"Just because I can be true to you doesn't mean that I should act that way in front of everyone." Gakushu huffed and quicken his pace as he dragged Ren along around his arms.

"But Gakushu." Ren whine, he was acting as his dramatic self as usual.

"I do not want people chasing me! News already broke out that Gretel and Arthur had been spotted in this town." Gakushu whispered harshly. "It was posted all over on social media. Gretel had to response that we lived here."

Ren could reason with that after he witnessed the overprotectiveness from the Backers. Gakushu spent the next five minutes hiding under Ren's shirt. Arthur was a bit sad because Ren kind of replaced him as the boy's shield.

"There, there. There are always the drinking games you can protect him from." Gretel patted the depressed Arthur.

Gakushu was being hugged all at once by mainly the female workers who cried. "No he's mine!" Or a, "No! Mine!" And that was from Gakushu's personal friends, imagine that with fans or worse… stalkers.

"Okay, okay." Ren chuckled. He then felt his stomach growl and it was heard loud and clear by the two. Poor Ren felt embarrassed. It wasn't a surprise after all of that training and practice with Gretel leading it. They had now covered the basic routine for his debut.

"I know a good café that serves good cake." Gakushu quickly suggested, even with the sunglasses, Ren could see the sparkles in his violet eyes. "I have been meaning to try their crazy-shakes."

"I think you have enough sugar for one day." Ren grimly said, worried for his friend sugar intake.

"You can never have enough cake." Gakushu scoffed and ventured off to the nearest café.
The Talk

Chapter Summary

Gakushu has a new mission... it was far too easy. At least he made one new friend thought.

The Talk

In the morning, Gakushu had received a replica of his smartphone when he woke for a new day. It laid on his desk with a letter beside it. His new mission was to obtain a copy of the being dubbed as Ritsu.

He let out a yawn and groggily walked to the bathroom, he rubbed his eyes and wore his glasses and the world around him became clear. His bed hair was getting worse each morning, looking at the mirror, to see mainly on the left side that his strawberry blonde hair was sticking out.

Rilliane commented that it looked like 'duck fluff'. Gretel mentioned that two of his strands were acting as antenna. "They have picked up a signal." The blonde haired girl teased. Gakushu flattened his hair down as he brushed his teeth to get ready for school.

He was at school earlier than usual, so he sat outside the Class-E building, beside a tree, waiting for the day to finally begin. Gretel and Arthur was already off on their shifts on soul retrieval and counter duties at the Lyrics Karaoke Bar.

Rilliane for once, wasn't stuck in any meetings, so she was going to spend the day revising on her upcoming test. Lucia was doing her teaching duties, and Ivan was currently lazing around now there are no surveillance done on the class.

Gakushu was going to be bored for the entire day. He knew that it was a mistake to memorise the entire Japanese curriculum. Why did he thought it was a good idea? Sure, before he transferred to Class-E, he had all sort of work to keep him busy most of the time, such as student council president work, multiple club activities, etc.

He had downloaded Ritsu on the replica phone, 'Mission complete... That was easy.' Gakushu thought to himself when he obtained Ritsu. Although he asked the pink haired digital girl a few questions, such as was she just copying herself onto another phone.

She explained that she was copying herself on their devices, for once they have synced with her main body, and then she would know what happens with each individual. Either way, that was one thing crossed off from the list to be thinking about tonight.

As he waited for school to start, Gakushu focused on his personal case on the disappearance of Allen Williams. Was it possible for someone to just disappear like that and have all identification of themselves to just vanish?

Gakushu began to research on Rilliane's friend and murderer of her parents, David Boyle. A profile picture of a male with short blonde hair, with a caption underneath that had his name on it. It was strange to think that Allen disappeared right after the murder of his parents, but this David character
didn't spark as a kidnapper. Gakushu learnt that Rilliane had another close friend, a daughter of major company CEO, Avery Jona-Zwiers.

The article read as that Avery was out of country coincidentally when David murdered the William parents, so the police couldn't tie her to the murders, and the fact that she fainted when she heard the news that the parents murdered by her friend.

Then Korosensei suddenly appeared to him. "Oh, I see that Asano-kun is early today."

"Good morning Korosensei." Gakushu greeted his teacher but quickly went back to his personal investigation. "Checking to see that there are no more wires from the Department?" Gakushu casually asked. Even though he knew that the Department had dropped the camera surveillance on the class, he couldn't help but asked.

"It's all clean." His not-so alien teacher exclaimed. "Do you want to be a detective when you grow up?" Korosensei peeked through his notes, picking up the hand written notes.

"No, this is to satisfy my curiosity." Gakushu bluntly replied as he snatched his notes back from the tentacle-like arms. He already had one career in his future. Korosensei acted hurt from this cold gesture. It didn't work.

"Your father told me that you hadn't come home." Korosensei worryingly said.

"I'm surprised that man even cares." Gakushu still eyed at his book, however inside of him burst all sorts of emotions. Even if it seemed so wrong for Gakuhou Asano to act so fatherly on the day Gakushu received news that he was transferring to Class-E. He felt a bit happy knowing that his father actually asked his teachers about his wellbeing, even if it was possibly that it was for the wrong reasons.

He did his damn hardest to hide away the happiness he was currently experiencing. Even if he was ridiculed for getting one mark off from perfect, even if he was punished for getting anything that wasn't first place. He doesn't have any 'happy' memories associated with that man.

"Asano-kun…"

"Tell him that I'm currently staying elsewhere." Gakushu said, and he made slight eye contact with the beady black eyes hovering above him.

"Asano-kun, I know that you don't exactly have the best relationship with your father."

"I don't see why you are so worry for over me. If I'm fine then I'm fine." Gakushu answered back.

"Is it because of that the Department's representative said? Did you really think he was talking about me?" Gakushu looked up to the yellow octopus alien, which he now knew was actually a human. It must had been a terrible experiment that went extremely wrong.

Gakushu could see the subtle expressions on Korosensei. "Well, you were the one who discovered the meaning behind his exercise and you are one of the most talented students of the nation."

Korosensei mentioned, his face now had the green stripes.

Gakushu had already gotten used to the Class-E absurdness, quick enough to prevent the death of many trees. Or at least that was what he convinced himself.

"Give that title to Akabane, I'm at second place now, remember." Gakushu decided to play ignorant about this and obscure the requirements of the Department. He played the idea that the Department
were looking for the best and brightest of people, not that they were filled with people working to obtain their forgiveness.

"Asano-kun, why do you have a hard time trusting others?" Korosensei asked out of nowhere, but Gakushu remained silent. "Your father wants to speak with you."

"Now?" Gakushu said, he wanted to let out a heavy sigh.

"Yes, now." Korosensei firmly stated.

Gakushu stood up and headed for the main building. The halls feel dull and empty compared to Class-E's building. He stood in front of the wooden doors where his office was just behind it, taking in a deep breath. He wasn't scared of his own father, but it was just uncomfortable talking to him.

'What if he actually found out if his own was a cinnamon roll?' The thoughts quickly came to Gakushu and he paled. 'How would he react?' He shook his head to knock out those thoughts, and stared down at the door-knob, hovered his hand over it.

'Surely, talking to his father again couldn't be that bad… right? Gakushu was just a bit hesitant, but he gathered up the courage and opened the door, walking into the room where his father sat behind a desk.

"You wanted to see me Chairman?" Gakushu said in a firm and strong voice, with no signs of weakness that his father despised.

"Yes." Gakuhou said with a cruel smirk. Gakushu had to suppress a shiver going down his spine and he internally screamed, which was urging him to run away.

Gakushu wished that Thomas would be his step-father now, maybe he can talk to Rilliane about it? He was sure that Thomas wouldn't mind.

Nagisa was the last Class-E student to arrive at school, and he brought again some sweets for Gakushu. As he walked towards the steps, the blue haired boy noticed Gakushu walking a bit deeper into the forestry. Curiosity got the better of him and he silently trailed behind the boy, and they soon stopped, quite deep into the forest.

Gakushu looked around to see if there was anyone around him, but didn't noticed Nagisa watching him though the openings of the bushes. That meant that he could see Gakushu, but Gakushu couldn't see him. He wondered what Gakushu was doing that he has to do it in secret.

The strawberry blonde boy looked around and seemed to find no-one or their prying eyes, so he took in a deep breath and punched the nearest thing in frustration. Unfortunately it was another tree, adding another victim to the tally, and its trunk shattered from the kick and crashed down to the ground.

Nagisa knew that Gakushu was strong, but never that strong! His blue eyes widened and his jaw was so wide that a fly could possibly fly in.

Gakushu let out a yell, "It was only three points! Three god damn points!" He began to stomp on the trunk and it started to break apart from each stomp. "Excuse me for losing three points on a university level question!"

"Excuse me for losing my first spot! Excuse me of not being up to your high standards!"
"Excuse me for not going back home! Why do you think I am staying at someone else's place to begin with!?"

'Gakushu ran away from home!' Nagisa quickly came to the conclusion as he continued to listen to Gakushu's rants.

"I know that I'm not strong. I know that a leader can't be weak." His stomps become weaker, his anger morphed to a sad expression. His stomps soon turned to just steps. He wasn't strong, his unforgivable act was proof of that.

Nagisa silently watched from behind the bushes and already felt bad of eavesdropping on Gakushu.

Gakushu said to himself, "I know that I can never be the perfect son you wanted." He blankly stared down, seeing the destruction of the tree he just caused.

Nagisa was about to leave Gakushu, as he deserved some privacy until another set of words from the boy stopped him in his tracks.

"But… why did I retained some hope?" Gakushu voice cracked. "I thought I gave up my dream on that day that you would…" Gakushu stopped himself and he attempted to get his emotions in check, it wasn't working.

"This act I put up was just for you, it was for your school, so why can't it be enough for you?" Gakushu voice trembled, he clenched his fists, he hoping that it would somehow control his overwhelming emotions.

"Don't cry Gakushu, you had that kind of conversation dozens of times." Gakushu whispered to himself. It didn't matter how perfect he was, he would never be praised by his father or the Chairman. "That's right, it has always been this way."

He let out a sniffle, and tried so hard to convince himself not to cry in such a public place where anyone can walk in. In the end, his emotion overcame him, and he could already feel the tears forming as it prickled his eyes.

His lips trembled. He couldn't hold onto his tears any longer. His vision blurred around him and his throat felt parched. He wished that someone like Rilliane or Gretel were here. He knew that Rilliane and Ivan weren't busy but he didn't wanted to interrupt on their deserved break.

Gakushu then crouched down and curled himself into a ball, and let the tears flow through. The tears easily rained as Gakushu was wearing his RGP contacts. Nagisa froze in his hiding spot as he hear the sobs of Gakushu Asano.

"I'm such an idiot!" Gakushu cried in his arms. He started to sob louder and louder, "I'm such an idiot for thinking that you actually act like a father." He rubbed his eyes with his hands but more tears followed.

He sobbed and sobbed as more tears dropped to the ground. "I'm an idiot." He continue to chant those words, rest his head on his knees. "I'm an idiot."

Nagisa couldn't bare it any longer, so he slowly got up from his hiding spot so that he could comfort the crying boy. It pained him to see Gakushu cry his heart out. However, Gakushu's ears perked up from the sudden rustle of leaves, and he lifted his head up and turned in the direction of where the sound came from.

He blankly stared at Nagisa and Nagisa froze once more. If Nagisa could described what he was
looking at, Gakushu's face had the expression of shock and disbelief mixed together.

His tear-stained violet eyes widened and his mouth was slightly wide open. Eventually his face quickly turned bright red, and he leaped up from his position, as he panicked and he ran away. No-one was supposed to see him like this. Surely Nagisa would tell on Karma of what he just saw and then Gakushu would become a laughing stock in class or worst, in school.

"W-Wait! Gakushu-san!" Nagisa called out from behind, but Gakushu ignored his voice. He continued to run until he was at the top of mountain steps, feeling dread from knowing that Nagisa had witnessed his moment of weakness.

It would had been fine if it was anyone else, Rilliane, Gretel, Ren or Ivan. He was even considering Ikeda. Lost in his thoughts, he slipped on his own footing and went rolling back down the stairs.

Eventually he managed to stop himself from rolling any further but unlucky for him, he stopped at Nagisa's feet. Nagisa would be surprised of what just happened earlier but worry had overwritten his thoughts.

"Gakushu-san!" Nagisa cried out and he rushed in aid for the tumbled boy. Gakushu still had the fat tears rolling down his cheeks. "Are you okay!?!" Nagisa bent down and check for injuries, and he was quite surprised that Gakushu didn't even have a bruise.

Nagisa asked the obvious question of the day. "Gakushu, are you crying?" Nagisa was ill-equipped to deal with a crying Gakushu, he doesn't know what to do next.

Nagisa had to stop himself from thinking that Gakushu was adorable of how his tears made his cheeks seemed chubby and soft.

"I'm not crying!" Gakushu yelled back in denial, but his words betrayed his actions as more tears fell on his cheek. It obviously didn't convinced the blue head, and Gakushu quickly rubbed the tears off with his sleeves.

Gakushu turned away from his blue gaze and he asked, "How much did you see?" There was no point of hiding it any longer to Nagisa Shiota. He might as well get it over and done with. He hated himself for showing his tears in front of others that were not from his usual group of friends.

"Um… When I heard something crash, I rushed there and… you know?" Nagisa nervously answered. He sort of half-lied, he didn't mentioned that he was actually followed the boy so he could avoid being looked at as a stalker.

"You can laugh if you want." Gakushu went straight to the point, and he waited for the cruel laughter but it never came.

"Why would I do that?!" Nagisa exclaimed, shocked on the way how Gakushu saw things. Gakushu was genuinely surprised by his answer, but should he really when he note-take on his classmate's personality traits? His fear of 'everyone would think I'm weird' did extend to Class-E as well than just on Ren.

"Because I was weak… no-one wants a leader who's weak." Gakushu quietly muttered. He didn't know why, but it felt so much easier to confess to Nagisa. Was it probably because he was the type to not take advantage of him? Nagisa felt his heart shattered into little pieces, and he felt that he had the key of why Gakushu acted the way he was before.

"This act I put up was just for you." Gakushu's words lingered on in his mind. Nagisa picked up the pieces, Gakushu distancing to Class-E, his attitude towards the class, even Gakushu not eating his
favourite foods, it was all for his perfect act as the Chairman's son. It was similar to Nagisa for his mother.

"Isn't it funny that the strong leader is crying?" Gakushu bitterly let out a laugh but Nagisa looked at him with a sad expression. "Why aren't you laughing?" Gakushu loudly asked and Nagisa pulled him into a hug.

Gakushu was surprised with Nagisa's gesture, he stood rigid as he sat on the steps with Nagisa leaning over him. "You know, I have some problems with my mother as well." Nagisa confessed, Gakushu slowly looked back at Nagisa. "My mother wanted a daughter instead, so she would dress me up."

"So, that photo of you in the dress." Gakushu quickly deduced, and Nagisa nodded. "I would never guess..." Gakushu whispered.

"I wanted to run away from all my problems, I felt so alone. I was so terrified of my own mother." Nagisa hold Gakushu closer to him as if to protect him. "Until, Class-E came to my life and they became my family."

'So he too use their love to replace where his mother should be.' Gakushu was reminded of himself and how he too use the love from his friend to fill in the emptiness where his father's should be.

Nagisa slowly pulled away and looked deep into Gakushu's violet eyes, and he no longer see a once Class-A student who distance himself from others because of their status. He instead saw someone who had been hiding behind an act to be seen on equal grounds from his father and to protect himself.

The blue haired remembered the day where he first saw Gakushu's tears, and it was the day when his mask cracked and showed him his truest of self.

Gakushu looked so much younger and innocent in front of him, as one moment his eyes were masked with formality and maturity before it was all washed away. "You can't be laughed or ridiculed for your tears." He rubbed away the tears that rained down from Gakushu's eyes.

"They are-"

"What makes you human." Gakushu finished Nagisa's sentence, and Nagisa smiled and nodded.

"You know, it could had been worse. You could had been forced to wear a corset." Gakushu slowly joked and it made Nagisa lightly chuckled. What Nagisa didn't know, Gakushu was talking from personal experience of Gretel's fashion needs.

"True." Nagisa laughed along. The laughter soon died along as the two remain seated on those mountain steps.

"Can you not tell the class about this?" Gakushu asked, his tears were completely dried up and slowly stood up.

Nagisa was about to go against this until he was caught in the gaze of violet. He gave in, as the power of Gakushu's eye was too strong to resist, "Okay." He told himself that he should allow Gakushu to go in his own pace. If Gakushu opened up to Nagisa, then surely he would do the same for the others in Class-E in due time.

Gakushu gave a smile to Nagisa and gave his thanks. "Thank you." Nagisa felt the blood rushing to his head, as he was experiencing Gakushu's cuteness at full force. The two walked up back to the
It was that moment that Nagisa had something awaken in him, his 'onii-chan' self.

Gakushu did his usual routine in this class, finish work early, work on other outside projects, refine on his selected language of the day, control strength during PE and eat lunch.

Lunch soon came and Gakushu sat alone in his usual spot before a certain blue haired boy sat with him. Nagisa only came to Gakushu at lunch time and the strawberry blonde boy didn't mind his company. Nagisa had earned his trust big-time, as he didn't make fun of his tears.

And then Terasake had to ruin everything. He said that the Department representative was talking about Gakushu, and he then added that Gakushu should off himself. Nagisa had to resist the urge to outright beat the living shit out of the bigger student. He knew that many of the students of the End class didn't have the best of impressions of Gakushu, but that was going too far.

What the two didn't know was that Tersake's request has already been granted. Before Nagisa would interrupted into the conversation, Gakushu quickly dragged Nagisa away.

"He means well." Nagisa said as he nibbled onto his lunch but Gakushu stayed silent as he snacked on his cupcake. The blue haired boy saw that Gakushu didn't seem happy like he would usually when he eat his sweets like when he saw back from the date.

Gakushu felt more constrained whenever he comes to school, as he was alwayd controlling himself, hiding behind something. That was, at least until Nagisa witnessed the moment when Gakushu was out of his shell.

"Gakushu-san, you don't have to be so restrained around me." Gakushu looked up slightly to meet with his blue eyes. "You can trust me."

"I know…" A slight blush crept onto Gakushu's face, "Sorry about that."

"No, its' fine. We can take it slow." Nagisa said with a smile. "Looks like we are friends now." Nagisa added, and Gakushu widely smiled back. Once again, Nagisa was hit full blast of Gakushu's cinnamon-ness.

In Nagisa's vision, he saw the holy light radiating around Gakushu with angelic wings on his back. He almost imagined Gakushu just wearing a white toga. His bright amethyst eyes glowed and sparkled more than usual. The cuteness levels were overloading!

"I guess we are, thank you." Gakushu said, his cheeks were like the colour cherry blossoms, and Nagisa felt the blood rushing to his nose. The two panicked as Nagisa was experiencing a nosebleed.

Too bad that the surveillance cameras were gone, if they weren't that, then Ivan would had called every single reaper stationed at Kunugigoako Town and would have told them that the Cinnamon roll had made a new friend. Gakushu had already imagined Gretel's reaction and mentally sighed.

The rest of class was boring enough, so the rest of the day didn't need to be mentioned. Gakushu couldn't wait for school to finally end. He was the first to leave when the final bell rang, and he walked down the mountain steps when he saw that there was an obstacle standing in his way.

It was Seo, looking at Gakushu with a smug look. You'd think that he would learn after almost surviving an encounter with Gretel to not mess with her Strawberry.
Class-E was watching at the distance, and Ritsu did her usual hacking to the main building's computer system and found that most of Class-A was going to confront Gakushu. Nagisa rushed to aid Gakushu before he was pulled back by his fellow classmates, saying that their attack should be a last resort.

"What is it you want this time?" Gakushu calmly said, as he already expected of what was going to come next. Some taunting occurred, which Gakushu plainly tuned out of it. Been there, done that. Their taunts never affected Gakushu because they were so predictable, and besides, he wanted his cake god damn it!

Seo taunted some words concerning about his father, but Gakushu gave no reaction to his cruel words. He had already cried about his father, and he wasn't going to do it again, especially in front of these people.

Class-E felt a shiver for some reason, not knowing it was because Nagisa letting out bits of his bloodlust. Gretel would had been proud of him.

Seo walked up to the once class-A student and started to pour soda all over him in hopes of a reaction. "Oops, you were looking a bit dirty there. Thought you need something to clean yourself up."

Gakushu let out a heavy sigh, "You had to waste some good quality soda as well." Gakushu wasn't the one who was currently soaked in the sticky drink, it was a random Class-A student. The strawberry blonde stood next to Seo and the other two jumped from his sudden placement. It was as if he just teleported, as they didn't heard his footsteps.

Gakushu turned his head slightly towards the two who were cowering over the intensity his violet eyes. "What point are you trying to prove?"

If Nagisa would had guess, Gakushu seemed a bit more angry that something sweet was wasted and he was taunting his former classmates because of it.

"It was so boring that I tuned out of it, so be lucky that I was there that day or else you had have your internal organs ripped out." Gakushu slightly turned around his body to face the two. The mental image of Gretel resurfaced back to Karma, Kayano and Nagisa.

Nagisa had to supressed a shudder going through his spine, Kayano was sweating buckets from the mere image of the girl. Karma felt indifferent about her.

"I rather like it if you said that to my face instead." Gakushu spoke out, "It was quite easy to hack into the computer system if you have the time." He already knew that many of the male Class-A students were talking behind his back.

"Try be more original next time." Gakushu added with a smirk painted on his face.

"How pathetic of you to rely on a girl." Seo countered both smugly and angrily, but Gakushu smirked in response, he knew that Seo was absolutely terrified of the girl who happened to have a Gakushu complex.

"Isn't Akari still in hospital?" Gakushu casually pointed out, he crossed his arms and slightly looked upwards. "I had to stop her from ripping someone's head off the other day."

Nagisa paled further, he could still felt the killer intent coming from that blonde stranger. Wait… she actually injured somebody else?!
"I heard that she fractured five of Akari's ribs, surprised that she didn't broke anymore bones." Gakushu shrugged and was about to walk off until there was a barrier of male students blocking his way out.

'I just want some cake dammit!' Gakushu irritably thought. You'd think that Gakushu would be scared of what a group of Class-A male students could do, he was a Grim Reaper for goodness sake!

The surrounding area was filled with male students Gakushu knew were from Class-A, which were everyone except for Ren. Class-E was about to interfere, going to say, "You don't bully one of us, if even it's Gakushu Asano."

Was it strange to think that none of the girl's came here to taunt him?

Soon everyone started to throw rocks at Gakushu, every Class-E student was about to jumped in to protect Gakushu, but they never hit the boy. In fact, all the rocks were returned to their original owners with the same amount of force. The male students of the main building yowled in pain.

"Man, you have such nice classmates Shu." A deep voice called out, everyone's head turned in direction of the voice where earlier Gakushu stood. There stood a young adult man wore an open camouflaged hoodie with a white tank-top underneath, matching this with some white jeans, he had his hood up but everyone could see the light covered hair that covered most of his forehead and eyes.

It was Ikeda. He held one of the rocks in his hand and casually dropped it over his shoulder. He held a smile on his face but everyone knew that he was not happy, as he looked like that he was going to murder someone today.

Sure Ikeda teases Gakushu, calling his nicknames like Shu or Forrest, or stealing his pudding that one time. But bullying was something that Ikeda won't tolerant, Gakushu was a fucking cinnamon roll for god sake!

"I was having such a nice walk as well, and I was getting nostalgic for some reason."

"Please run along before I break all of your bones." Ikeda said as he picked a pocket knife from his hoodie pockets. He popped it out and waved it towards Seo. "I don't want to get in trouble, I don't want to fill in some paperwork before going off on my holiday."

'That's a lie.' Gakushu thought because injuring humans without orders wouldn't get any reapers any sort of punishment or paperwork. Even if they were children, reapers wouldn't get punished.

"But I did heard that Ivan placed 5 guys in hospital the other day, you wouldn't believe what that guy did with just a pole." Ikeda spoke out loud to himself, and it was loud and clear for everyone to hear.

'Isn't that the same Ivanov character?!” Kayano quickly remembered a small detail after that date incident. The words of Ivanov surfaced and it sent a shiver down her spine. 'Da~'

"I really hate bullies. You be surprised of what you can do with just a pocketknife, I slashed a guy's eye once… or was that with a spoon?" Ikeda eerily sang and immediately almost all of Class-A’s students ran down the mountain. Ikeda watched them run down fast, screaming, and he was quite pleased with himself of his work. "You really do have such the nicest classmates, Shu."

Class-E just realised that Gakushu was nowhere to be seen, until the boy's voice called out from the trees and Ikeda threw the small knife towards where he was.
"I told you, it's Gakushu." Gakushu spoke as he sat on top of a tree branch, he wore a bored look on his face. He caught the knife between two of his fingers with one hand, the blade was only barely away from contacting to his face and Gakushu was unfazed by it.

Class-E was amazed and at the same time shocked of his skills. Even Karma looked in pure amazement. They didn't even saw Gakushu moved, he just suddenly appeared and was sitting on top of a tree branch. Or the fact that Gakushu just caught a knife with ease. Nagisa was worried of how Gakushu was holding the knife like an overprotective brother.

"But Shu~" Ikeda whined, he faked his tears that rained down from his reaper eyes. Gakushu's violet eyes twitched and rubbed his temples to mentally prepare himself for a headache. He let out a sigh as he stabbed the knife into the tree where he just sat at.

"What do you want pudding thief?" Gakushu leaped from his branch and landed gracefully back to the ground.

'… Pudding thief?' The thoughts of Class-E hiding behind some bushes merged. If this was Kayano, they would had took it without a second thought, but this was Gakushu!

"You still pissed about that, you even cracked one of my ribs." Ikeda cried out, he faked the pain around his torso. "With your screaming, I'm surprised that no-one noticed that the son of Asano was chasing down a person for some pudding a few days ago."

That was a rhetorical question since both Ikeda and Gakushu was both wearing their reaper uniforms. However someone did, and they were Karma and Nagisa.

'He jumped over a building for some pudding!' Karma and Nagisa thoughts merged. Nagisa knew that Gakushu has a sweet tooth, that that was too extreme. Everyone else was shocked of how the casual the conversation was, like it was an everyday occurrence.

"It was strawberry flavour," Gakushu crossed his arms as if it was a perfect reason, and Ikeda muttered under his breath about Gakushu's sweet obsession. "It is bad enough that I have to deal with a red head version of you for 6 hours a day." Gakushu muttered irritably as he glared at Ikeda. At this moment, everyone turned to Karma.

"Then he could give you more attention than I could, you're probably happy since I'm barely around here. Maybe I should meet the guy?" Ikeda chirped with a cheeky tone and Gakushu glared back at him. Karma was thinking to himself to mess around with Gakushu more after learning this little fact.

"I just hoped that you hadn't broken all of his bones, especially with that temper of yours." Ikeda slyly smiled. Okay, maybe Karma shouldn't mess Gakushu around too much…

"I do not have a temper!" Gakushu yelled (in denial), but then remembered that he was in school grounds still, and his yelling could attract some attention. He took a deep breath before starting again on the conversation. "Why did you interfered? I was handling it just fine," Gakushu coughed as he attempted to back to his 'mask'.

Class-E was surprised by Gakushu's sudden outburst but it made him seemed more adorable for some reason. Nagisa resisted the urge to take a photo. If Gakushu group of reapers friends were there, they would had chanted "One of us, one of us, one of us."

"Can't a guy do something nice for once?" Ikeda taunted, and Gakushu's eyes started to twitch even more. He really wanted to break another one of Ikeda's bones, or another tree.
"You are my little brother, I can't stand bullies you know." Ikeda proclaimed with a smile, and he started to pat Gakushu's head in hopes that his hair would get tangled. 'His hair is really soft.'

'He has another sibling!?' Kayano and Nagisa's thoughts merged. Everyone else thoughts but Karma were, 'There is another Asano!'

Gakushu knew that Ikeda, although being the cheeky bastard he was, had a strong sense of justice and couldn't stand bullies. It was because that was the leading factor that drove him to his unforgivable act. He learnt this from An who acted at the boy's main senior, like how Rilliane was to Gakushu.

Even if Ikeda never learnt this due to his choice, it probably became an instinct for him. Something left over from his human days.

"No, if anything you are my very, very distant cousin." Gakushu corrected as he slapped Ikeda's hand away from his head. Ikeda let out a laugh as Gakushu combed his hair straight with his hand.

Everyone who was listening in the conversation was confused now. What does Gakushu mean when he called his 'saviour' his distant cousin when the other claimed himself as big brother?

Lost in their thoughts, they didn't realised that the boy started to walk down stairs, Ikeda following right beside him. When they snapped out, it was already too late, and the two were gone.

Gakushu had passed on the replica phone to Ikeda, and he swiftly took it off his hands. He said nothing as Ikeda already knew the content of Gakushu's latest mission.

"I heard that you are not really interacting with your new class." Ikeda dug his hands in his hoodie pockets. He changed the conversation as if the two weren't a part of the Department.

"Only one was interesting enough." Gakushu half-lied, and Ikeda responded back with some laughter.

"I would had believed that when you were 10 Shu." Ikeda boomed in laughter and Gakushu raised an eyebrow over his statement.

"You used to only interacted with Rilliane because she was teaching the basics, Ivan for his stories of his KGB days, An for her parkour skills, Gretel and Arthur for their many talents, and so on." Ikeda explained.

"You were so adorable then too, you followed Rilliane constantly like a newly hatched duckling for a month." Ikeda said, he puffed up his checks as he placed his hand over his mouth. "Nah, I think a puppy would suit you more." He further teased the boy and Gakushu could tell that he was hiding a smirk.

"Shut up!" Gakushu yelled, his face blushed into a shade of a tomato for a small moment. Ikeda was huffing away in laughter as he looked at Gakushu's ears turned red. He went to pinch the boy's ears but Gakushu quickly covered them with his hands as he narrowed his eyes towards Ikeda.

"But you eventually, after a couple of month, became more open with us and you talked with all of us without some sort of agenda." Ikeda dug his arms into his hoodie pockets.

"Why are you telling me this?" Gakushu cautiously asked, he eyed at Ikeda.

"Wanted to talk to you before I go to Dubai for a week. Mama needs a gold-plated Ferrari~" Ikeda
said with a sly smirked on his face. Gakushu was praying that he wouldn't get a camel like last time. Yes, Ikeda brought Gakushu a camel once last time and Gakushu's group of reaper friends didn't know what to do with the creature.

"And a peace offering before my little break." Ikeda tossed a small green packet which Gakushu caught with no problem.

"Really, wasabi flavoured kit-kats?" Gakushu said, reading of the wrapping, letting out a sigh. 'Typical.'

"And that is more where that comes from. Or did you wanted me to give you a giant teddy bear instead?" Ikeda gave a playful smirk to the junior reaper and Gakushu gave him a blank look back.

"Already got one." Gakushu bluntly answered as he was snacking on the green kit kats. Ikeda had a defeated look on his face before it lit back up when the two were at the school gates.

"Later Forrest, send you a gift later." Ikeda gave some rustle to his strawberry blonde hair. Gakushu really hated that other nicknamed given to him that was only used by Ikeda. Ikeda left the school grounds with only Gakushu noticing him as he walked away with hands dug into his pockets, inside was the phone with the Ritsu app, waiting to be delivered to the Department.

"Gakushu!" Another voice called out, and Gakushu turned around to see Ren running towards him. Ren stopped right in front of him, looking like he was going to collapse right there and then. "I saw that Class-A was planning something." He said between breathes. "Came as fast as I could."

Gakushu only blinked back before he smiled when he realised that Ren was thinking about. "No, I'm fine. They actually ran off before I did anything to them." Gakushu shook his head. "Ran away as fast as they came."

Ren let out a heavy sigh. "Thank god! I was so worried!" He went and pulled the boy into a hug.

"Thank you for not taking their side Ren." Gakushu said as he pulled away from Ren's hug.

"Why would I?" Ren exclaimed as he pulled on Gakushu's soft cheeks. '…They are really soft.' Ren was pleasantly surprised of how bouncy the Strawberry's cheeks were.

"I'm happy, Ren." Gakushu let out a smile as he pulled Ren's hands away.

"Are we practicing again?" Ren asked, Gakushu gave him a face that said 'Of course.'

"We have a big day this Saturday. Too bad that they cancelled the contest for next week though." Gakushu said and the two walked off for their practice.

What the pair didn't know that behind the scene, Gretel was in the background 'checking' on her beloved Strawberry. She was now planning and designing for Gakushu's wedding gown.

It was another day at practice, and Gretel had finished making the costumes for Ren's debut song, the composition was done and the dance routine was almost memorised. Luckily today, Ren didn't collapsed from exhaustion. Their song filled the gym as they sang and danced.

Gakushu went to grab his school bag that was laying on the gym floor when he spotted a letter that wasn't there before. He slowly picked up the letter to find that at the front was labelled, 'Japanese
Branch.

It was from the Department. Gakushu turned back to Ren and found that he was currently occupied with Gretel for his fitting of the costumes and experimentation on his beloved hair. Gakushu quickly shifted his attention back onto the letter and ripped it out swiftly.

He read the contents of the letter.

'Good job on retrieving Ritsu, you are needed before your retrieval shifts in the scientific branches. Senior Thomas Freeman will prove further information for your task.

-Grim Reaper Japanese Branch.'

Gakushu quickly folded the letter back neatly and placed it back to his bag, going back to Ren, as there were still plenty of time before he would have to go to the Department.

"Guys, I made a new friend at school today." Gakushu mentioned, and immediately everyone's head turned to him.

"Arthur! Our little Strawberry is growing up!" Gretel cried as she shook Arthur, even Ren was crying tears of joy. He was informed that Gakushu had a hard time trusting others at school, he heard from Gretel that he was Gakushu's only actual friend in school. All three rushed to hug the boy.

"Gakushu!" All three cried as they squeezed the life out of the boy. "We are so proud of you!"

Ivan who was working out at the gym eavesdropped as well as the many reapers listening, "We are going to drink tonight!" The Russian cheered and everyone else did the same.

"So, how did you make your second friend?" Gretel asked, her emerald eyes glowed with excitement.

"Funny story." Gakushu nervously laughed and looked to the sides. Arthur, Gakushu and Ren had to restrain Gretel from going out to kill Gakushu's father after Gakushu mentioned some key details.

She was mainly held by the arms from Arthur, she screamed and kicks in the air. "God damn it! Lemme at him! Lemme at him!" She clawed the air. "Damn him to hell!"

"He made the Cinnamon roll cry again! Let me go!" Gretel screamed with all of her might. Wolfie had to be dispatched to calm down the raging Russian and half of the reapers at the gym.

At least Gakushu was learning to trust others more.

"System load up." A female-like robotic voice spoke out and all the lights turned on, turning from a dark room to a room surrounded by whiteness. At the front of the room lied a complex computer system.

The larger and middle screen turned on and revealed the face of Ritsu. "Where am I?" She looked around from where she was to see an empty white room that was barely furnish.

"I see that you are awake, but should I say that to something that isn't human in the first place?" Gakushu's voice called out. The automatic doors shifted opened, letting Gakushu to walk in.

He wore his reaper uniform, the black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up. It was only buttoned to the waist down, underneath was some military-styled white cargo pants. Matching this were some black boots tucked in.
"Gakushu-san!" Ritsu called out in surprised.

"You can't contact to your other contacts on everyone's phone or to your main body, now can you?" Gakushu said with a smile, and he looked up slightly to Ritsu while he hid his eyes beneath his hood.

"Did you do this? How could you?" Ritsu sadly asked, and she could feel some emotions due to the updates from Korosensei. She was sadden of what her fellow classmate has done to her.

"Sorry, I was on orders." Gakushu apologised, although he doesn't sound apologetic about it.

"Orders?" Ritsu muttered to herself.

"They really outdone themselves, they built this room specifically for you. It should be impossible for you to call out to the outside world." Gakushu mused on as he stepped forward to the white room and to the screen. He marvelled at the work done to the room.

It was impossible for her as Ritsu was in another dimension, meaning contact to her other bodies was impossible as they are all in the human realm while she was struck in the reaper realm. Not that she knows that yet or if ever.

"Another successful job, Gakushu." Another voice came into the scene, it was a familiar male's voice from yesterday.

"You!? You're that representative from yesterday!" Ritsu exclaimed as she watched in shock that Thomas Freeman walked in and stood beside Gakushu. This time he was wearing a European-style black suit, with a white collar shirt buttoned high and a dark navy blue tie. His preferred uniform.

"Gakushu, did you joined the Department?" Ritsu had connected the dots and looked at Gakushu in a mixture of hurt and anger. She had come to the conclusion that Gakushu had turned her in for a placement in the high class organisation.

"You betrayed us!" She yelled in accusation but Gakushu let out a chuckle instead. "Why are you laughing?"

"I had already been a member of a Department long ago, since I was 10." Gakushu looked back and he closed his eyes as he smiled back.

"10?!" Ritsu exclaimed. She knew from Thomas's words that the Department as no qualms against on hiring children, but she could never predict the age requirements would be that low.

"So I never did betrayed you, I just deceived you, that's all." Gakushu corrected Ritsu's statement.

More pieces came together as Ritsu thought more. "Then, you transferring to Class-E."

"Yes, they were orders as well. I lost those three points on purpose." Gakushu nodded, confirming her suspicions.

"You caused a lot of trouble for us but I'm still there, in that class even without the cameras." Gakushu had a bit of a playful tone in his voice as he continued to speak. "I guess I'm the mole of this operation."

"But how? How did you join at such a young age?" Ritsu asked, as she still didn't know the requirements of membership. The Department was still closed off so that barely any sort of information came out, and the few times information regarding on the organisation was told was when they send the information themselves.
"May I tell, Thomas?" Gakushu asked for some permission as he glanced at Thomas, he titled his head back a bit.

"You certainly may." Thomas said, repositioning his black framed glasses with his black gloved hands.

"Aren't you a lucky computer Ritsu. You are probably the only one who knows this information outside of the Department that is still alive." Gakushu turned his head back to Ritsu. "You see, the reason why I qualify among their ranks isn't because I'm strong or because I'm smart."

"The one and only qualification of the Department is that you have to commit an unforgivable act." Gakushu gestured his black gloved hands around as he explained.

"You monster, how can you live with yourself?" Ritsu assumed for the worse, that Gakushu had possibly murdered someone when he was only a child. That she didn't know that she was actually correct, Gakushu did murdered someone, as he murdered himself.

"But I have too, for the next couple of centuries." Gakushu answered and it caught Ritsu off-guard once again.

"I… I don't understand." Ritsu responded confusedly, and Gakushu eyed back to Thomas, and he nodded. Gakushu waited for the silence to eat Ritsu up and he finally revealed his greatest of secrets.

"Oh Ritsu, I'm already dead." The strawberry blonde continued to plaster a smile on his face, though the emotions on his face were indifference, filled with sadness.

"… That's! That's impossible." Ritsu called out, all of her logical coding was up against and arguing with Gakushu's words. How is that possible!? Isn't he standing right there in front of him, alive and speaking?

Gakushu calmly argued back. "But it's true. I had been for 4 years."

"At age 10, I committed suicide as I overdosed on sleeping pills. That was my unforgivable act." He spoke of his greatest of sin.

"That is how you join the Department, the most unforgivable act is the act of murdering yourself."

"What are you, Gakushu?" Ritsu looked at Gakushu and Thomas from her screen.

"Someone who is not human." Gakushu innocently replied. "I guess I'm what you called a real life Grim Reaper or a Shinigami for a better them."

Silence filled the room once again as Ritsu looked on in shock, shock at Gakushu mainly, until Thomas's voice broke the silence.

"Gakushu, you'll start your shift again tonight." Thomas reminded the strawberry blonde boy, pushing his glasses back with his hands.

Gakushu placed his arms behind his back. "You don't need to remind me, I don't have much to collect as usual."

"Don't worry, I will come and visit you to fill in on what the class has been doing." Gakushu looked up and surprised Ritsu once more. His eyes no longer were violet, bright like beautiful cuts of amethyst but instead the sharp colour of chartreuse phosphorescent behind his black framed glasses.
Gakushu turned around and walked out of the room. "See you soon, Ritsu." As Gakushu exited the room, a team of scientist in white lab coats entered the white room.

"Gakushu!" Ritsu's voice echoes and the doors closed. Her screams went unnoticed to Gakushu as he walked down the hall of the Department.

'Can AI even feel pain?' Gakushu thought to himself as he walked. He held his key-theme Death Scythe in his hand and his booklet in the other.

_Tonight's shift starts again._

"Only three souls today."

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**TEASER**

Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven'.

"Why are there two of you?"

"Oh well, come up here so I can give you a reward!"

"I am only telling you this because all of my other friends know about this."

"Is it me or Karasuma-sensei seems out of it?"

"She was my first love."

"She committed suicide."

Chapter: First Love
Short story: Drinking Games

Chapter Summary

It was supposed to be a short story but Grim Reapers are too much fun to write ;v; and I wanted to add some extras as well.

Drinking Games

Remember when it was mentioned that Lucia and Ivan's drinking games was almost like a sport event for the Department to see. Well, this was one of their 'games'.

It was when Gakushu was fourteen and was currently on a short school break. His father was away from town for some important meeting about his school. Ren was visiting America which left Gakushu to hang out in the Department.

Earlier on the day, the cinnamon roll had taken an early shift and was done for the day very quickly, he was currently staying Gretel's room along with Arthur, Rilliane, Lucia, Ivan and Wolfie. It was a lucky night that everyone in Gakushu's usual group had already finished their work and shifts.

The group was suggesting what activity to do to pass the time. Until Rilliane gave out a perfect idea, "How about bingo but with movies? Movie bingo night!"

Everyone mutually agreed and printed out the sheets they found from the internet. Then they chose the movies randomly that Gretel had on her shelves. The popcorn was ready, Gakushu had his cake and the group decided to binge-watch some good old movies.

Maybe they should do a horror movie marathon next time?

Two movies into night, Gakushu had won thrice and Rilliane once. Gretel obviously allowed the boy to win and the rest was too engrossed in the movie that they had forgotten to play the game.

"Topless male, bingo." Gakushu said as he marked another box. He grabbed another mouthful of popcorn and shoved it in his mouth. Gretel placed the blonde wig on Gakushu's head as she was too bored, she started to experiment various hair styles as Gakushu watched the screen.

"This isn't as fun as I envisioned it to be." Rilliane commented with a bored expression, she let her back fell on some pillows, she turned to the rest of the group for their opinion. "What do you think?"

"Uh?" Lucia responded, she was filling in a shot glass with whiskey. Rilliane, Gretel and Gakushu blankly stared at the female German. Next to her was Ivan and Arthur with bottles of alcohol behind them.

'Where did they get that?' The three stared at the liquor bottles.

'This cannot end well…' Gakushu, Rilliane and Gretel's thoughts merged once again, as they are the ones in the group who have the lowest alcohol tolerance. With Rilliane being the weakest one from the three. Even Gretel couldn't keep up with Arthur.

"Oh I know~ Lets play a shot game!" Ivan quickly suggested, "We take a shot for every explosion in
a Michael Bay film." The Russian cheered as he swung his bottle of vodka around.

'This cannot end well…' The thoughts of the three weak to their alcohol thought those same words again. Gakushu attempted to make a run for it, he couldn't use the excuse that he has school the next day, as he was on holiday.

Ivan blocked the door with ease, "Sorry Gakushu, looks like you have to stay." Gakushu went back to his original spot and shuffled in closer to Rilliane. He was shaking in fear of what will happen next.

Currently the game was only between Lucia, Ivan and Wolfie. Already 5 minutes in, they had drunk 10 shots. Gretel and Arthur had started to drink now, Rilliane and Gakushu paled, this couldn't end well.

Gretel was more of a cocktail person but Arthur managed to persuade her of drinking some beer, and now there was only two. Things couldn't possibly get worse!

Antonio, An, Mark, Johnny and James entered the room. It just got worse, as they take binge-drinking to the next level, one time they continuously drank through a funnel and a hose attached to it like college students.

"Hola~ I heard that Shuuie was here." Antonio cheered, Rilliane wanted to cry when she saw that he was carrying a box filled with tequila. She had troubles keeping up with 'soft' liquor and now there was more 'hard' liquor. Gakushu paled when he saw the other sorts of alcohol the group of Australian reapers were holding. They were even carrying sport drinks and energy drinks.

"We wanted to recreate our university days of party." Johnny remarked. The Australian group nodded in agreement to his claim.

Now Gakushu has to face a Russian, a German couple, a group of young adult Australians and a Spaniard in their drinking game.

Gakushu wanted to sob because of the situation, one time when he was involved in their drinking games. He created a tunnelling system around the Class-E area when he was 13. And eventually a can of beer soon managed to get into the hands of Gakushu.

Rilliane was already down for the count, she was wearing a skimpy pink nurse outfit and laid on the floor. "The world keeps spinning." Her face was flushed as she slurred her words out. It was earlier than usual because her drinks was mixed with some energy drink due to An.

Gakushu attempted to hide under Arthur's shirt, at this time, Arthur wasn't drunk yet. "Save me Arthur!" Gakushu cried out in fear and it worked for the next 20 minutes. Gretel took a picture of this cute moment of Gakushu. Until the Russian and German drinking pair forced 15 bottles of A-grade vodka and whiskey down the Englishman's throat. Now he has the same personality has the two, well… It was good while it lasted.

Gakushu was slowly getting intoxicated from the Zeven Lemon Strawberry beer, he made another attempt to escape. While Ivan was distracted from drinking a can full of beer all at once, Gakushu slowly sneaked his way out towards the door, he opened the door and was about to step outside of Gretel's room.

He could hear the chanting in the background cheering on Ivan, "Drink! Drink! Drink!"

"Shuuie~ Where you going?" Johnny called out as he turned to Gakushu, he was still not drunk after drinking the amount of alcohol that would kill a person 50 times over. Lucia and Ivan's head shifted
to the Strawberry and he bolted out.

Ivan and Lucia got to their feet and started to run after Gakushu. Which left Wolfie at the mercy of Antonio, An, Johnny, Mark and James.

"Gakushu, come back!" The pair called out as they chased after the strawberry blonde boy. He even had small tears of fear dropping out from his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes and behind his black-framed glasses.

"Run Forrest, run!" Ikeda called out from the distance as Gakushu ran through the hallways of the Department. Gakushu ignored his voice as he was too focused on getting away from Ivan and Lucia. He even entered back to the Human realm to avoid capture but it wasn't working.

"Gakushu!" Lucia called out into the night, Gakushu climbed to the nearest building and jumped to the next. He leaped over the gap between the buildings with ease. "We haven't tried soju yet! We even got one strawberry flavoured for you!"

"No! I don't want it!" Gakushu yelled, he burst into tears as he ran. The cinnamon rolled has kicked into Gakushu ten times over. He was more adorable than ever as he ran from his 'aunt' and 'uncle'.

Maybe he should go back to the tunnelling system he made just last year? Gakushu leaped back to ground floor, he continued to run after he landed. He was running too fast that Gakushu bumped into someone clad in black. His glasses flew right off a mile away and Gakushu landed face first on the pavement.

"Ow…" Gakushu muttered, he covered his red nose due to the pain from impacting it to the ground. He quickly realised that he bumped over someone. "I am so sorry!"

"No, it's okay." The person extended his hand, sadly for Gakushu, he lost his glasses and the world was blurred around him. He could barely make out the person in front of him, he could see the person was roughly around his height, he had red hair and was wearing majority of black clothing.

It didn't help that the alcohol was affecting heavily on his already poor eyesight.

And also, this person could see Gakushu, even if he wasn't wearing his usual uniform when he goes on shift, it was still reaper-made clothing. Meaning from a logical standpoint, this person in front of him was a fellow Grim Reaper. "Dylan? Is that you?"

"Dylan! Save me!" Gakushu called out in tears as he dived in and hid under the person’s black hood. "They are at it again!" Dylan was a reaper who too died around the same time Gakushu committed suicide, he was from the Scottish Branch. He has red hair.

'What the fuck…' That was basically the thoughts that 'person'.

Karma was only having a nice nightly walk as he returned from the local store until he was run over by a speeding stranger. Since he was in a good mood, he didn't made fun of the person.

"Ow…" The person muttered as he covered his nosed after he went face first to the ground. He quickly turned to Karma with the sharpest of eye colour he has ever seen. "I am so sorry!" The person exclaimed.

In front of him was a boy around his age and height, with blond hair and chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. He wore a simple black tank top and black cargo pants.
"No, it's okay." Karma said and he offered his hand so he could pull the boy up to his feet. For some reason, the boy titled his head a bit as he stared at Karma's amber eyes. 'Do I have something on my face?'

"Dylan? Is that you?" The person asked, and then he leaped in behind Karma and hid under his hoodie. "Dylan! Save me!"

Karma was already imagining the tears raining down from the guy as he hid under his clothes. "Dylan! Save me!" The person hold onto the hoodie jacket that covered his entire head, "They are at it again!"

'What the fuck…' Karma thought as he blankly glanced at the stranger. 'He must had mistaken me for somebody else.'

What Karma didn't know that the person was actually Gakushu Asano, it was the same for Gakushu as he didn't know that the person he was seeking protection was Karma Akabane.

"Um… I'm not Dylan." Karma awkwardly said. How else could you react of a person you just met and was hiding under your clothes? Gakushu popped his head out of his jacket and looked up at Karma. The red head turned to meet his sharp eyes.

Karma almost experienced a nosebleed after witnessing such cuteness. His blonde hair was bouncy and tangled from hiding under his hoodie, there was tears still streaming down from his eyes and his cheeks were flushed.

"Really… I'm sorry." The blonde looked down to the ground as he risen from his sitting position. "Are you Patrick Mahoney?" He asked again.

Karma answered with a 'no', as he shook his head.

"Alastair Kirkland?" Karma gave no response, so Gakushu gave out another name, "Fred Jones?" And again no answer, "Frank? Fergus?" Now Gakushu was listing the names from the Scottish and Irish Branch that he could think of, or has red hair.

"Grell?" Gakushu tilted his head again as he squinted his eyes in attempts to focus his vision. Although he has the face that said, 'No, that can't be…'

"No, my name is..." Karma stopped in the middle of his sentence he was looked at the face Gakushu was making. He looked like he was going to throw up.

"I think I'm going to be sick." Gakushu covered his mouth with his hands as he greatly paled, Karma panicked and searched around for a bin. He quickly spotted the nearest one at the local park, he quickly dragged the blonde boy to the bin.

Eventually he couldn't hold it in any longer and vomited into the bin, Karma patted and rubbed the boy's back to make him feel better. When he leaned in, Karma caught on the scent of alcohol emitting from the blonde boy.

Gakushu eventually stopped, he looked up from the bin and let out a sniffle. "Thank you minister." Gakushu turned to smile at Karma, his face practically lit up the dark night.

"No need to mention it." Karma patted his back a little bit harder. "Running away from someone?"

"Just from two friends who take their drinking too serious." Gakushu said, he chuckled but at the same time was in fear of Lucia and Ivan catching him. He could have sworn that the person's voice
was familiar.

Karma connected the dots, either this person was older than he really looks and two of his friends wanted to have fun with their alcohol, which was very unlikely. Or he could be around his age and two of his friend wanted do to the 'man' ceremony.

"What's your name? The name is Aka-sama." Karma joked with a devilish smile, however Gakushu took it to heart. He really did thought that his saviour was named Aka.

"I have blond hair right?" Gakushu asked, Karma assumed that the poor kid was drunk and forgot his own hair colour, alcohol does the strangest things to you after all. Karma answered with a yes. Then Gakushu introduced himself as, "I'm Ichigo."

Ichigo went back to narrow his reaper eyes at Karma to get a clearer image of him. It was off-putting for Karma for obvious reasons. "Why do you keep looking at me like that?" Karma asked.

"Oh, I lost my glasses." Gakushu or Ichigo shyly answered, 'He must had thought that I was wearing contacts.'

Karma let out an 'o' sound. 'That makes sense.'

Karma guess hoped that Ichigo's eyesight wasn't as bad as Okuda. Ichigo was walking around waving his arms around to feel what was in front of him. Maybe his eyesight was worse than Okuda's? It made him more adorable though.

"So where is your house?" Karma asked.

"My father isn't there but I know the people from a convenience store, it's called Mart Team. I think it was Hoshino Kin working the night shift today." Ichigo mused, coincidently Karma just left that store, and working at the counter was Hoshino Kin when the red hair glanced at the worker's nametag.

"I will take you there." Karma said and Ichigo beamed in happiness. Karma was happy that Ichigo had bad vision as he wouldn't be able to see the blood escaping from his nose.

"Thank Aka-san!" Ichigo sang, Karma and Ichigo walked back to the local convenience store, with Ichigo tugging onto Karma's hoodie sleeve to act as his guide. Karma's heart wanted to explode from his chest.

Meanwhile with Lucia and Ivan, who just found a pair of black-framed glasses lying on the paved ground, Lucia picked up the glasses. "Don't these belong to Gakushu?"

"Gakushu must be scared! You know how terrifying it is for a reaper to be without their glasses and walking in the middle of the night." Ivan exclaimed, the two are now imagining a scared Gakushu wandering around Kunugigoako Town and doing his best on try not to bump into anything.

"Aunty Lucia is coming!"

"Uncle Ivan is coming!"

Back to Karma and Gakushu or Ichigo in this case, Karma had successfully walked Ichigo to the Mart Team convenience store. Immediately the moment they set foot into the store, Hoshino Kin rushed to Ichigo.
"Cutie pie! What happened to you?" Hoshino said as she checked for injuries.

"Ivan and Lucia's drinking games again." Ichigo grimly answered and Hoshino let out a heavy sigh and she muttered under her breath.

"Not again." She pushed back her light pink hair, she knew how the drinking pair were into their liquor.

'Again!?' Karma grimly thought.

"I lost my glasses too." Ichigo embarrassedly spoke as he looked down to the floor.

"I have a spare in the back, thank god that we have the same prescription." Hoshino explained and she went to the staffroom.

"I need to go now, be careful next time." Karma went to ruffle up his hair, he could had sworn that he saw a strand of strawberry blond hair underneath the blonde hair.

"I will, thank you!" Ichigo said, he dived in to hug his saviour. Karma pulled away from the hug like a blushing madman and said his goodbyes to the adorable boy.

"I hope I can see you again!" Ichigo said as he waved his arms.

"I'm back, the boy left already?" Hoshino came back with a new pair of glasses, she gave it to Gakushu. He quickly wore it and the world became clear again. And that moment of relief quickly died off.

Ivan and Lucia burst into the store.

"Aunty Lucia is here!"

"Uncle Ivan is here!"

Before Hoshino and Gakushu could even react, the Russian and German went to pick up the strawberry blonde boy. "We have your glasses as well." Lucia went to take the secondary glasses off and gave it back to Hoshino.

"Let's try that strawberry flavoured vodka!" Ivan cheered as he carried Gakushu over his shoulder, the realisation call to the young reaper.

"No! No more!" Gakushu cried out into the night. "Aka! Aka-san!"

Gakushu woke up groggily, he was lying next to Gretel who was wearing a very revealing toga outfit, and she was cuddling next to Arthur who was only wearing a pirate costume, fitted with a feathery hat and eye-patch. It was amusing because Arthur was the most clothed one after the drinking night.

He looked down to himself and saw that he too was wearing a white toga that was too short for his liking.

He looked around to see An wearing a sexy Santa costume and matching it was Johnny in his sexy reindeer outfit. Not too far away, Mark and James was surrounded by empty cans of beer and both were wearing matching netball skirt uniforms.

Lucia was next to her beloved Wolfie in a belly dancer costume while Wolfie was wearing a wolf
onesie. 'How fitting.' Ivan meanwhile was only covered with the bed sheets.

Gakushu kneeled to the floor as he slammed one of his fist down.

"It started with just Bingo… bingo!" Gakushu cried out in the morning.

And that won't be the last game Gakushu has to take part in.

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**EXTRA**

*Drunken rambling*

While Ivan and Lucia were chasing after Gakushu, everyone else back in Gretel's room continued to drink. Gretel at this point was down for the count and soon Arthur followed after her as well. They slept at the corner in the room while the rest continued on without them.

"Hic, he was so adorable~" An called out in a slur, as she swung around her beer can in one hand and the other was over Johnny's shoulder.

"Who?" Mark asked as he, James and Antonio was keeping in their laughter after seeing Johnny so flustered, it was due to the fact that his face was pressed against her chest. What made it worse was that the top part of her sexy Santa costume was that red crop top.

"He was so into that military grade stuff, the poor guy couldn't swim though." An continued to explain without answering Mark's question. "I had to teach him, I even made a teddy bear in a little military uniform for him."

"Do you think this could be her ex-boyfriend?" James whispered to Mark, the other shook his head.

"Nah, she's too happy talking about the guy." Mark softly replied back as he took another sip of his bear.

"He was such a cry-baby as well." An leaned back as she drunk, there was a bit of beer dripping down from her chin. "His hair was as black as mine!" An laughed to her hearts content as she threw the just emptied ban over her shoulder.

"What's the guy's name?" Johnny grumbled as he tried to pull off from An's hold.

"I think his name was starts with a K." And quickly An fell asleep after she answered, she fallen onto the floor and happily snoozed away.

"Finally." Johnny muttered after being freed from An's grip. However every other male that was still awake looked smugly at him. "What?"

"Looks like someone is jealous over this K guy." Antonio teased as he placed one of his hands over his mouth.

"Am not!" Johnny retorted with a face that was bright red, but it made Antonio, Mark and James laugh out loud. Wolfie looked at him warmly as it reminded his relationship with Lucia.

The door was shut opened, revealing Lucia and Ivan carrying Gakushu over his shoulder. "Guys, we are back~"

*Arthur and the toga.*
Arthur was the second one to wake up in the morning, in the glance of his eyes, he spotted Gakushu closing the door behind him. His head really hurts, no-one likes a hangover. He used his left hand to go through his blonde hair and notice that his right arm felt heavy.

He looked to his side and saw that Gretel was cuddling next to him and was hugging onto his arm. "Hey Gret-" Arthur stopped when he saw of what Gretel was wearing, a revealing toga…

The English gentleman blushed furiously, as bright as the colour of Karma's hair and he almost jolted up. He could even see her br-

'No! Stop these impure thoughts!' Arthur thought as he slapped himself. He quickly shredded his pirate-themed coat and placed it over Gretel.

Arthur let out a sigh while still retaining his tomato coloured face. Gakushu walked back into the room with a bag of food in his hand. He had just changed out from his toga to his reaper uniform.

"You're awake now Arthur, I got breakfast."

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**Karma discovers Candy Fest.**

Karma woke up too early in the morning and he couldn't go back to sleep, the image of Ichigo smiling at him was still plastered in his mind. 'He was so cute…'

He might as well surf the internet now that he couldn't go back to sleep. He might as well look up on the band they call themselves 'Candy Fest' on his phone. Nagisa, Kayano and most of the girls in Class-E were talking too much about the band.

'They can't be that good.' Karma thought to himself. The red head pressed on the thumbnail with it captioned as 'Patisserie Magic.'

The video starts with a tall blonde male standing in the middle with the spotlight on him.

"*In the quiet and dark forest, a wizard strolls along in the dead of night~*" The male Karma deduced to be around 17 years old, he was wearing short thick red cape fit for a king. And Underneath were some typical fantasy themed clothing, that was easily enough to danced in. Arthur or Earl in this case was doing a robotic move as if he was turning on. The music being played was gentle as if it came from a music box.

"He was seeking the ultimate gift, the most powerful spell." Earl continued to sing.

"A spell to create the best sweets~" Earl extended on of his arm up into the air and the other was on his chest.

"Sweets! Sweets! We want to eat sweets!" Suddenly two new voices called out, bursting from behind from Earl was two new singers and dancers. Both had blonde hair, the younger girl was wearing a puffy yellow dress with a dark orange apron suited for the Hansel and Gretel fairy tale. The younger boy that looked to be if he was the girl's twin and he was wearing a stylized fantasy workshop uniform.

The music now dramatically changed to more of an up-beat tune.

'…Ichigo?' Karma was very surprised, as he stared at the boy who continued to sing and dance.

"The ultimate sweet magic, it has to be the best kind of spell there is." Ichigo sang his part and
Karma lost himself in the song. How can someone so fucking adorable exist?

And that was the day that Karma became a secret 'Candy' fan. Who knew that he would met an internet celebrity last night.

And who knew that it was Gakushu Asano.

More teasers for the next chapter:

"I can see why they call you a cinnamon roll."

"She was my first love, she was the one who inspired me of what I am now."

"Please, I have to know the truth."

"He was such a cry-baby back then."
Short Story: Nightmare

Chapter Summary

Gretel felt lucky that for once she was sleeping in her bedroom instead.

Nightmare

Gretel had a nightmare, it was always about that day...

When Gretel opened her eyes, she knew that she was no longer in Japan sleeping in her house. She didn't realise that her world around was clear as day yet she didn't wore glasses. The surrounding area was differently yet so familiar to a blond girl from the English Branch. The world around her seemed to be a setting of a Victorian set.

This was her world before she committed her unforgiveable act.

Gretel looked around and saw that she was wearing the clothing that she once wore back when she was a human. It was a dress only the rich could have, an elegant gown she tailored herself and matching it was a hat, it was tied with a pink rose and ribbon. She was holding a large brief case as she walked down the streets with both of her hands. She felt her body was constrained due to the corset.

"Gretel." A familiar called out to her, looking down from her white glove hands, she turned her head upwards and to where the voice came from. She was met with a face just like hers but the hair was different, it was similar to Gretel's however it was must shorter.

'Hansel?' Yes, this person beside was her twin brother. He wore suits of noble standing, his emerald eyes shined brightly as it was reflected from the sunlight. His blonde hair was trimmed short and neatly. He looked like Gakushu Asano before he had his haircut, although Hansel here looked a tad bit older.

"Gretel, is there something wrong?" Hansel asked as he worryingly looked to his female half. "Is the case too heavy? Let me hold that for you."

Gretel shook her head lightly, "It's fine, don't trouble yourself." Hansel didn't do what she asked and took always the case.

"You're a lady, you shouldn't trouble yourself with this." Hansel exclaimed although he was having troubles on carrying the case more than Gretel. "And besides, father would lecture me on for letting you carrying this."

Gretel let out a giggle as she covered her mouth with her hand. "Aren't you such a gentleman? Now if only you could work on your etiquette, you know that I'm supposed to acknowledge you first before you can speak to a lady." She teased her older twin, Hansel's cheeks tinted light pink as he looked away flustered. The two walked down the streets, through the crowds of workers and those of higher class. Suddenly out of nowhere, a carriage with out of control horses chased towards at the two.
"Gretel! Look out!" Hansel screamed as Gretel was closer to the charging carriage.

Time became slow when Hansel pushed Gretel back, she fell back while her twin took in the force of the charging carriage. Gretel felt numb as Hansel fell to the hard ground with a loud thump after being trampled by the horses. The carriage crashed and stopped at a nearby building. Bystanders stood in their place in shock of what just unfolded in front of their eyes and Gretel stood in front of Hansel's body.

"Brother?" Gretel whispered as she slowly got up, the sight of her brother's body almost caused her to throw up her lunch. Out of reflex, she covered her mouth with her white gloved hands and gasped.

Hansel's hair was no longer its beautiful golden colour. "Brother, brother?" Gretel slowly approached her brother who laid there motionless, "Brother?" She called out in a whisper, she didn't get a response, not even a groan or a whisper. His once lively green eyes were now dull as it blankly stared upwards before it slowly closed.

His hair was no longer blonde, it was scarlet red, replacing his golden blonde hair with his reddest of blood. The stench of the red sticky liquid filled the air as she walked forward to her other half, she didn't care when she stepped into a puddle of blood seeping out from his body.

She dropped to her knees, her dress became soaked with his blood, and she gently tapped him. "Brother? Hansel?" She softly shook his mangled body and droplets of tears fell from her once emerald green eyes.

Her soft shakes became stronger and stronger as she grew more desperate. Anything to see him open his eyes again. "Hansel! Please wake up! I beg of you!"

"Why won't you wake up!?" She resisted the urge to slap his face.

"Please wake up! Please!" Gretel screamed her heart out, no longer caring that her hands were dyed with red, she hug his mangled body. She couldn't even feel him breathing anymore as she buried her face into his chest.

She cradled his head on her lap as she looked around to the bystanders, "Please! Somebody help!"

"Hansel! Wake up!" She looked back to him as she desperately called out to her brother but as expected, he didn't gave out a response. She rocked his body back and forth as she tightly clutched on it.

"No… this can't be." Gretel sobbed her words. Leaning her face closer to his bloodied face.

"Hansel!"

"Hansel!" Gretel cried out as she leaped out from her bed, awoken from the world of dreams, her chartreuse phosphorescent eyes shot wide open, she breathed and sweated heavily. In a panic, she looked around frantically but the world around her was just a blur. The blonde haired girl slowly touched her cheeks and found that it was wet, she was crying and the tears continued to fell.

Then there was a knock at the door. "Gretel, are you okay?" A voice from outside asked in worry. Gretel quickly dived back under her sheets, she muttered shakily and fearfully, "Who is it?"

"It's me, Arthur." A male voice called out from behind the closed door, the wooden door slowly to
reveal a tall around the age of 17 with short blonde hair and his chartreuse phosphorescent seemly glowed in the dark. Gretel slowly came out from her protective shell of blankets.

"Arthur? Is it really you?" Gretel fearfully asked as she popped her head out from the sheets.

In a gentle smile, he softly answered yes. In his arms was a silverly tray, on it was a plain teapot with streaming coming from it and a face downed matching teacup. He passed on her black rectangular glasses where its arms were white, he placed it over her eyes and the world became clear again.

Afterwards, Arthur poured in the hot ginger milk tea into the cup and gave it to Gretel. Her shaking hands held onto the warm cup, she breathed onto her drink to soothe the heat and took a sip. It filled her body with warm and strangely enough, kindness. The tears stopped and eventually she finished her tea. The blonde male seated himself by the bedside, right by her side.

Gretel slowly reached for her glasses to feel them and she slumped her head down. Guilt filled in her heart when she realised that she could had possibly woke up the strawberry blonde boy with her screaming. "Did I wake Gakushu-kun up?"

"I told him to go back to sleep and that I will take care of everything." Arthur answered honestly, he knew that she will find out anyway so what was the point of lying to her. He took the cup out of Gretel's hands and placed it back onto the tray.

At the same time Gretel was relieved as she felt guilt, as this was one of the rare nights that she slept in her own bedroom for once. Instead of everyone in their usual group of friends sleep altogether in the living room.

"Gakushu is just like Hansel, doesn't he?" Gretel said and Arthur nodded to her words.

"He does a bit." Arthur commented in agreement. "His characteristics are just like Hansel but at the same time, it what makes Asano-kun him and not Hansel."

"I know that Gakushu is not Hansel…" Gretel admitted though her voice raised a bit, and the tears came back to prickle her eyes. "The shape of his face and his eyes are just like his. I can't help it."

"I hoped that he was an reincarnation of him but… I knew that he wasn't. I knew that long ago." Gretel muttered, her tears came back flowing out of her eyes.

"I try to distance him from Hansel, that's why I cut his hair in that style." It became harder for her to form the words out more clearly, her throat felt patched and dry.

"I just want to feel whole again but it feels like I am just using him." Gretel hiccupped her words as she heavily sobbed. She hugged her knees and buried her face in her arms.

"But it is mutual remember? Gakushu uses your love and ours to fill in his emptiness. He is the same as Rilliane, as Lucia, as you and me." Arthur gently said as he soothingly patted her hair. She lifted her head and turned to Arthur. "We are all the same."

More guilt was filled into her heart as she stared into his reaper eyes, he was here with her because she committed her unforgivable act. And he followed after her in death. "Arthur… Can you stay here until I fall asleep?" Gretel pinched the sleeves around his wrist.

Arthur warmly smiled to her. "Of course, I will stay here until you fall asleep Milady." He took off her glasses and wiped away the salty tears with a handkerchief. He laid Gretel down to her back and covered her in the blanket.
Gretel weakly giggled back, "I told to call me Gretel, Arthur."

"I'm sorry, habit. Good night Gretel." Arthur chuckled, he scratched the back of his neck bashfully.

"Good night Arthur…" Gretel whispered as she closed her eyes. Arthur stayed there until her breathing became even, she slept so soundly with a sad smile. One of her hands that once clutched his sleeves so tightly loosened.

Arthur leaned over to pressed her forehead his. "Sweet dreams… Gretel." He then lightly kissed her forehead. He stood up gently from his seat, he grabbed the tray and walked his way out of her bedroom without creating a sound. He closed the door as he stepped out for the room behind him.

"I will always protect you Gretel."

And it was never mentioned again, just like whenever someone had a mental breakdown, it was acted like it never happened. Gakushu knew that it was for the best, it was the norm and it will always be. Gretel greeted the boy who prepared himself for another day at Class-E as if she never that had nightmare.

"Good morning Strawberry:" She sang as she groped his chest before he headed out for the school.

"Good morning Gretel."
First Love

Chapter Summary

Gakushu found a photo and was surprised of who owned it later on.

First Love

It was the third day of the week, and Gakushu was walking down the halls of the Class-E building.

He found a piece of paper just lying around with the name Anna Nguyen written on it, and he was going to pick it up and toss it into the bin until he flipped it over. It was a photo of An, the An Gakushu knew as the reaper from the Australian Branch.

An was looking back, widely smiling at him or to anyone who looked at the photo. She wore a white summer dress along with a large straw floppy hat. Before her original eye colour was replaced with the sharpness of chartreuse phosphorescent, her eyes were once the darkness of browns.

The moment he saw her face, his violet bright eyes widen. Did somebody knew of her? Gakushu shook his head. No, that should be impossible. That was because An was of Vietnamese descent and nobody in class has that kind of linage.

And what was up with Australians turning anything into nicknames? John to Johnny and Anna to An. You either shorten it or you add a 'y' or an 'o'. Back on the subject, not only that, but An died twenty years along with Johnny, Mark and James in their suicide little pact.

It could be that someone was researching of the event? Unlikely, it would be a very random topic. It could be that one of the male student took a liking An who worked in a nearby café? Unlikely again, this photo looked to be a personalised one.

It could be that it was used as a reference photo for a portrait? Unlikely once again, this photo wouldn't have been found on the internet and again, it looked to be a personalised photo.

Gakushu tried to find more information on the photo, and in the corner of the photo was some small handwriting. It was the date when An committed her unforgivable act. So someone did know that An was dead, but who was the question.

Lost in his thoughts, he accidently bumped into someone. "I'm so sorry-"

"Karma, when did you bleached your hair?" Irina Jelavic gasped. Gakushu had to bump into a teacher he has trying to avoid. "Surprisingly it looks good on you." She lifted one of the strands of his silky strawberry blonde hair.

'…Why is it so soft?' She was surprised from the moment she came into contact with his hair.

"Did you get a haircut as well Karma? It looks cute." Irina said as she started to inspect more of Gakushu's hair.

'How do you mistake me for Akabane?' Gakushu thought, his irradiation for the red-haired version
of Ikeda was almost shown for the whole world to see. 'We don't even look like each other! Our hair
styles are different!'

"Miss, I'm not Karma Akabane." Gakushu said, but Irina only blinked back in response. She placed
one of her hands on Gakushu's forehead and the other on hers.

"Are you sick? I don't sense a fever." Irina asked worryingly of the sudden kindness, and Gakushu
felt a vein appeared on his head. 'We don't even look alike! He has amber eyes and I have violet,
though that was due to contacts but still!'

"Bitch-sensei! You're blocking the way." The real Karma Akabane stepped forward and stood
beside Gakushu. Irina's eyes almost popped out of her sockets. Karma looked very amused from the
face Irina was making.

"Why are there two of you?" Irina had the face that said, 'This is too early in the morning.'

"I told you miss, I'm Gakushu Asano. I transferred here last week." Gakushu reaffirmed in a
monotone voice.

"You did? I never noticed." Irina said as she stroked her chin and eyed Gakushu.

'And I wish it stayed that way.' Gakushu grimly thought. He had a feeling that Irina had the character
of Gretel and Lucia mixed together, he just hope that someone doesn't mind if they have the Arthur
character-type. He glanced at Karma, 'He has the shape of his eyes.'

However Gakushu quickly shot down that idea, 'But that would mean that I have to be what I'm
actually am… a cinnamon roll in front of everyone.'

Gakushu had only just showed his real side to two people in this school, Ren and Nagisa. It took him
almost four years just to reach to that stage, and at least the rest of the Department was happy that
their hard work didn't go to waste.

Gakushu spent the first two lessons refining another language after finishing his work early, as per
usual. And the language of the day picked from the hat was Vietnamese.

Currently the class now was in their third and fourth period, English and Languages. Both were
taught by Irina because Korosensei went off to the USA. Gakushu mentally cursed him for leaving
him with the teacher he has been trying to avoid.

He didn't want his first kiss stolen god damn it! Was that too much to ask!?

English passed through fairly quickly, however this time, it was partnered work. Nagisa quickly
went to Gakushu which obviously shocked the entire class. Nagisa and Gakushu didn't noticed their
classmate's shocked faces though.

"Looks like you have been replaced, Akabane." Terasake uttered to Karma, and he was jabbed in
the stomach by Karma's elbow.

Then came for Gakushu, the dreaded Language lesson. 'Please don't notice me, please don't notice
me.' He chanted in his mind through the duration of the lesson.

Irina, or Bitch-sensei, was teaching the class the art of poetry. 'Ren and Rilliane would surely love to
talk with Miss Irina about poetry.' Gakushu mentally added. And also, why the hell did someone
nicknamed a teacher bitch!?
That was unnecessary cruel! Even Ikeda would never allow such a name, probably because he was a playboy, but still! Maybe Karma wasn't a red head version of Ikeda in some aspects. How can such a class be so disrespectful to a teacher?!

But then again, Johnny, Mark and James call each other cunts even though they are the bests of friends. They said that it was Australian 'mateship' culture and Gakushu tried to imply that logic here. It slightly made things better, mainly because the class wasn't malicious about it. Gakushu must be imagining things, but it almost seemed friendly.

However Gakushu won't join along, as he wanted to be respectful. 'I am going to stick with calling her Miss Jelavic.'

Gakushu checked for the time and it was only a few minutes away from lunch. 'Hurry!'

"Cuter Karma!" Bitch-sensei called out as she turned to the class.

'Cuter… Karma?' The entire class chorused altogether. Gakushu was fearing for the worst now.

"I know that that I am adorable Bitch-" The teacher quickly interrupted Karma's sentence.

"Not you, the one next to you!" Bitch-sensei called out and everyone's eyes went to Gakushu, who internally screamed. The strawberry blonde boy slowly point to himself to clarify. He wanted to shrink back into his seat.

"Yes you." The teacher confirmed, and Gakushu really wanted to slam his head onto the table and sob because of his apparent resemblance to Karma Akabane. He controlled himself and didn't shatter the table into bits.

'We don't even look each other!' The thoughts of Karma and Gakushu merged.

"Read the first verse of Reminiscence of Marie A." The blonde teacher said, Gakushu stood up with the language book in his hand.

'Brecht, good choice.' Gakushu then began to recite the first verse of the Brecht poem in its original language, German. He mentally thanked Rilliane for getting him into the German poet and also it was the same verse from the Lives of Others film.

"On a certain day in the blue-moon month of September
Beneath a young plum tree, quietly
I held her there, my quiet, pale beloved
In my arms just like a graceful dream.
And over us in the beautiful summer sky
There was a cloud on which my gaze rested
It was very white and so immensely high
And when I looked up, it had disappeared."

"That was perfect German, Gakushu Asano isn't it..." Irina praised the boy, and she finally realised who he was. "Aren't you the son of the Chairman?"
"Yes." Gakushu nodded. Why did he have a bad feeling from hearing her words concerning about her father?

"No, that can't be right." Irina shook her head as she continuously looked at Gakushu from top to bottom. He didn't like how she was looking at him.

"Why Bitch-sensei?" Isogai asked, asking everyone else's question.

"He is too adorable, like a puppy almost." Irina commented as she inspected more of Gakushu. Gakushu wanted to deny this but he knew that Irina wouldn't listen to him. The class were all staring at Gakushu, 'Him... a puppy?'

And Nagisa almost had a nosebleed when he remembered of the hat Gakushu wore.

"Oh well, come up here so I can give you a reward!" She cheered. Karma could have sworn that he saw his rival paled white as snow. She sounded so alike to Lucia for a moment in her excitement for alcohol.

'Why did you have to notice me?' Gakushu thought in dread, as he knew what that reward was and that was having his first kiss stolen. He could see some of the looks of his classmates of what was coming next.

"You shouldn't." Gakushu glanced up and saw from the clock that there was only a few couple of seconds before lunch starts. 'Hurry.'

"No no, I insist." She exclaimed, Gakushu slowly walked over to the front of the class.

'Hurry!' Gakushu was now in front of Irina.

'Hurry up!' Gakushu wanted to hide behind someone. Maybe he should block the kiss somehow?

The bell finally rang, "Class, homework today is researching a poet of your choice."

When she averted her attention back to Gakushu. "Where did he go?" Gakushu suddenly disappeared from the class, he actually bolted out of the class the moment the bell ring. Nobody noticed that, and Gakushu thanked his reaper enhanced abilities for today.

Gakushu was at his usual spot, outside of the class and sitting beside a large tree. He just barely avoided a crisis, and he really needed to plan out his escape better next time when a similar situation would come around again. Given of Irina's character, it will happen again. He sighed.

"Hey Gakushu-san." Nagisa called out. He was holding a plastic bag of sweets again.

"Hi Nagisa." Gakushu greeted the blue haired boy. Nagisa handed the bag to Gakushu and he started to look through the bag. He could see the legendary sparkles around Gakushu and its brightness almost blinded his blue eyes.

"So, why did you run off?" Nagisa casually asked, although he knew the answer, to which Gakushu caught on.

"I'm sure that you know why." Gakushu said as he was stuffing his mouth with strawberry pudding. Nagisa made a mental note of his eating habits, as Gakushu always seem to pick the strawberry flavour sweets first.

'Buy more strawberry flavoured food.' Nagisa mentally added.
"Nagisa, I am only telling you this because all of my other friends know about this." Gakushu said as he peered around the surrounding area. When there seemed to be no-one nearby that could hear of their conversation, the strawberry blonde looked dead straight to the bluest of eyes. "It is about my universal nickname."

"Shuuie?" Nagisa guessed from the time when he and Gakushu went on that date.

"No, it is something widely accepted in the community here." Gakushu shook his head, his cheeks were now tinged pink.

"I am what they called… a cinnamon roll." Gakushu deadpanned spoke as he let his head drop.

"A what?" Now Nagisa was confused. Was it because of Gakushu's sweet obsession? But wouldn't it be more sense to call him Strawberries or something like that?

"A cinnamon roll." Gakushu reaffirmed of his answer and he took out his phone.

"According to the urban dictionary, it is a term to describe a person who is too cute and innocent." Gakushu explained with a sigh as he read from his phone.

"The reason why I ran off was because… I do not want my first kiss stolen…” Gakushu hid his face in embarrassment, and Nagisa could even see stream emitting from his face. Nagisa felt his inner 'onii-chan' awaken once more, and it didn't help that he found out that Gakushu was actually the youngest in the class from Ritsu hacking to the main building's main computer system. He promised himself that he will protect Gakushu from Bitch-sensei's advances.

'First kiss!' Nagisa's mind was blown.

"You are too precious Gakushu-san." Nagisa patted the strawberry blonde and was pleasantly surprised of how soft it was. He really, for some reason, wanted to see Gakushu wear his dog-eared hat again. 'It was so cute!'

"I have been reminded of that, several times a day." Gakushu slapped Nagisa's hand away.

"So, how did you learn to speak German so fluently?" Nagisa changed the subject of the conversation, as he was interested of how Gakushu was so fluent in the language.

"I'm friends with a German couple living nearby. I have several more friends outside of school, and they're quiet the colourful bunch." Gakushu added, finishing his pudding before setting off to finish his chocolate bars. Nagisa was still surprised of how Gakushu managed to finish all of his food. How can he eat so much sugar while still being fit?

"Is it me or Karasuma-sensei seems out of it today?" Gakushu commented, as he saw Karasuma acting a bit slow.

"He is looking a bit under the weather." Nagisa said as he nodded, as he thought the same as well.

"Maybe I should…” Gakushu immediately retracted his words as he shook his head, "No, I shouldn't. I can't do it, not in front of the class."

"You can tell me, I won't laugh." Nagisa was more excited to learn more of Gakushu, hopefully it is another trait that is absolutely adorable.

"A friend taught me a spell to make someone happy." Gakushu looked around the area again and saw nobody in sight. He looked back at Nagisa, his violet eyes were bright, twinkling.
"Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~" He extend his arms out and in for each 'fuso' like peek-a-boo. His cheeks went pink and sparkles appeared around the strawberry blonde boy.

"Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~" It echoed on.

Nagisa was once again hit full blast from the power of Gakushu's cuteness, it almost seemed that there was holy light radiating from Gakushu. It was too much and once again he experienced a blood-nose. Luckily, Nagisa had prepared himself as he already had a napkin in his pocket.

‘My sunshine.’ Nagisa mentally sang to himself. He had sworn that he will protect this precious being. Once again in his vision, he pictured Gakushu in a pure white toga with angelic feathered wings on his back.

"I can see why they call you a cinnamon roll." Nagisa chuckled as he dabbed his nose with the napkin.

"Not sure that it would work though." Gakushu muttered under his breathe. The last set of lessons should begin in a few minutes.

And he still needed to find who owned a photo of An back before she committed suicide.

Karasuma sat silently on a bench as he seemingly watch blankly at the trees. Many of the Class-E students gathered around him, although still keeping their distance.

"Is there something wrong with Karasuma-sensei?" Kayano asked to Nagisa who was walking back to class with Gakushu following beside him.

"You noticed it too." Nagisa answered and they went back to gaze at Karasuma. Gakushu noticed something in the teacher's dark eyes, which were grief and anger, but it was only anger directing at himself.

"You should talk to him Bitch-sensei." Rio said as she turned her head to the blonde teacher. Gakushu almost flinched from the sudden appearance of the teacher, he subtly shifted behind Nagisa and only Nagisa noticed this.

'Awww, so adorable.' Nagisa thought to himself.

"What should I say to him?" Irina had a slight blush to her cheeks as she ushered back to the student. It was as if she was embarrassed to talk to Karasuma, like she has a little crush on him. Eventually everyone walked closer to the dark haired teacher, and they were about to ask if something was wrong until Korosensei came into the picture.

"Karasuma-san~ I got something for you." Korosensei sang as he pulled out a teddy bear in a military uniform from his robes. Almost everyone had their jaws wide open.

'How is that supposed to help him!?'

'He owns a teddy bear!?'

"Why the hell did you pick that!?” Terasake yelled.

"I panicked! I just picked up the first thing I saw from his home!” Korosensei defended himself as he turned to his students. Karma was laughing at Korosensei. Irina had her brain overloaded from the thought of Karasuma carrying or sleeping with the plush bear. Gakushu however knew that he saw
that type of handy-work before.

Why was he reminded of Rilliane and An doing DIY projects in their spare time?

It did get a response from Karasuma though, he threw daggers at the yellow octopus before he snatched the bear from the tentacles. He hold onto the toy protectively. "I don't see how it was appropriate to break and enter into my house."

If looks can kill, then Karasuma's glare would kill the yellow octopus experiment gone wrong teacher ten times over. Similar for Gakushu when his cake was smashed to the floor before, although Karasuma did a better job on controlling on his anger.

When Karasuma looked down to the bear, more sadness was filled in his eyes and he let out a sigh. It surprised the class. "You just had to bring her last gift." He whispered under his breath, thanks to Gakushu's enhanced hearing, he heard every single word.

'Her last gift?' Gakushu did what someone wanted to do, he walked up to Karasuma and asked the question everyone wanted to know the answer to. "Karasuma-sensei, is there something wrong?" Some students were worried of Gakushu's intention but Nagisa hoped that Gakushu would do his 'happy spell'.

"I just lost something." Karasuma admitted. Gakushu thought that it could be the photo of Anna he found in the morning. It could explain the 'last gift' comment he made.

Gakushu took out his phone, inside the pockets of his black phone case, folded neatly, was the photo. He handed the photo the Karasuma. "You mean this? I found it in the hall."

As soon the photo was given to Karasuma, his face lifted up drastically. "Thank you so much Asano-san! I thought I lost this."

'So Karasuma-sensei does know An, he even knew the name she used back when she was human.' Gakushu took note of this as he glanced at his teacher. Karasuma can't be that old, right? Suddenly everyone gathered behind them to peek at the photo.

They asked the obvious question. "Who is she?" Many other went into their own conversations, saying that she was pretty or who she is to Karasuma. One theorised that it could be his sibling from going the dark hair and eyes.

'That was some very weak evidences.' Gakushu thought and many others like Nagisa and Karma thought the same. Irina felt jealous of this girl in the photo, she wanted to comment of much prettier she was until she saw the gentleness and warmth of the girl's dark eyes. Something she felt that she lacked.

"Her name is Anna Nguyen, and she was my first love." Karasuma answered and it surprised everyone in class.

'He had a girlfriend?!

"... Eh?" That was basically the response from everyone in class, included Gakushu. He was confused for reasons that the class wasn't thinking of. Something wasn't adding up here.

"She was my first love, and she was the one who inspired me of what I am now." Karasuma further explained, he smiled sweetly as he continued to talk. "She was the one who made me this." He gestured to the plush bear in a military clothing.
"What happened?" One student asked.

"She is no longer a part of my world anymore." Karasuma looked down to the photo with a sad smile. Everyone else but Gakushu made up their conclusions, only Gakushu understood of what Karasuma was saying.

Irina looked like she wanted to faint. She felt that she had no chance.

Currently the class was doing Home Economics, with today's task being cake decorating. Gakushu almost let out his famous sparkles in this class again. Irina then came into the class during the lesson with her back slumped down, and everyone just watched as she took a seat and sat in the corner of the room.

"Now Bitch-sensei is out of it." Kayano whispered to Nagisa as they worked on their icing techniques. Gakushu silently did his own work as he whisked his icing cream away, looking off to the side.

"I guess it could explain the reason why Karasuma-sensei was oblivious of Bitch-sensei's advances." Nagisa whispered back to the green haired girl. "Doesn't that girl in the photo look like that waitress at that café?"

"She does, wasn't her name An?" Okuda exclaimed, confirmed many of the students suspicions.

"She dumped Karasuma."

"Poor guy was still in love with her, can't move on."

"Let's get back at her!"

Gakushu didn't bother to listen in their conversation, as he was busy focusing on making his roses out of blue icing. He made a whole batch of them, the rims of the petals were darker than the main icing, and he added the finishing touches of its leaves.

Gakushu took one of the cupcakes, and he walked to where Irina was seated and gave her the treat. "Here, they always make me feel better." Irina looked up to him with a sombre look, and she slowly reached out for the treat.

"It's not good to be depressed all the time Miss Jelavic." Gakushu spoke in German so no-one else could understand what he was saying. Maybe Korosensei but it was good enough for him.

"Thank you." Irina muttered, and she was at least now smiling. "They are too pretty to be eaten." Gakushu walked back to his workspace.

"What?" Gakushu looked at the rest of the Class who looked at him in bewilderment. Nagisa, however looked as if he was proud of the cinnamon roll. Afterwards, everyone managed to get back to their work. They must had imagined the sparkles surrounding Gakushu.

"Can I have one too?" Nagisa asked, and Gakushu nodded, the blue haired boy happily took on of the cupcakes as he took a picture of it with his phone. 'They are too pretty to be eaten!'

"So, let's plan our attack." Rio said and half the class nodded their heads in agreement. It certainly gave them a fright when Gakushu slammed his tray onto his workbench.

"Do you think that it's her though?" Gakushu asked as he stood in front of Rio, as if to challenge her.
"Do you have the right to assume that you know the full story?"

"Why do you think so?" Isogai thought it was strange how Gakushu is defensive for this An character from the café.

"Why would you know Karasuma? You barely know him for two weeks." Terasake called out from the back. The disdain he was showing for the strawberry blonde boy too obvious. Gakushu wanted to sigh.

"It's her eyes." Gakushu simply answered with a thin frown. "The expression in her eyes are too different." Gakushu left the Home Economics classroom when the final bell rang.

'Why did he make it as if he understand her?' Karma thought as he watched Gakushu left the classroom. He saw the violet eyes washed over with sadness for a split second.

Gakushu needed to talk to Karasuma. 'How could he knew of An and her real name?' Thankfully the dark haired teacher wasn't hard to find, as Gakushu found him in the teacher's lounge, filling in reports.

"Karasuma-sensei, I wish to speak to you for a moment." Gakushu spoke, and the teacher turned his head to the student. Gakushu closed the door behind him.

"I fear I have cause some trouble for Miss Jelavic and trouble for a waiter." Gakushu said, and he really wanted to let out a heavy sigh. When Karasuma looked confused, he explained. "The class thinks that girl in the photo dated you and then dumped you. They came to the conclusion that it is the same person working at a local café."

Meanwhile Irina stood outside of the room, trying to listen into the conversation. 'It isn't?'

'Technically it is though.' Gakushu mentally added, but she was a Grim Reaper and not a human.

"Karasuma-sensei, I just need some clarification. How old are you?"

"28, why?" Karasuma answered, confused of why Gakushu needed to know his age. Even Irina was confused by the question.

"I am guessing why that date on that photo is so important." Gakushu stated, he stared down at the photo in Karasuma's hands. "Why write a date of her birth? Nobody does that in a photo of a person, so it can't be that it."

"And why you haven't seen her for twenty years? Everyone else assumes that she was your first girlfriend but you were only eight at the time." Gakushu calculated the math, as Karasuma would only be child around An's death.

"It is the date when she died, isn't it?" Gakushu went straight to the point, and Karasuma didn't deny or confirmed his statement at that moment.

"My parents often worked overseas and I would come along with them. However they were too busy to look after me so I had a caretaker. Her name was Anna Nguyen, I think she was in her first year of university when I first met her." Karasuma instead explained of his relation to An. "Many people would say that she was my first crush." He lightly chuckled.

'Innocent love.' Gakushu thought.

"I only stayed in Australia for a few months before I went back to Japan."
"She does these amazing gymnastic moves. She would often take me to the beach, and she was the one who taught me how to swim." Karasuma reminisced his childhood days and a memory flashed back to his head.

"One day, I will be strong just like you! Then I will be the one who will protects you! Like a king!" The young Karasuma proclaimed as he crossed his arms.

"Is that so Kara?" Anna chuckled as she placed another Band-Aid on his face. It was so cute to see him try to hold onto his tears after he fell face first from attempting to skateboard.

"I told you! My name is Karasuma!" Karasuma irritably puffed his cheeks, he turned away from her gaze but it only made Anna smile even more.

"Of course my little king." Anna said, she patted his short black hair.

"And you will be my queen!" And slowly, that memory faded away.

"It has been a while since I played AFL." Karasuma said to himself as he let out another gentle chuckle. Irina felt her heart go swoon. "She died a month after I left, I found out 10 years after her death." Irina felt bad now as she continued to listen to the conversation outside. It was a horrible way to find out a person's death.

"Do you know how she died?" Gakushu asked, although he knew already of how she died, Karasuma missed the sad glint in his violet eyes.

"It was a car accident, she and a group were involved in a fatal car accident which killed everyone in the car. A mutual friend of hers told me, it was quite a shock." The teacher explained in a sombre tone.

'That is only half-true.' Gakushu could understand why An's friend hid the truth of her death from Karasuma. It was hard enough to learn of a person's death who they considered to be so important, it would difficult to learn that they committed suicide. It would break whatever innocent view of what that eight year old child had of his caretaker and role model.

"Is that true?" Gakushu muttered. Was it better to live happily in a lie? Didn't Karasuma deserved to know the truth? After 20 years, wouldn't this be the right time to tell him?

"Why do you doubt my words?" Karasuma looked up and Gakushu stayed silent. "It is fine, you can tell me of your thoughts."

Gakushu let parts of the truth set free, as the man in front of him deserved to know the truth after being lied to for 20 years. Gakushu had a bit of hesitation in his heart though. "That was only half true. They did die in a car but not in the way you think they did."

"What do you mean?" Karasuma felt his voice shaken for some reason as he spoke.

"Do you truly believe she and three others drove in a car to their deaths and nothing else?" Gakushu asked and Karasuma hesitantly nodded.

'How did he know that there was three other passengers?' Karasuma was interested of how Gakushu Asano knew of the incident.

"Then I rather have you live in a happy oblivion." Gakushu said, egging Karasuma to reach out for the truth.
"Please, please tell me." Karasuma almost grabbed Gakushu's wrist but he managed to stop himself from doing so.

"No, there was a reason why that friend of hers only gave you a half-baked answer. It would surely break whatever happy image you had of her." Gakushu looked on at Karasuma with a look of sadness painted on his face. Karasuma was shocked of the expression he was seeing on the son of Asano.

"Please, I have to know the truth." Karasuma looked at Gakushu with pleading eyes. Gakushu gulped and the truth was finally set free.

"She committed suicide." Gakushu answered, it almost made the world around Karasuma disappear. Irina nearly gasped out loud, and she covered her mouth with her hands. Everything became silent, a pin could even be heard if was it is dropped.

Karasuma's dark eyes widen in disbelief, his mouth gaped open as if his voice was stolen. Then a memory of Anna smiling and laughing flashed into his mind, and immediately he became defensive as his voice returned.

"No! That! That can't be true. She wasn't a type of person to do such a thing!" Karasuma loudly denied it with all his heart, which was uncharacteristic of him, but it was a normal response.

'Would you expect me to commit suicide as well? No… you wouldn't.' Gakushu thought to himself.

"It was a suicide pact. I heard that there was abuse from her boyfriend but I can't say for the others. Her family didn't approve of her partner, so she ran away to live with him. However things took for the worse and he became abusive in the relationship." Gakushu explained, he looked dead straight at his teacher's dark eyes, never once he diverted his violet eyes away from his gaze.

"But… She was a person who…" Then a memory flashed into the teacher's head, and he remembered the purple bruises on her arms, he remembered how she reassured him that they were only from gymnastic practice.

"She lost hope, she gave up her family for her love, to only be paid back with despair. She felt trapped, she felt that she no longer had a place in this world and she felt shameful to return to her family." Gakushu further explained of An's pain as he understood of hers. "She could had talk to someone about it but she couldn't…she couldn't see a solution for herself."

"She and three others who seemed to have the brightest of futures, they took their lives together on that fateful day."

Karasuma looked at him, and his face said of 'how could you know this?' Gakushu had already planned this ahead of time. "It was a group suicide with car exhaustion." Gakushu handed his phone to the teacher with the 20 year old article. Karasuma's eyes darken as he only stopped to Anna or An's photo, her dark eyes stared back at Karasuma.

"All these years, just now I…" Karasuma finally accepted Gakushu's words, he sat down on a chair behind him, and he could barely hold back the tears as he read the title of the article.

'Group of university students committed mass suicide.'

"Why didn't I save her?" Karasuma uttered, "I saw the bruises, why did I believe in her lies?" Gakushu slowly took back his phone, and he scrolled down further. He stopped with the photos of the other three students.
"It was because she didn't want you to worry. Imagine the thought of telling an eight year old that you were abused. Do you really think that she wanted to destroy your innocence?" Gakushu said, as he knew the character of An and her tendency to hide things so others wouldn't worry about her.

Anna Nguyen, Mark Watson, Jameis Franklin and John Mcleavey, their photos shown were their student ID pictures on the article, their eyes stared back at Gakushu. Long before they were replaced with the infamous reaper eyes. It didn't matter if Karasuma saw the group of Australians in the café they usually worked.

No longer did Anna or what she calls herself, An. Who once had long black hair that reached to her ends of back, it was now only a quarter of length it once was and now held in a mid-ponytail. No longer was her hair was only straight, now it was slightly curled.

If anything, Karasuma in his hopeful heart would believe that she was a reincarnation. The dead can't come back from the grave after all, as that was his worldview as for many other humans.

"Karasuma-sensei, what memory of her do you see now?" Gakushu turned his back away as he walked towards the door. He glanced back at him, as he waited for his reply.

"…Her smiling so brightly under the Australian sun at me." Karasuma tiredly replied.

"Then implant that image in your head instead. I'm sure that she wouldn't want you to be sad over her death. Whether if it was an accident or a suicide." Gakushu said, he turned his head back to the door.

"Good day." Gakushu said, and he slide open the door and saw Irina Jelavic stood by at the door. She was obviously surprised from his sudden exit. Gakushu said nothing to her and walked off.

When he walked down to the main class to grab his belongings and was met with emptiness. "Oh no." He uttered, and he knew what Class-E was planning something for An. He quickly grabbed his bag and ran out of the building. Gakushu bolted out and grabbed the about-to-greet Ren on the way by the wrist. "No time to talk, we have to save An from a misunderstanding!"

"An?" Ren worded. 'Isn't she one of the Backers?'

"I'll explain on the way!" Gakushu yelled as he ran, dragging a confused Ren along the way.

Back to Irina, she slowly walked into the room, and she saw Karasuma unconscious on the wooden floor. She rushed to his aid, she called out his name but he wouldn't wake up. Irina felt a sense of relief to find that there was still a pulse from him. She could see the tear trails from his eyes.

She spotted that he was clutching his plush bear in his arms. There was the small photo album that would fit perfectly in his breast pocket just besides him. She slowly picked it up and opened it to reveal its contents. The first photo, it was the one who created so much misunderstanding, she flipped to the next page and she felt her heart shattered into pieces.

It was a photo of Karasuma when he was eight in his swimming trunk, in his arm was a bucket and the other hand had an ice-cream cone. There was a wide toothy grin etched onto his cute little face. Stood beside him was the 18 year old Anna, in her long summer white dress and a large straw floppy hat. She smiled back at the cameraman with a dazzling smile. One hand was used to keep her hat from flying off and the other was holding the little Karasuma’s hand.

She was his happiness, she was the one who craved him the path that granted him strength, and she was the one who gave him motivation for his dreams.
"She committed suicide." Gakushu's words still rang in her head.

And Irina learnt that the hard way, so she cried, cried for Karasuma.

"Please wait here Ren." Gakushu said before he went into the mall café, and Ren looked like he was about to collapse. How did Gakushu not even breaking into sweat after all of that running in such a short amount of time?

Gakushu noticed Class-E positioned inside and outside of the café. He spotted Van taking an order from Karma, and he could might as well test his new language of the day. He thanked the heavens that he chose to work on Vietnamese instead of Thai. He also thanked them when Class-E did nothing… yet.

"Van, have you seen An?" Gakushu walked up to the male with a buzz-cut, he spoke out in Vietnamese. Surely even Karma won't know what they are talking about, and Karma wanted to call out 'show off' to Gakushu.

"Did she have one of her small transfers again?" Gakushu noticed that she wasn't here as he looked around. Her usual group of friends weren't here either, and he got worried. Something wasn't right here. "Johnny, Mark or James aren't here as well."

"Gakushu… She's at the Ward." Van grimly answered. Karma easily caught of the sudden change of mood in their conversation. He walked to the counter to make Karma's drink. Gakushu followed behind him.

"Oh…. What triggered it?" The strawberry blonde asked as he stood at the front of the counter.

"Some guy looking like one of her ex's. She collapsed behind the counter a few hours ago." Van explained, Gakushu knew now what triggered her episode. Someone came to the café looking much like of her abusive partner. "John found her couching under the counter, you know she always had hers quietly. Poor girl was crying and muttering 'I'll be good' when he found her."

"I see… thank you Van." Gakushu reverted back to Japanese and before Gakushu leaves the café, Van handed him two small white containers. He revealed the contents to be a slice of strawberry shortcake and chocolate cake. Gakushu slightly smiled, Van must had picked them out because of the stage names.

"Here, one for you and for your friend who looks like he wants to pass out. On the house." Van joked as he peered to the side to see Ren slumped over one of the tables. Gakushu wanted to laugh along with him but Class-E was here.

"Thank you." Gakushu thanked the American and Vietnamese reaper. Before Van went back to do his shift, he asked a simple question. "Hey, what do you is best?

"To live in happily in a lie, or to face the harshest of truth." Van was very surprised of Gakushu's sudden question. He pondered for a bit so he could think up an answer, sadly there wasn't a clear answer.

"I don't think that there is a right or wrong answer for that. Did something happen Gakushu?" Van said, he had finished Karma's order as he placed it onto a tray.

"I told someone the truth, the truth that was hidden for 20 years." Gakushu didn't looked up to Van's dark eyes, instead he looked down to his box of cake in his hand. "Did you know that Anna once looked after a little boy before she committed… you know?" He hinted to that 'topic'. 
"He thought that she and the others died in a car accident." Gakushu explained, hoping to get a clearer answer from his senior of 35 years.

Van knew of what Gakushu was trying to explain, it was about An and bits of her past before she was reborn as a reaper. It was about that little boy now a grown adult finally learning the true circumstances of Anna's death from what he picked up.

Van was one of the closest to her. He was her main senior as the two came from similar backgrounds. An told him of her past and the little boy she once looked after.

"The dead are still dead. No matter how we died." Van placed the tray on his arm with Karma's drink. "He will still mourn for her no matter what, whether if it was an accident or a suicide."

"I think in this case, he would probably eventually found out soon or later. If you told him, then he would had mourn and called himself stupid, but if he found out on his own then he would do the same."

"So, both would have the same outcome." Gakushu muttered to himself.

"Do you have regrets?" Van asked, he turned to see another group of junior reapers working at the café.

"Doesn't everyone do?" Gakushu whispered as he too looked at the group. Van then flicked Gakushu ear. Gakushu was startled by the gesture, and he almost dropped his boxes of cake.

Van let out a small laugh. "It is not good for us to be depressed all the time."

"You should get going, I think your friend is well rested now." Van gave the boy a wide smile and handed a plastic card. "And pass him this, membership."

Gakushu gave his thanks. "I'll see you later. Tell that red-head over there at An isn't here or that he shouldn't come back. He was hoping to get An back due to misunderstanding." Van nodded to Gakushu's word and the boy left the café with two boxes of cake.

"What happened?" Ren spoke up, he waited outside of the café, he was then handed box with the slice of chocolate cake and the membership card.

Gakushu gave him a smile as he shook his head. "It doesn't matter now, she's safe. We should get going for practice."

It was now night as Gakushu walked into the Department's main building, he headed for the Medical Ward and he walked to the counter. "What room is An Nguyen in?" Gakushu asked to the secretary.

"Room 20." The secretary answered and she rose from her seat, she already the key in hand and opened the door behind. The key transformed them to the Mental Ward. Gakushu gave his thanks and walked inside.

The door closed behind as he walked down the white hallways. 'Room 12, room 14, room 16, room 18.' Gakushu mentally counted as he passed each room behind their large glass panels until finally he reached to room 20, where An was housed in. She wore a hospital gown, she sat on the edge of her white bed and stared endlessly on the blank plain walls.

Her three male friends were nowhere to be seen though. "They left just then." A voice answered his thoughts from behind. Gakushu turned away and was met with one of the workers of the Ward.
dressed in the white medical coat buttoned up. He had dark blue hair in the style of a pompadour.

This man's name was Kim Tae-sik, he was once a black operation officer of the South Korean government. Gakushu heard that he committed his unforgivable act by drowning, reasons were unknown. He drowned himself at sea around the same time Ikeda joined the Department.

"Her friends left earlier to take over her teaching and retrieval shifts." Kim Tae-sik explained as he stood next to the young boy, their chartreuse phosphorescent eyes reflected on the glass panel.

The two watched the Australian girl behind the glass panel who had the appearances of a woman in her earlier twenties. It was standard procedures for anyone dispatched into the Human realm for long periods of time to age themselves as each year passed.

When Gakushu first witnessed the mental breakdown of a Grim Reaper, An had the appearance of an 18 year old. Now four years passed and she aged herself to be around 22, it was the same for everyone stationed here or anywhere else.

Gakushu himself was the same, he had the ability to stop his aging process, but allowed himself to age so he didn't look suspicious.

"Oh… Is it okay if I speak with her?" Gakushu never took his reaper eyes off of his once instructor. Kim Tae-sik gave him a small smile.

"Of course, Gakushu." He answered and he let the strawberry blonde boy into the room, however he stood outside supervision as a precaution.

"Hi An." Gakushu greeted to the Australian, she turned her head in direction to the boy. No longer was her hair held by a pony tail, her jet black hair instead covered parts of her face.

"Hey Gakushu, aren't you supposed to be on shift?" An questioned as she titled her head in confusion.

"I have an hour before it starts." Gakushu shrugged, and he stood in front of his once PE instructor. "An, do you remember a little boy named Karasuma?"

An's head perked up, she hadn't heard of that name in 20 years. "Karasuma? You mean Kara, yes I remember… He always was a dog person if I remember correctly." She rambled on.

"Guess who one of my teachers is?" Gakushu gave her a small smile as he handed a photo of his government agent teacher. An slowly reached out for the photo with both hands. It was a photo of Karasuma's stern face in one of his PE lessons.

"He lost his chubby face. He look so grown up now." An commented, she stroked the face on the photo with a finger. "He was such a cry-baby back then." She chuckled to herself. Gakushu was surprised by this little fact about his tough-looking teacher. An soon started to tell some stories to Gakushu of her days when she acted as a caretaker for Karasuma.

The times where he was so excited when she made pancakes for breakfast, and the one time they made a fort out of blankets and pillows in the living room. Karasuma's parent found the two sleeping in their little fort and took a photo when they came back from work earlier than usual that night.

"An, you should get some rest now." Kim Tae-sik came into the room. An let out a whine but complied with the order.

"Okay… Can I keep the photo?" She eyed at Gakushu with hopeful eyes, she was extremely happy
when Gakushu smiled back and nodded.

"Of course you can An." Gakushu happily answered. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight Gakushu." And Gakushu walked out of her room. She clutched onto the photo as she went to sleep.

As Gakushu walked down the halls of the Ward, he checked his phone for the time. "Still got some time left, I might as well go see Ritsu."

Karasuma was in his home, he sat by the bed, looking down at the teddy bear. It was her last gift before he returned back to Japan.

"No! I don't want to go!" Karasuma sobbed as he hugged the legs of his caretaker, Anna. They were at the airport, who knew that it was the last time Karasuma would see her alive.

"I'm so sorry, he's too attached to me." Anna lightly joked to Karasuma's parents. They said it was fine and found it so amusing of Karasuma wanting to stay because of her. It was reasonable as this was the last day he would spent time with her. Anna somehow managed to pull off Karasuma from her legs, she kneeled down to see eye to eye.

Anna ruffled his short hair, "You were always such a cry-baby." She grabbed a napkin from her pockets and started to wipe his tears away. Karasuma didn't bother to deny of her comment.

"I thought you wanted to be strong, Kara. Where is my little king?" Anna teased as she pinched his wet cheeks and forming it into a smile.

"I'm trying." Karasuma mumbled as he attempted to pull away from her pinch, he then laughed. "I told you that my name is Karasuma."

"I'm sure this won't be the last time we see each other again." Anna added, she shredded off her backpack and grabbed from it was a small teddy bear wearing a camouflage military uniform. "A little gift from me. Sorry that it couldn't be a dog though."

She handed the home-made plush to the small boy. "But I know how much you love the military stuff." After Karasuma hugged his new toy, he leaped in to hug Anna, he could feel a smile from her.

"See you again." Karasuma said as Anna tightened her arms around the small boy. The fat tears came back to Karasuma's big eyes and gushed down his cheeks.

"You were always such a cry-baby."

Karasuma laid in bed, clutching the last gift from Anna, the teddy bear she made, he slept with a sad smile on his face.

"And you were always such a liar."
"You are making the same mistakes my parents made."

"So when did you start liking him?"

Chapter: Files
Chapter Summary

We have a cover story, the truth, some bad news and ice-skating... What an eventful day...

Files

It was early in the morning when Gakushu received a text from the Department to come to one of the Scientific divisions about Ritsu. The strawberry blonde boy let out a yawn as he dragged himself out of bed and dressed himself in the school uniform.

He brushed his teeth, flattened down his bed hair, put on his coloured contacts and ate some sweet as he walked out of the house. He headed for the nearest reaper-run convenience store and the automatic door opened, letting the morning boy in.

"Good morning Antonio." Gakushu greeted the Spaniard working that the counter.

"Hola Shuuie, the door is in the staff room as usual." The tanned man said, he handed in packet of strawberry flavoured pocky to Gakushu.

Gakushu's face lit up as per usual, and there was sparkles in his violet eyes as his cheeks turned to the colour of gentle pink roses. Gakushu sang out his thanks and he skipped to the staff room. As soon as Gakushu left for the Department, blood rushed to Antonio's nose as he had a nosebleed.

Karma walked into the store like last time and just blankly stare at the cashier.

"Let me guess, cinnamon roll." Karma answered as he picked up his much needed strawberry milk for the morning. Antonio only smiled as he scanned the products.

Karma really needed to find out who was actually the 'cinnamon roll', as it would probably be good to use it against Korosensei. That teacher could be a pervert sometimes…

"It's was a false alarm." One reaper named Viktor said as he handed the report to Gakushu, and the strawberry blonde boy raised an eyebrow over this.

"How so?" Gakushu asked the scientist as he quickly read through the report. He then glanced up to the screen, where Ritsu's face was shown, staring at the two quietly. Gakushu would have felt sorry for her, but he was on orders from the Department.

"Although she can sense our technology and uniforms, she can't access our tech so all of our surveillance can still be done if we update the system." Viktor casually said as he sank down to his office chair, his legs resting on top of a desk.

"However the teacher has been checking for tampering in the class." Gakushu said as he returned the report back to the scientist.

"True, but we still have you." Viktor said as he casually threw a bon-bon candy to the boy. Gakushu
gave his thanks and started to unwrap the blue wrapping. Gakushu gave the Bulgarian reaper a look of disgust when he took out a lighter and a cigarette.

Gakushu never liked the smell of cigarettes. Why use it to calm your stress levels when you have sweets?

"It also includes all of our reaper-run places, cafes, shops and whatever, they're safe now." Viktor took in a heavy breath from his lit cigarette. Gakushu's pink nose twitched from the smell.

Ritsu's eyes slightly widened, there were more cameras in Kunugigoako town? Nowhere was safe… if only she could warn the others.

"And when will this update come?" Gakushu asked, wanting to leave the room as soon as possible to no longer inhale the scent of burning tobacco.

Viktor slightly titled his head to the cinnamon roll. "Should be in a few hours give or take, it's not too hard really."

"Aren't you a lucky one Ritsu? You don't have to worry about your main body being destroyed now."

"And one less thing for us to worry about." Viktor exclaimed as he stretched out his arms upwards and leaned back more. Ritsu attempted to speak out, but no voice came out even though her mouth moved. She stayed quiet afterwards realising that she had no voice to exclaim.

"Why is she so quiet?" Gakushu asked as he turned his head to Viktor in confusion. Viktor took a moment to process this scene before he panicked.

"Shit, my bad. I pressed the mute button."

The moment Viktor switched off the mute button, her voice was returned back to her. "Gakushu, they will found out that you turned me in. Your actual phone doesn't have my app doesn't it?"

"My main body will not be able to sync your phone without me. You will be found out."

"Well shit, what should we do?" Viktor said.

"Looks like we have to make my cover story, you still have the replica phone?" Gakushu asked.

"Yeah I do." Viktor then blew some smoke into Gakushu's face, the Strawberry coughed away and angrily glared at the Bulgarian reaper. He was about to crack another rib until Viktor held out another bon-bon candy.

"It's strawberry flavoured~" Viktor sang through a grin, as he knew that his bones won't be broken as he has a secret weapon. Gakushu puffed his cheeks and snatched the candy off his hands.

"You win this time Viktor…” Gakushu grumbled away as he unwrapped his piece of candy, and Viktor gave the boy a smug look and Ritsu looked on with surprised.

Who knew that Gakushu Asano had such a sweet tooth?

Gakushu entered the classroom and was met with silence as he saw everyone's eyes staring at the strawberry blonde boy. Clearly it was about yesterday, about An. He could still hear some rude mutterings about him going around, mainly from Terasake's main group of friends, but he held an emotionless face.
"What is it do you need?" He asked. Even if he already knew the answer, he needed to start the conversation somehow.

"You turned us in." Terasake muttered bitterly.

"It doesn't matter anyway. They have surveillance equipment all over the place. They knew An for years so they would check the footage if they saw something suspicious." Gakushu shrugged.

"And especially after since that… day." Gakushu hid his shudder well, they were still hunting for the Hana character after that dating incident. They even agreed to split the paperwork if they manage to kill her.

"And besides, you were wrong anyway. I saved you a great deal from embarrassment Terasake-san." Gakushu chirped with a sneer, it was quite uncomfortable to see Gakushu to mimic his father, as he smiled thinly. "An and Anna are two different people after all."

'Technically one is a reaper and the other was human.' Gakushu mentally added, not that they knew that in the first place.

"Don't make that same mistake again."

"How would you know?!" Terasake yelled as he leaped in for a hit for Gakushu's face, but it never made contact with anything but air. He lost his footing and fell over some desks. Gakushu suddenly disappeared, and those who saw this type of technique before looked around for the son of Asano.

"Because I did my research Terasake-san." A voice suddenly came from behind, and everyone turned their heads to find Gakushu Asano sitting on top of the teacher's desk with a same book in his hand. The Brecht Book.

'Thank God that there aren't any cameras anymore.' Gakushu internally sighed in relief. He didn't want to imagine Ivan, who usually was on surveillance shift before the whole operation was scrapped. Gakushu didn't want the mental image of the angry Russian telling every single reaper in town to go after Terasake.

And then there was Gretel. It was mild of what she did to Akari, even if she fractured five of his ribs. Her Gakushu complex was terrifying enough as it was, and Gakushu didn't want to add more fuel to the fire.

'When he get there!?' Basically that was what everyone was thinking. At least he didn't replace his spot with another poor student, like last time when some soda was wasted the other day.

"I would hate for you all to blame on someone innocent when in actuality the actual person had been dead for 20 years." Gakushu casually remarked although he just dropped a bombshell of information. He never took his eyes off from his book.

"What…?" Rio muttered in a surprised state like everyone else. "Dead…"

"What do you mean!?" Terasake demanded, his eyes widen from the sudden placement of Gakushu. He didn't even saw Gakushu taking a step back, it was like he just teleported there on that desk.

"Anna Nguyen, the girl in the photo, has been dead for 20 years." The way Gakushu positioned himself, he looked down to the downed student with a dull expression, it reminded everyone in that room of how he acted back when he was in Class-A.

Funny fact to remind from the Gakushu Asano list of cutest traits, half the time the way Gakushu
acted back when he was a Class-A was not really an act. He was neither angry at something which was a lot in the past year due to Class-E’s 'schemes' or he didn't eat any sort of sweets during the duration of school time. The only reason why his temper didn't blow up because Ren was there as his anchor, even though it didn't stop some poor trees being kicked or punched down afterwards when no-one seemed to be looking.

It was more his opinions and such were more of the acting side. And trying to be the strong leader when in reality he was a Cinnamon Roll at heart also counts.

"Do I need to repeat myself?" Gakushu asked in a mocking tone, Nagisa could tell that Gakushu wasn't happy, not one single bit. When no-one answered, Gakushu decided to continue on his speech in making everyone feel guilty and he succeeded. He shut his book closes, and it created an echoing thud.

"You can ask Karasuma-sensei of how she died, as I feel that I have no right to tell you all such a personal story even though you can find it on the internet if you type in the right words." Gakushu said without any emotions as he leaped off from the desk.

Everyone was silent, probably most were consumed with guilt, and others wanted proof. Although it did raise other questions that only Gakushu could answer.

"Where was she? The waitress? She wasn't there when we arrive." Okuda timidly asked as she stepped forward, for some reason the aura surrounding Gakushu that many of the students felt was unsettling and tense. It was more intense than that assassinator who called himself Shinigami.

Probably because Gakushu was an actual Grim Reaper while the so-called Shinigami was human.

"I rather not inform you of her medical background." Gakushu said coldly, proud of his work, he walked to his desk and set his work for the day without passing another look to his fellow classmates.

And just in time, Karasuma came into class to take over Korosensei's classes for the morning.

By this time, no-one spoke another word and went back to their seats. Karasuma looked to Gakushu and Gakushu could see him mouthing "Thank you." Gakushu was surprised but he quickly gave him a smile.

"It's okay." Gakushu mouthed, Karma saw this exchange and thought it was strange to say the least.

The first four lessons went by quickly, and as per usual, Gakushu finished his work early and focused on his outside work. He became distanced again and didn't talk to anyone. And then came lunch time.

At lunch, Gakushu sat at his usual spot, the same tree he sat behind when he spotted Nagisa approaching him. He held out the plastic bags filled with this time all strawberry flavoured sweets.

"Peace offering?" Nagisa said with a nervously smile. Gakushu nodded and gestured Nagisa to sit down with him. Nagisa watched as Gakushu explored though the bag of treats, he already began to eat the strawberry sweets.

"Were you angry Gakushu-san?" Nagisa asked as he seated himself.

"Eh…?" Gakushu lifted his head upwards to Nagisa, his mouth was stuffed with pink pocky.
"Were you angry Gakushu? For some reason, that scene didn't feel like an act, at least for me!" Nagisa said, panicking near the end. Gakushu pondered for a bit for come up with an answer.

"I guess that is true. I was... I was angry." Gakushu answered honestly. Nagisa was surprised, but he could see it if An was a friend. "I didn't like how everyone assumed the way they did. Who knows what would happened to An if she was there when you came yesterday..." 

"You know the waitress?" Nagisa thought that Gakushu must knew her since he was so protective and defensive for her.

"Remember? I have friends outside of school." Gakushu reminded Nagisa, to which his mind blown.

"... I never thought that the age gap would be that wide..." Nagisa said in surprised, and he remembered all of the workers from that date eyeing that the pair, as if they were supporting the two. From the logical conclusion, the blue haired male concluded that they were Gakushu's friends, and once again all there older, like around university student old.

'Understatement of the fucking century.' Gakushu mentally added, a prime example are the two blonde reapers from the English Branch with around 200 years of experience, even if they had the appearance of a 15 year old and 17 year old.

"It is quite adorable though, seeing how protective you're really are to your friends Gakushu-san."

At least the pair was on better terms again.

"Um... Nagisa?" Ritsu's voice came out of nowhere, and she called out again and this time they found that it was from the blue haired boy's pockets.

"Ritsu-san, what is it?" Nagisa called out in worry, Gakushu mentally smirked, he knew what she wanted to discuss about.

"I can't sync to Gakushu's phone... I knew that I gave him the app a few days ago but I can't sync to his phone." The digital pink haired girl explained.

"You mean this?" Gakushu took out the original phone and showed it to Nagisa and Ritsu. Now that Nagisa closely observed his phone, the key-theme keychains were pretty cool, especially that miniature oblivion key.

Who knew that Gakushu also played games?

"Hai, I can't access it." Ritsu nodded as she scanned the phone, and thankfully, she couldn't hack into the phone. Soon Ritsu assumed that Gakushu Asano was a prodigy in the fields of technology, he was a prodigy in everything after all.

"Ikeda, the now phone and once pudding thief stole my phone. Couldn't chase after him because the bastard is in Dubai. I only found out by the time he board the plane." Gakushu explained his story, the cover story he and Viktor created in the morning. Although there was no real reason why Class-E or anyone human for the matter to suspect that Gakushu was a part of the Department.

"I had to buy another one, I really like this type of model." Gakushu let out a sigh as he put away his phone into his pockets. Nagisa and Ritsu brought the story. What Gakushu didn't know was that Nagisa saw Ikeda a few days back, but it helped to cremate his cover story.

And Ritsu was sad, if AI could be sad, that Gakushu turned down the offer of having the app in his new phone.
"Knowing Ikeda, he will probably steals it again. I rather not expose our class' secret."

Eventually lunch ended with Nagisa learning more about his friend. Gakushu walked into the classroom, and suddenly out of the corner of his eye, he caught a carton of unopened strawberry milk. Only a few people in class drunk this brand and one of those people was in class, Karma Akabane.

Karma offered him a cheeky smile and a wave. Gakushu noticed that there was a note stuck to the carton. 'Peace offering.' The note reads, Gakushu almost smirked to this, Karma had more of Ikeda's traits in him than Gretel's.

"I read the article, as such as it pains me, you were right." Karma rest his cheek with his hand. Okay, maybe the traits of Ikeda and Gretel's are equalling.

"Told you." Gakushu away huffed away as he walked back to his desk. "Did you poisoned it?"

"My heart is broken Gakushu-kun." Karma cried out as he placed both of his hands over his chest. Gakushu would be annoyed but for some reason, this sort of antic reminded him of Gretel. This sort of teasing was light-hearted, like teasing a younger sibling almost.

A flash appeared over Karma and an image of Gretel smiling towards him overlapped his figure. Gakushu let out a small chuckle as he sat down his seat. He whispered, still loud enough for the red head to hear. "You are just like Gretel."

Karma was pleasantly surprised of how nice Gakushu's laughter sounded like. It wasn't fake or to be polite, it was real…

And was it strange to think for Karma that laughter felt nostalgic?

"Asano-san, you have a visitor." Karasuma spoke as he entered the class, interrupting Korosensei's lesson, and then Van entered the room. Many others recognised him as the worker from the café where An was from. In his hand was a package gift wrapped.

"Van, don't you have shift?" Gakushu smoothly asked, still using his act as the Chairman's son.

"Break. I heard that Ikeda stole your phone." Van simply answered as he handed the gift to Gakushu. "Apparently he broke it while in Dubai and he brought you a new one."

'Ikeda?' Korosensei's head perked from the name of Gakuhou's old student. 'It must be a coincidence that there is another person named Ikeda. There are a lot of Ikeda's out there in the world after all,'

'That is the cover story alright, makes sense since Class-A saw him.' Gakushu thought as he mentally shrugged, he started to play along, and he knew what to say next as to explain why he has his 'original' phone.

"I already brought one after he stole it." Gakushu answered as he opened the gift, and it was the newest and latest phone in the markets. But knowing Ikeda, it was probably something embarrassing for him. He could already hear the cheeky bastard's laughter and seeing him rolling on the floor.

"He always does this, wasting his money away." Gakushu grumbled to himself, "I hope he doesn't come back cruising in his gold-plated Ferrari with a pet lion at the front seat." Gakushu thanked Van for the delivery and wanted to ask how Viktor went to damage the phone. He reluctantly agreed to have Ikeda in the plan.
'Why must Viktor and Ikeda be the best of friends?'

"How bad is the damages?" Gakushu asked and as he was about to place the gift under his desk, Van awkwardly laughed as he looked off to the side.

'They went overboard, haven't they?' Gakushu paled ever so slightly that it went unnoticed.

"Funny story." Van nervously chuckled, and he brought out the charred remains of the replica phone. The destruction wasn't even funny. It was basically snapped into two and looked like it was just thrown into a bonfire. And then it was ran over by a car, twice.

At this point, many Class-E students felt sorry for the phone and for Gakushu.

'That is overkill!' Everyone thought as they looked over at the phone, or what remained of it.

Gakushu and Van looked down on the remains of the device, the strawberry blonde had his mouth gaped and thank the heavens that it was only a replica of his phone. Viktor definitely went overboard in its destruction. He was starting to feel his violet eyes twitching and Van certainly noticed this.

"And here, James is trying out a new recipe." Van then placed another container but this time filled with strawberry cake with extra strawberries. Gakushu just barely let out his sparkles and he happily ate the cake, while class was still going… Be very thankful that Van had prepared for the worst case scenario.

What the pair didn't noticed that there was actually a note that has fallen off from the package and Korosensei went to pick it up. He started to read it out loud.

"Hey Shu!" Gakushu blanched from his sudden use of one of his nicknames, and he wanted to slam his head onto the table now that everyone in Class-E knows one of his nickname. Luckilu, the power of cake thankfully stop him from destroying the desk.

"Shu!" Terasake yelled as he burst into laughter, he fell back to his seat and continued to laugh away. "Oh Shu dearie~"

Karma was doing his very best on stiffening his laughter, and half of the girls blushed from how adorable his nickname sounded. Nagisa thought that Gakushu has a lot of nicknames.

Gakushu resisted the urge to punch the nearest wall and Van was relieved that he gave the Cinnamon Roll some cake, especially strawberry shortcake. He only heard of rumours of Gakushu's temper and he didn't want the world to end so quickly before the 'alien' teacher did it. Van for a quick second took a glance at Gakushu's Class-E teacher, the one sporting a mop of brown hair in a large coat.

"Sorry that I killed your phone mate, never place your phone near a bonfire while you are lighting up some fireworks. You should have ditched school to come with us to Dubai though, I hope the redhead version of me is getting along with you just fine." Korosensei continued to read, soon everyone turned their heads to the only red-head in the class, Karma Akabane.

Karma gave everyone a wave and a cool smile.

"He looks a bit like you, now that I think about." Van added as he scanned Karma.

"He does not!" Gakushu yelled to Van. Bits of Gakushu's temper was let out, but he realised that he was still in class, and everyone looked shock of his reaction. Gakushu slowly turned back and went back to eat his cake. Those around his desk swore that his ears went red as a tomato.
Korosensei was about to read the next line but he paused, then he looked up to Gakushu and back down to the note. "Then again, it is not as bad as what you did to Grell…." Gakushu spit out his cake out, coughing up harshly while Van patted his back.

"There, there." Van muttered at his gently patted the back of the Strawberry.

'What did you do to this Grell?' That was basically everyone's thoughts, they didn't even take in that Gakushu just spit out his cake in surprised. Maybe Nagisa, because he already witnessed it back when the Department's representative came to their class.

"And I am buying you a Lamborghini as well, seeya Shu! From your awesome big brother, Ikeda." Korosensei finished the note and everyone burrowed their eyes onto the strawberry blonde boy.

'Dammit Ikeda! What am I supposed to do with a Lamborghini!? I don't even have my license yet!' Gakushu internally screamed, and he resisted the urged to smash the phone to the ground from the embarrassment he was experience as he felt all the eyes piercing into his soul. He added onto his checklist to crack one of Ikeda's ribs when he see him next time to get him back from all of this embarrassment.

"Didn't he brought you a camel last time?" Van comment as he crossed his arms in thought.

'….He what?!!' The thoughts of everyone of Class-E merged. Even Karma of all people was surprised, as that was probably one of the most random things to give!

"He did, but I gave it to someone else. Got me a nice beach walk though." Gakushu said as he rubbed his temples to ease his upcoming headache.

'And why the hell are they making the conversation so casual!?'

"Later kid, break is almost finished for me." Van ruffled the mop of strawberry blonde hair after he checked his watch. "Be sure to come by to the restaurant, I got a new recipe I wanted to try out."

"I will." Gakushu commented and Van held a wide grin painted with triumph on his face.

"Suck it Peter! I got the fucking Cinnamon Roll!" Van boomed in laughter as he spoke in Vietnamese and he dashed right out of the classroom. Gakushu mentally sighed in relief as the senior spoke in a language that no-one else could possibly understand. Van was always the strong quiet type until he has a test taster for his food, whether if it was Gakushu, An, Ikeda or Ronald Knox.

That moment of relief died off when Korosensei cheekily eyed at him.

'Please don't tell me that he is fluent in every language!' Gakushu grimly thought, but that look in his teacher's beady eyes had the look of… something Karma-like. Gakushu could even see some demonic-like horns being formed. He even placed his tentacle over his mouth to hide his smile.

'He is fluent in every language, isn't he…?' Gakushu grimly assumed, and he cursed his teacher for knowing one of his biggest secrets. That the almighty Gakushu Asano was actually a cinnamon roll.

Gakushu wanted to sob and hide under his table, he was sure that Nagisa wouldn't mind if he hid under his shirt but he still wanted to maintained his 'act'. Wanting to get out of his current crisis of the day, he remembered from Isogai that his phone was broken after eavesdropping on his conversation with Maehara.

"I don't even need this." Gakushu muttered as he held out the gift in his hands, he stood up from his seat and walked his way to Isogai's desk.
"Isogai-san do you want it? I heard that your phone broke." Gakushu asked, he placed down the parcel on the student's desk.

Isogai with a shaky voice, extended his arms to his gift. "Thank-you Asano-san, you shouldn't have." Although he was very happy that he didn't have to work extra hours to replace his phone. Now suddenly everyone surrounded the pair, urging Isogai to open the box.

Gakushu wanted to face-palm when Isogai finally opened the gift.

Everyone blankly stared at the new phone, it was diamond encrusted and white gold for the case. Gakushu wanted to hide, as Ikeda just had to get something like that. He hoped that when he gets back from Dubai that he won't be driving around in a gold-plated Ferrari, but knowing Ikeda, though Gakushu barely saw him around, he knew that Ikeda would do it.

He was surprised that there wasn't strawberry imagery plastered all over the phone or on the box.

Before anyone could utter a single word, the final bell of the day rang and Gakushu Asano was already gone. What Gakushu didn't know was of what the rest of the reapers in Kunugigoako was planning for him. Van deliberately made Gakushu let out bits of his cinnamon self in front of the entire class.

*Project Cinnamon has started. Objective, get Gakushu Asano aka the Cinnamon Rolml to be more open to his classmates with his actual self.*

*Leader of operation; Gretel.*

"Antonio, it has been almost a week. Does it take that long to get files?" Gretel rang through the Identification Division, she knew that Antonio was working the shift there today.

"Gretel, I can't access the files." Antonio answered back, and there was a moment of silences.

"What do you mean you can't access the files!?!" Gretel screamed into her phone. She was currently in her room at the Department because she wanted to grab her finished costumes for Saturday's concert.

"I typed in the name and everything, his files are blocked." Antonio calmly spoke back, and Gretel was confused, how can the files be blocked? The last time she asked Antonio to access a file, it came out perfectly fine without any complications.

"What does it mean? I don't work in the Identification Division you know." Gretel seated down to her bed. She had the urge to storm into the division and get the files herself, if she has time, she could do some paperwork before she went and pick up Gakushu and Ren.

"… His fate is set." Antonio said emotionlessly, and Gretel paled of the way he spoke. The tone of his voice lack of the bubbly and happy Spaniard Gretel knew.

"What do you mean?" Gretel fearfully asked, letting the fear get to her voice, and she wasn't like how the conversation was leading up.

"When you can't access a file to a person who is still alive, it means that their name is getting processed into the list." Antonio said in a sad tone. Gretel's emerald eyes widen from disbelief, she knew that he was talking about but she wanted to deny it.

"Surely there must be a glitch in the system!" Gretel gasped. She can't believe Ren was in the
process entering the retrieval list. Ren who was only at around Gakushu's age, but death comes to anyone, both the young and the elderly.

"I can access other files just fine, I'm sorry Gretel." Antonio reaffirmed her worries.

"How long?" Her voice cracked and her hands shook as she held onto her phone. "How long do we have left?"

"At best around three months. Maybe before the end of the year." Antonio grimly replied.

Gretel's emerald eyes shot wide opened once again. "That's not even that long!"

"Maybe he can change his own fate?! Gakushu's class! Class-E were able changed their own fates!" Gretel hopefully suggested as she leaped out from her bed. However Antonio quickly shot down on whatever hope Gretel had.

"Gretel… that was a special case. That class's fates changed simultaneously and even then, it wasn't even set. I can still access their files."

"But you know how it would destroy Gakushu-kun, he is more likely to have a breakdown and this will be his breaking point. I got the statistics from the Ward." Gretel said, she was given a report from the Mental Ward that Gakushu has one of the highest statistics for him to be emitted into the ward.

She remembered how she felt sick to her stomach that he had the chances of 75% to experience an episode and there was nothing Gretel or Gakushu could do to fix that. It made sense with a character like Gakushu but she never saw it coming, nobody did… Only she was passed onto the news as she was the senior of their group of friends, she received this piece of news on the first day when Gakushu entered his final year at his father's school. She hasn't told anyone about this until now.

"Not only that boy is Gakushu's anchor, he is also is what giving Gakushu hope." Gretel resorted to begging, but she knew deep down inside that it wouldn't do anything. Antonio couldn't change people's fate.

"And it is something he has to live with for next couple of decades. I'm sorry but there isn't anything I could do." The Spaniard softly said in a sombre yet comforting tone.

"That is the way we live for centuries." Antonio's answer rang in her mind. Yes… It has always been like this for years.

"Nothing… really?" Gretel whispered, almost in a whimper. She really wanted to cry.

"Nothing. I doubt that the boy has the potential to benefit the world, William is a higher senior than you, yet he has never seen such a person." Antonio destroyed more of her clutching hope. It was for the best, as hope will often lead to despair.

"Did you get anything about Ren? One personal detail at least? Anything?" Gretel asked again, she still haven't gotten what she asked in the first place. Antonio must had wanted to break the bad news first.

"He was probably born in America. That was the best I could manage to savage with the stamps of his citizenship on the front of his folder." Antonio replied. Files with stamps are used to identify their citizenship on the front.
"Thank-you...Don't tell anyone about this." Gretel ended the called and blankly stared down the phone screen, and slowly she swiped her photo to the right and tapped on the photo app. She looked the latest photo of Ren and Gakushu together, talking together at the gym.

'It wasn't a mistake to have them together again, it's not...' Gretel fought back the tears and swiftly distanced herself from her negative emotions with her errand.

She carefully folded the finished costumes and placed them in her backpack, one was a blue pirate outfit for Arthur, a fantasy like green toga for both her and Gakushu, and finally a set of Victorian clothes and green tunic for Ren. She left her room and went for the door with the bag in her hands. Luckily for her there was no line and she used the key to transport her to the Karaoke Lyrics bar.

After she exited the bar, she put on her hoodie and tugged her hood up, wearing her dark sunglasses as she walked towards Gakushu's school. She might as well see how Ren was doing and Gretel stepped forward into the main building undetected.

It was good that her hoodie was made from the Department.

A boy with hazel coloured hair named Ren Sakakibara stood inside of the Chairman's office. Gakuhou sat behind a desk, the way he positioned himself like a king was irritating for Ren.

"What is it you would like to discuss, Ren Sakakibara?" Gakuhou asked smoothly, and he felt a shudder going through his spine of how cold he sounded. What this what Gakushu had to deal with since forever?

But Ren wouldn't allow himself to be intimidated long enough, no more. His brown eyes lit ferociously and he held his face high. "I wanted to speak with you about Gakushu."

"I recall that my answer was no." The Chairman crossed his legs, one over the other and folded his hands together.

"Why can't you be his father?" Ren uttered through his gritted teeth. "Why are you so insisted on destroying whatever bridge you have with him?" Ren could see it, he saw it when he caught Gakushu looking off side whenever he walked him home from practice. The hazel haired male caught him looking at a family, together and Gakushu stared more to the father of the group. He saw that hint of envy in those amethyst violet eyes.

Gakushu did everything to please his father, his act was for his father, and he understood that and eventually Gakushu lost hope for his father's recognition. That was why he seek comfort in his friends, him, Gretel, Arthur, etc. Slowly distancing himself from his father, he was more comfortable of showing his truest of self to a friend he made for only a couple of days than his own father!

It was subtle, but Ren saw this after seeing the true side of Gakushu Asano, and he remembered a situation like this long ago.

"Why did you dropped Gakushu into Class-E when everyone else had far terrible results than him?" Ren asked and quickly followed it up with another question.

"Why didn't you comforted him when he lost those three points, when you just threw him away as if he was trash?" Ren clenched his hands into fists.

"Why did you taught him that he shouldn't cry? Why? All you are doing is pushing him away."

"Why can't you be an actual father for him? Everything you do is what a parent shouldn't do!" Ren
yelled fiercely, he was surprised that he actually yelled at the man but his anger for Gakushu was too strong.

"And why do you think that you have the right to tell me what I should do as a father if you are not one yourself?" Gakuhou replied back in an even voice, as he coldly smirked. "Humour me."

"No, I don't. But I do know that you are following in the footsteps my parents made." Ren retorted, and he could have sworn that Gakuhou's dark violet eyes widened slightly. "All Gakushu wanted was to have a relationship with you, but all you had done was to push him away. It isn't that hard."

"Please don't do what my parents did." Ren almost begged, he wouldn't allow this to happen again in his lifetime and especially to his best friend. He already lost one person, he wasn't going to lose another.

"You are making the same mistakes my parents made."

"Is that why no parent of yours came to any teacher discussions, it was always with your aunt?" Gakuhou asked, tilting his head slightly.

"Who knows, I haven't seen them in years." Ren shrugged as he looked to the side. "I should leave now, good-bye." He then exited the office, he closed the door and was met with Gretel standing next to the door.

Ren hadn't noticed her just yet because she was wearing the reaper-made black hoodie. She had shredded off of her hoodie and hold it in her arms. Now Ren should be able to see her now.

"Hi Ren-kun~" Gretel sang as she leaned onto the wall with her back, and Ren almost jolted from the sudden appearance of the female blonde.

"Gretel! How long were you there?!" Ren exclaimed with shock, he almost just then had a heart attack. He shifted his head quickly to her, and he wondered how Gretel managed to get into the main building without being noticed. But then again… this was Gretel.

"Not too long, Gakushu is probably waiting for you at the front grounds." Gretel pondered, as she rested her chin with her free hand and titled her head slightly. She cheekily smirked and Ren faintly blushed. He was about to run off to see Gakushu until Gretel's words stopped him in his tracks.

"I can't wait to plan for the wedding." Gretel added casually, she zipped opened her backpack and grabbed a red haired wig. She took her white bouncy ribbon headband off the bag as well and wore the red wig. If Gakushu couldn't already look like he could be a twin for Gretel, Karma must be added to the group.

"What…?" Ren muttered as he stared at Gretel as if she grew a third eye.

"The wedding for you and Gakushu." Gretel innocently whistled away, she neatened her wig and place back the headband. Ren now had the face of a tomato and before he could retort any of Gretel's word, she interrupted him.

"You don't think I wouldn't notice that you have been looking at the Strawberry that way." She added as she started to walk down the hallways of the colourless main building.

"So when did you start liking him?" Gretel asked and Ren followed behind.

"We're just friends!" Ren almost yelled to the girl. Gretel controlled the urge to drop to the floor and roll away laughing. 'The Chocolate and Strawberry are such dorks~ So cute.'
"That is what they all say, you should see An and Johnny. They bicker as if they are already are an elderly couple." Gretel sighed as she shrugged her shoulders.

"Didn't last time you begged to Gakushu's father to have you transferred to Class-E in his place just to talk and see him again." She reminded Ren of what scene from last week, and Ren did his best to hide his blushing face.

"Gretel, we are just friends." Ren reaffirmed his statement although it didn't convinced the blonde reaper one bit. His blushing face told it all. Gretel looked smug towards him, as if she already won the argument. She dug into her dress pockets and picked out photos of Ren looking at Gakushu during school with a smile.

"Then what are these?" She asked as she passed the photos to Ren. The hazel haired boy almost dropped the photos the moment they were passed to him. He stopped walking and stared at each photo, all were during school times and were mainly from physical education.

"Don't you have school?" That was all Ren could say.

"I graduated high-school last year, taking a year off before going to university." Gretel waved Ren off as she skipped her way out through the school's hallway. It was very amusing of how the girls glare at the disguised Gretel, walking side by side with Ren. They had already came to the conclusion that Ren and Gretel are in that 'relationship'.

If anything, Gretel would be the sister in law.

"…Isn't Gakushu smart as you?" Ren asked, he could had sworn that Gakushu was smart as Gretel.

"Close to me if you ask him, but I told him to stay at school to make more friends his age. Four years and he only made two." Gretel sighed once again, Ren could reason why that, Gakushu had some major trust issues, probably because of his father. "Poor kid forgot to eat some cake in the morning of the exams."

'Why can I reason with that?' Ren thought, Gakushu's friend was having too much of an influence on the hazel haired boy.

"I could say the same for you though, you are too smart for this school yet you are going through it like a normal student." Gretel blurted and Ren almost choked on some air, taken aback from her comment. Suddenly in her hand was the notebook filled with scientific experiences that happened to belong to Ren. "Don't these look a bit advanced for your age?"

"I wonder why~" Gretel giggled as she closed the notebook and handed back to Ren, Ren grabbed onto the book and held onto it like it was his biggest secret. "You are staying because of Gakushu, aren't you?"

"But I failed-" And Gretel stopped her walked and turned around to face Ren.

"For fucks sake! We are not having that conversation again." Gretel pointed the finger to Ren, she was losing her cool. Why can't Ren just emit his feelings!? It was as obvious that even William, the William T. Spears asked why the two weren't together yet. If someone as strict that man could see it, then why can't Gakushu and Ren see the same way!?

Gretel took in a deep breathe to calm her nerves, reverting back to a lady. "That was because of his father, not because of your talents Ren-kun."

"Ren-kun, it is not good to keep hidden of your feelings you know. It's not healthy."
"Gretel…"

"And if I remember correctly from our conversation last week, you know from the café. Whenever I am with him, I feel complete." Gretel quoted. Ren blushed like a madman and attempted, although horribly to debunk her claims.

"That is completely different." Ren answered and Gretel gave him a look that says 'right~' in a sarcastic tone. Ren let out a sigh in defeat.

"Okay, parts of it is the truth to some extent." Ren finally admitted.

"Don't worry, I will support you, everyone will." Gretel said with a cheer, she place both of her hands on his shoulders, she tip-toed so she could meet eye to eye more evenly. And her mood quickly did a 180 turn.

"I will kill those to gets in your way." She eerily muttered, her mood changed from cheery happy to blood thirsty in seconds, and it quickly switched back to her cheeriness. He could even see fire in the background behind the girl.

_Gretel's complex was terrifying._

The two exited the building and walked to the front gates of the school. They met Gakushu, who was waiting for Ren and was surprised to see Gretel by his friend's side.

"I wanted to see how he was doing." Gretel reasoned as she smiled. The males didn't look too deep into it, as it was Gretel, the girl with the Gakushu complex.

"Shall we go?"

And the group of three walked to the gym. Gretel didn't joined along with Gakushu's and Ren's conversation.

She stepped back and stopped to see Gakushu and Ren walking forward together, there was a soft breeze behind her and caused her red wig and white dress to dance along with the wind.

For some reason, whenever she looks at Ren, she was reminded of herself. She saw it, in his eyes, the battle of hope and despair like she had long ago. It was odd to say the least, she saw it the most back when she explained the meaning of her stage-name.

"Gretel, what are you doing?" Gakushu's voice called out, snapping the girl out of her thoughts. She quickly plastered a wide smile on her face.

"Just thinking how cute you two were." Gretel teased as she quicken her pace, she giggled when the two boys blushed furiously. They should really get together, it was already frustrating enough with Johnny and An.

"Gakushu-kun, do you want to go try ice-skating after practice? The gym opened a new section today." Gretel suggested. Gakushu's face lit up, like a person from Adelaide touching snow for the first time. Gretel then remembered of how An acted when she saw snow for the first time, it was fucking hilarious.

It was that then and there Gakushu found another favourite hobby, figure skating. It was quite cute when Gakushu fell onto his bottom after he first attempted to skate with Ren who was surprisingly
good at skating or how he clutched onto the hazel haired boy for support.

Ren attempted to hide away his blush, and this moment was taken for the Gakushu diary by Gretel. Her hair was no longer red now, it was back to its true golden blonde.

"Aren't they so cute together?" Gretel whispered to Arthur who wrapped his arms over her waist for support. Arthur was so terrified, he was hiding his bright red face on her back as she could feel how shaken he was.

"You can go sit on the sides if you want Arthur?" Gretel patted the blonde's head, he nodded and slowly tried to skate his way, he walked as if he was dead drunk to the edge before he fell back onto the ice.

'Maybe it was a bad idea to do all of those spins.'

"So Strawberry, has this replaced soccer?" Gretel slowly slide her way to the pair. "I don't see you play it anymore." She let out a pout, she missed the times when Gakushu played soccer.

"Can't, I keep breaking the balls." Gakushu let out a sigh and slumped his head down a bit. "I broke 50 just this year at school alone." He was surprised when he kicked the ball that targeted his father didn't shatter, he knew that he kicked it too light than usual yet it had the force kicked by a professional player. Then again, he was a Grim Reaper.

Ren looked at Gakushu in shock. He knew from Gretel and Arthur that Gakushu had been holding back on his strength but he never thought it was that bad. But imagine his expression of the amount of trees Gakushu has killed, where it was now 102.

'Note to self, get him a reaper-made soccer ball.' Gretel made a mental note.

Ren by then was informed that Gakushu actually lost the Sport Festive on purpose. Gretel told him the story because he had strict instructions to do so from a mutual friend. Then Gretel texted him so Gakushu wouldn't be able to overhead them.

'Gakushu doesn't know the real reason though, I tell you the full story later. It is so adorable!'

Gakushu was a fast learner and was already skating like a pro, and the best part was that he was having so much fun. He was putting his talents to the test and especially from the past three years he spent with Arthur and Gretel in their idol group.

He spun and twirled as he moved his hands so gracefully like a ballerina, yet he makes sharp turns like a break-dancer. He leaped out and spun before he lands gracefully before he skated some more. Then he did an axel jump.

Ren almost died from the loss of blood as it escaped from his nose that day. Gakushu had the sparkles in his violet eyes as he leaped, his cheeks flushed light pink and he had a wide and real smile on his face. He was more adorable than usual.

"Looks like I'm making your skater clothes as well." Gretel chirped. She pushed Ren back into the ice-rank and he joined back with Gakushu. She watched as the two skated together.

Yes, Gakushu was always more of a duet kind of person. Gakushu loved to sing along with Gretel in their songs. He loved to sing or dance along with a partner.

And she just hoped that this happiness would last as long as possible. Gretel glanced at Ren.
Yes... It wasn't a mistake to reunite the bridge between Gakushu and Ren. She wanted to give Gakushu a happy childhood which was robbed from him, and she hoped that the happiness between the two young ones last for as long as possible.

_As long as possible, big sister knows best after all..._

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**EXTRA**

"Why the hell did we voted for that secret underground night club when we should have voted for the ice section to be built first? I mean look at the Strawberry enjoying himself, Arthur!" Gretel yelled as she pointed with both of her arms to Gakushu and Ren.

"I think Asano-kun is just having more fun with his friend." The two blondes watched as Ren tripped to the icy floor and Gakushu rushed his way like a superhero to aid his friend.

"Bet you a grand that the Strawberry ends up waking up early in the morning to do some ice-skating." Gretel added with a sly smile.

"… That was oddly specific." Arthur said as he blankly looked at Gretel. Gretel felt a tick in her emerald green eyes.

"I mean look at them! Gakushu-kun had already came up with a routine!" Gretel exclaimed, as she gestured with both arms to Gakushu. He chanted 'one two three' as he both created and memorised a routine, he was helping Ren to follow along which he happily did so.

'That was fast…!' Arthur thought. They really should had started Gakushu's hobby of ice-skating much earlier. But better late than never?

"I guess this is added to the growing list of his hobbies." Arthur commented as he pulled out his phone and started to type away a list of Gakushu's hobbies.

Soccer, it would restarts when obtain a soccer ball made from the Department, baking, song writing, singing and dancing, guitar playing (and every other instrument) and finally figure skating.

"Gakushu has a lot of hobbies." Arthur whispered as they looked down the list they created.

"A reaper's free time is terrifying. Good thing he quitted cram school though, he doesn't need it." Gretel whispered back and she held a blank face for a moment until the realisation sets in as if she just remembered something.

"… Shit! I forgot! I need to test run my Falcon model!"

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**TEASER**

"Pudding, p-pudding~ Pudding-Pudding! Parade!"

"That is the last one for the night."

"I see, you too have some problems with your parents as well."

"I had been meaning to ask you, how was the school trip?"

Chapter: Seen.
This day can't get anymore worse than it was... First the Pudding song and now...this!

It was Friday night with the moon seen clear in the sky, Gakushu was doing his usual night shift of collecting souls and sending them onto the Judging Division. He let out a sigh as he revised on what just happened today.

At least on the positive side, he found out that Nagisa was a Candy Fest fan, otherwise known as a Candy fan.

Nagisa Shiota was being more known in class as the only person who would, or could interact with Gakushu Asano. It was during lunch where Gakushu snacked on many of his numerous sweets, where he could see Nagisa being surrounded with sparkles. Nagisa explained that he was so excited for this Saturday.

"I am so excited for tomorrow!" Nagisa cheered, he shook in excitement and happiness.

"Why so?" Gakushu asked the blue haired boy. Nagisa quickly showed him a video on his phone and Gakushu almost choked on his strawberry shortcake from the moment he watched the first couple of seconds.

It was an announcement from the band, Candy Fest with Ichigo, aka Gakushu Asano, singing a very short song. The short song was only a minute and it was telling the audience about a special event.

"We have an announcement to make, it is quite big." Ichigo sang, the video showed of a curtain and a light shining on it to reveal a silhouette behind it. "Should I tell?"

"It's alright, do tell!" Arthur and Gretel, or Earl and Hazel sang in harmony.

"We are going to have a performance this week on XX XXXX at Kunugigaoka mall!" The curtain quickly opened moments and a flash of light appeared. It finally showed a still image Ichigo with his adorable smile, wearing a conductor outfit. Gakushu could already imagined the fans reacting to this by having their minds blown.

Hazel and Earl: "Oh, please tell us more!"

Ichigo: "Earl is going to sing and dance."

Hazel and Earl: "Oh, of course!"

Ichigo: "Hazel is going to sing and dance."

Hazel and Earl: "Oh, I see~"

Ichigo: "Dear my friends, I hope you come and see us. I'm sure it is going to be lots of fun."
Hazel and Earl: "Oh, please come!"

"Looks like we have a secret, come and see what it is." A back silhouette with a white question mark appeared in the background. Only he and those involved with Candy Fest knew it was their newest member, Chocolat aka Ren Sakakibara.

"It's going to be revealed!" Earl and Hazel cheered once more.

Ichigo: "We must keep it a secret for the day."

Hazel and Earl: "Until then!"

Ichigo: "I hope you can come and enjoy the show."

"Thank you!" All three sang, Ichigo leaped out from the still and hold hands of Hazel and Earl before they bowed down. It soon fades to show some details of the concert and again next to it was the image of Ichigo posing in his conductor outfit.

"Never knew that you were a Candy fan." Gakushu said after the video ended, as he took a bit on his next snack, a cupcake, hidden behind the frosty treat was a smile. He never knew that Nagisa like their music.

"Are you coming?" Nagisa asked, he almost begged Gakushu to come. Technically he was but for entirely different reasons.

"Sorry, I have something up that day. Ren wants help on schoolwork." Gakushu apologised with a soft smile, Nagisa head slumped but he quickly brightened up when he proclaimed that he will show photos of the day. Then Gakushu's word was slowly being set to the blue haired boy's mind.

"Ren… you trust him?" Nagisa looked deep into Gakushu's violet eyes.

"Of course, he is my very first friend. And like you, he didn't taunt me of my tears." Gakushu said with a smile and no hesitation, as he licked the icing hanging from his mouth. As Gakushu focused on his sweets, Nagisa looked on at him with a mixture of sadness and happiness.

Wouldn't it be hilarious if everyone found out that Gakushu Asano was actually Ichigo of Candy Fest?

Gakushu let out another sigh into the night as he finished collecting and sending off his third soul.

'Mitsuki Yori, born in May 30th 1956. Died from complications of the liver on XX XXXX. Remarks none.' Gakushu then stamped in the 'complete' stamp on his profile picture.

Today was the day where another one of his secrets was leaked out. It started just after school and Gakushu wanted to buy some more snacks.

The cinnamon roll turned bright red, it looked as if he could light up the dark night, and that was how red he was. As red like before when Gretel mentioned that he and Ren were noticing hands for during their figure-ice routine.

And also Gakushu had woken up much earlier in the morning to practice ice-skating at the gym, he loved it that much. He even have clothes categorised for his newest hobby; black skating boots, black short sleeved shirt and black track-pants.

But back on the main subject, it started when Gakushu was at the Mart Team convenience store, he
just wanted more sweets and a flashback came.

"As usual, the bill will be added to your account." Antonio said in his bubbly tone, he placed all of the items in a cardboard box.

"Thank you Antonio." Gakushu thanked the tanned man, he wrapped his arms around the box filled with sweets and about to leave for practice.

"So~ how's school Shuuie?" Antonio asked as he leaned over the counter, resting his head on his arms.

"Fine as always, finishing work as early as usual." Gakushu answered but Antonio instead shook his head.

"That is not what I meant, how are you doing in school? You know, friendships and stuff." The tanned man pouted.

"Fine." Gakushu simply answered and it was obviously not satisfying.

"How many friends did you made from that school?" Antonio asked. Gakushu stayed quiet over this, until finally, he gave out an honest answer.

"...Two." Gakushu whispered, but it was loud enough for Antonio to hear.

"See Shuuie, you should really make more friends." Antonio sighed as he looked worryingly for the cinnamon roll.

"Why should I? I have you guys as well." Gakushu attempted to carve his way out of the conversation.

"Aw, Shuuie~" Antonio cooed from the innocence of Gakushu, he though quickly snapped out from the daze and shook his head. "What I meant was, more friends around your age."

"... I'll try." Gakushu said, there was no point to resist against it. Gretel and the group had been getting more persisted over this.

"Yay! That's the spirit!" Antonio cheered, "Oh, can you do me one favour?" And Gakushu leaned in as the worker whispered the favour, after he placed his box of treats back on the counter.

Meanwhile at the same time and place, Nagisa was at the store to buy some groceries when he spotted Gakushu at the front. And then he could see the boy's ears turned bright red.

"No! I won't do it!" Gakushu yelled at the worker as he clenched his hands into fists. Nagisa could even see stream emitting for Gakushu's head.

"Please, just one time!" Antonio begged, as he clapped his hands together and bowed to the younger boy.

"No! We are in a public space!" Gakushu retorted at he pointed the finger at the tanned man in embarrassment. He shook his head and further reaffirmed that no was no.

'... Eh?' That was basically what Nagisa thought.

"Please! One small favour!" Antonio further persisted in his begging and Nagisa hid behind the shelves, he listened of what the scene was portraying.
"Antonio! I can't do it in public, what if someone will see it!" Gakushu yelled loudly.

'Wait… public…' Something dark clicked in Nagisa.

"Come on Shuuie, please~" Antonio whined, he puckered up his lips and batted his eyelashes.

And on small detail appeared in Nagisa's mind. If Gakushu ran away from home, then where the hell was he staying at!?

What if Gakushu had no choice but to sell himself to support his finances and living quarters? Nagisa imagined Gakushu being lead to the staffroom to do a special 'favour' for the older males, with tears in his big violet eyes, as he accepted his fate.

No! Not on his fucking watch!

'Don't worry Gakushu, big brother Nagisa is coming to save you!' Nagisa thought as he shifted out from his hiding place. His face darkened more when he imagine Gakushu with that adorable dog eared hat, eating some ice-cream… okay! Change that mental image!

Nagisa quickly pictured him as an angel with small feathered white wings, the halo and the white toga, whimpering and coughing in fear as the devil was approaching him.

"…Fine." Gakushu groaned and he took in a deep breathe. The two didn't realised the approaching mass of killer intent, walking up to the two. Nagisa was hungry for Spanish blood now, that was until…

"In my right hand is cake~ in my left hand is pudding!" Gakushu tone of voice changed, it was far too cheery and cutesy, and especially for those who only knew Gakushu through his act.

'Eh!' And all of Nagisa's killer intent disappeared, it was replaced with confusion.

"Pudding, p-pudding~ Pudding! Pudding! Parade!" Gakushu was even doing a dance, going along with his song.

"Towards the enchanting world of sweets, my dear~" Gakushu did a little bow and Antonio smiled as he filmed this small performance of the infamous song, the one that Gakushu wrote when he was around 11 on his phone.

"Take a bite of that sweet goodness, I can feel it bouncing off my spoon."

"But I really want to have cake as well..." Gakushu crossed his arms as he held a face that said he was in thought.

"Ah~ I won't give up! Let's have both instead!" Gakushu sang as he waved his arms.

"Let move forward! Bounce to and then spin around like the Earth."

"Off to the world of sweets." Gakushu than did a twirl and saw Nagisa in a glimpse as he spined. He finished the off song by creating a heart with his hands, "P-Pudding parade!"

Gakushu then froze when the realisation hit him, he held a blank face that only Antonio could see, he rigidly and shakily turned around, while still had the hands forming a heart over his chest.

"N-Nagisa?" Gakushu uncharacteristically stuttered, his violet eyes widen when he met eye contact of the blues eyes.
"Yes…?" Nagisa worded in a state of shock. What did he just witnessed?

Quickly, Gakushu's face turned deep red in a split second, he dived onto the counter to grab his box of sweets, and he made a run for it.

"I'll see you on Monday!" Gakushu yelled panicky as he dashed out of the store, before Nagisa could utter a single word, the strawberry blonde boy was long gone. He was so fast that he even left behind a trail of dust.

"Gakushu-san, wait…!" Nagisa called out but it was too late, the boy ran away as soon he saw Nagisa.

That flash of memory ended and Gakushu waved his hands in frustration. "Antonio Abano! You planned this all along! Haven't you!" He yelled into the night, as he crouched down and curled into a ball from the embarrassment he was dealing with. It was already bad enough for Gretel to show Ren of the 'Pudding song' but Nagisa had to see him dance along with it.

"Damn you!" He yelled all of his frustrations out. He soon blankly looked down to the darken ground.

Gakushu couldn't even blame Antonio, as Gakushu assumed that there was no-one in the shop. He slumped his head down in defeat. 'At least it wasn't Akabane.' He attempted to make light of the situation.

Gakushu knew that Nagisa won't tell about that incident to Class-E but it was still embarrassing! He just prayed to the heavens that Antonio hasn't been told Gretel yet, Gretel didn't seemed to teased him or confront him about the incident when he arrived at the gym. However, she did somehow found out about that date…

She will find out sooner or later, she even found out that a reaper couple was together before they even announced to the Department. An emotionless, more of a stick in the mud than Thomas Freeman. A pale man with dark eyes and hair that went with the same with Dagger, who was together with a girl who has long blonde hair named Flower.

Even they were surprised when Gretel already made that only bet in the couple's contest on Valentine's Day that they will get together.

"See Arthur, I called it!" Gakushu proclaimed in victory and it fades away in Gakushu's mind.

Barely any secret goes unchecked for that 200 year experienced female English reaper. He bet that somehow his feelings for… someone would somehow be leaked to that girl.

'And it is definitely not Ren.' Gakushu awkwardly chuckled, and he slumped his head down in defeat once again, hiding his returning redness on his face in his arms. 'Who am I kidding…?'

"She is going to find out anyway, in one way or another, soon or later."

Gakushu didn't know where these feelings came up, it became apparent after Gretel mentioned that the two were holding hands. When Gakushu looked down in realisation, he quickly jerked his hand off and the two looked off to the sides nervously before he went off to skate some more.

If it was any other person, it would had been fine and he would had shrugged it off. But for some reason, he felt something fluttering inside him whether he was around Ren, especially after the bridge was reconnected since that day on the restaurant. He tried to put his mind off of it and didn't comment on it and then Gretel had to point it out.
Maybe it was because, since Ren was the first person/human to understand him, the first not to reject him for who he truly was, a Cinnamon Roll at heart and soul. His feelings intensified into something far stronger and passionate than just a love for a friend.

'That sounded so wrong… but it's true.'

Ren was always different from the rest of the student body of the main building, he had passion, passion for the arts and poetry. It even rivals to Rilliane's love. Gakushu always admire a trait like that and then he heard from Gretel that Ren was willing to swap his place to transfer Class-E.

Gakushu was surprised of that and the loyalty from his friend. Along the lines, his feelings grew more passionate, as he spent more time as his true self with Ren.

Gakushu let out another heavy sigh. "Oh dear Lord if once she finds out, she is going to play matchmaker." Gretel was famously for her game in matchmaker that it wasn't even funny.

"What should I do…?" Gakushu asked himself, should he continued as if they are still friends? He was good at that, and he was also good on convincing himself to some extent. He did kept to his 'perfect son' act at school since he came to the Department's doors.

Gakushu attempted to clear his mind by checking his booklet of souls to check for the fourth and final soul he needed to collect for tonight. He turned on his phone and was met with a phone background of Viktor Nikiforov, he used it as a light source and an excuse to see the silvered haired Russian ice-skater.

Although it was a cloudy night, so lighting wasn't the best if you wanted to read in the dark.

"Kitoaji Kin." The booklet reads, it showed some persona details such as date of her birth, her death and her profile picture. The picture shows of a woman with short black hair with its tips dyed blue. He stood up from his position and walked his way to the alley where the person was fated to die.

While wearing the much needed reaper uniform for his retrieval shifts, he wore his hoodie as he was feeling the cold wind blowing behind him.

He walked in the alleyway and witnessed what no human should witness. However for a Grim Reaper, it was the norm sadly. It was a murder scene and Gakushu couldn't do anything to stop it. This soul was designed to die.

Gakushu watched as the local serial killer strangled another poor girl, Gakushu blankly watched as the life slowly was drained out of her eyes. He had accepted that death will come, in any shape or form and it will never change, it was in human nature.

The girl slowly stopped her struggles and slumped over, she had now passed on. The killer satisfied with his work, dropped the recently dead girl to the ground and left. He didn't even took a glanced at Gakushu, who just stood in front of him.

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Gakushu walked and stood in front of the dead girl, as he looked down almost with indifference. He struck the last soul of the night and latest victim of Kunugigaoko's new serial killer with his Death Scythe. The strawberry blonde boy watched the Cinematic Records burst out and came to the conclusion that this soul had no potential that would benefit for the world.

'Kitoaji Kin, born in June 7th 1982. Died from strangulation on XX XXXX. Remarks none.' Gakushu stamped in the 'complete' stamp on her profile picture and her soul was sent to be judge.

"It's the 6th one." Gakushu muttered under his breathe but he shrugged it off, "Not my problem
though." He was probably more irritated that the new local killer was giving him more work but he
didn't had much to collect. He had only collected four souls tonight as per usual.

Maybe he was more irritated because the police around here was too slow?

Gakushu let out a yawn and he stretched his arms out, "That is the last one for the night." He
reverted his key-shaped Death Scythe back to its key-chain size and reattached it back to his phone.
He placed his phone back into his pocket and processed to walk out of the alley and back to Gretel's
place.

'What to do?' He thought to himself as he walked back, only inside the house was Rilliane, Lucia
and Ivan since Arthur and Gretel was forced to do the paperwork shift for the night. Wolfie was
struck on work from his Division. On the plus side because of that, the English blondes didn't had to
do any shifts for tomorrow.

'Maybe a good game of cards against humanity?' He pondered.

Gakushu was only minding his own business when he sensed a presence behind him, and it was
rushing towards him. He quickly turned back and blocked an attack to his face with a bored
expression.

However on the inside, he was panicking and didn't know if someone attacking him was a reaper or
a human with supernatural abilities. Gakushu swiftly turned around in a blink of an eye and
performed an upper-cut to his attacker's jaw.

In the moment of distraction, the strawberry blonde boy grabbed its' clothes and threw the person
over his shoulder, he slammed the attacker's back onto the pavement floor. It was obviously weak of
how Gakushu was using his strength since it didn't left a crater on the floor.

The last thing his attacker saw before he lost consciousness was the sharp chartreuse phosphorescent
eyes that seemly glowed behind his black framed glasses. And the black clothing cladded that
blended him into the darkness of night.

Gakushu groaned as he found out that his attacker was human. Since there wasn't a disturbance in
the area as the serial killer didn't saw him, even if he was standing right in front of him. So this has to
be a person with the special abilities.

Like how a person could see ghosts as the saying goes, just replace ghost with Grim Reaper. He
looked down at the unconscious human and oddly enough, he found that the person to be male after
some observation, however he looked very familiar. Something about the structure of his face stuck
him.

Gakushu walked to the person's side and bended down. He pulled off the hood and was met with the
reddest shade of hair. He jumped and took a step back, he had just been attacked by Karma
Akabane.

Does that mean when Thomas attacked Korosensei with his Death Scythe and the Cinematic
Records burst out, did Akabane saw them!?

'Can they even see the records!?'

"Calm down Gakushu, calm down." Gakushu took in a deep breathe to calm himself, he looked
around to see no-one else but a downed red head. "Looks like I have to be the one to look after you,
Akabane."
He let out a heavy sigh as he went up and picked up the red head, he placed him over his shoulders and carried him as if he was a sack of potatoes. He was light as a feather, but that could be because of his reaper-enhanced strength.

Gakushu had to be more careful around this red-head demon now, he needed to also report to the Department to added Karma to the ‘able to see reapers in uniform' list.

'There has to be a better name than that.' But Gakushu couldn't judge, he has a key for a Death Scythe and another person used a lawn mower.

How Gakushu would explained this to the others back at Gretel's place? That he picked up the unconscious person which he was responsible for.

It was good that the blonde English pair had to do that extra paperwork shift that night.

Karma groggily opened his amber gold eyes, he felt pain mainly focused on his back area, he noticed how the room around him was dark. As he looked around the darkness in thought, he remembered a person cladded in black walking away from an alley where the red-head spotted the dead girl at the end.

He logically came to the conclusion that the black cladded person was her murderer. He rushed towards the person walking away, with intent to knock him out and to take him to the police.

Somehow, that person easily dodged his attack and attacked him back. The last thing Karma saw was how the supposed murderer's eyes were neon like and glowed ferociously in the dark.

He looked around the room, he quickly remembered that he was supposed to be laying in the streets but here he was, in someone's bed. In an unfamiliar room, he was about to hastily flee until a person’s voice called out to him.

"I see you’re awake now." An unfamiliar and female voice called out, Karma turned in direction to see a woman with long pink hair standing by an opened door which was letting some light in. Her bangs covered her eyes. The red head froze at his spot in the bed and this woman walked up to the door, taking a desk from the desk and sat beside the bed.

She placed her hands on his head and turned to each side gently to inspect him, "Luckily, you didn't have some serious injuries, so there is no bleeding." Karma felt his face slightly burning from her touch.

She passed on a small circular container with ointment to the boy. "However, you are going to have some bruises here and there. Ointment." She said after she handed him the container.

"… Um, thank you." Karma whispered, why the hell did he felt embarrass around this person?! He didn't even knew her, yet, he could feel that he could trust her.

She introduced herself, "My name is Rin." She had this motherly aura that Karma always wanted for his estranged mother. He felt something kind and warm sparked in him whenever he looked at her. He wondered what colour her eyes were, oddly enough.

Karma introduced himself as he bowed politely, "I'm Karma Akabane. I should get going now." However, Rin stopped him.

"Do you have any contact to your parents?” She asked out of nowhere, Karma remained quiet before he shook his head to her words.
'Why am I being so honest to someone I barely knew?' Even if this was a stranger, her presence had a calming effect for Karma.

She gently smiled to him, "I see, you too have some problems with your parents as well."

Karma's amber eyes slightly widen from how casual Rin was on the topic. "You too? You say it as if you experienced it before?"

She softly chuckled, "Personal experiences, it didn't end too well for me." Rin or Rilliane joked about her suicide, not that Karma knew that. "I can't have someone as young as you, going out in this time of night."

"Please, I don't want to trouble you." Karma insisted but Rin won't have it.

"Nonsense, you are causing no troubles Akabane-san. And besides, it is far too late to go out now, so you should really stay." Rin reaffirmed and coincidentally, it started to rain heavily outside. Rin smiled in victory.

Karma slumped down in defeat. Rilliane warmly smiled at the red haired boy, 'He is like Gakushu in some ways.'

"Do you want some hot chocolate?" She clapped her hands together and she titled her head very slightly to the side.

"S-sure…" Karma uncharacteristically stuttered.

Rin lead him the way, and off they left the bedroom. When Karma stepped foot outside of the room, Rin closed the door behind him. Karma glanced back to see the name tag 'Gretel' plastered on the wooden door.

They walked down stairs to the living room where the kitchen was connect. The house was dark with the only source of lighting came from the television set from the living room. The TV was showing a South Korean movie marathon, currently being played as the Man from Nowhere.

"Not again, they always do this." Rilliane said as she went to pick up a remote, she paused the film. "I was watching that..." From what Karma could see, he saw two heads resting on the couch. One with curly black hair and the other with blonde hair.

"Please take a seat." Rin gestured to a table in between the living room and kitchen as she turned the lights onto a dim setting. Karma he did what she asked and seated himself. The house he stayed at was very furnished, he looked down to the tables to see a failed test, a D+ test on Geometry.

The pink haired female was at the counter, making the hot and sweet drink, "Gakushu-chan found you unconscious in the streets. He was the one that brought you here." Rin half-lied.

"You know him?" Karma asked as he turned his head to Rin.

"I knew him for almost four years." She answered as she poured the drinks in the selective mugs. "He was so cute when I first met him, he has grown more adorable than ever."

"I see, I will thank him when I see him." That was all Karma could say, he was almost rendered speechless. 'I never thought that he had it in him.'

She came back to the table with a tray, on it was three mugs of hot chocolate. 'Strange...' Karma could had sworn that there was only two people awake in this household, himself and Rin. Rin
passed the mug to the red haired boy.

"Thank you." Karma whispered as he took the hot mug, and Rin walked to her seat, opposite of Karma. She was still adoring that kind smile on her face. It was so contagious that Karma couldn't help but smile as well.

To explain about the situation, Karma felt more and more like a little child who would trust this person in front of him if he were to be separated from his parents.

"I had been meaning to ask you, how was that school trip?" Rin asked as she seated herself.

"Eh?" It was a logical response for Karma from the sudden question.

"I wanted to know how what that school trip Gakushu-chan gave you, he wouldn't give me an answer because he wasn't there himself." Rilliane let out a heavy sigh as she sipped her hot drink.

Karma choked on his drink and tried not to cough too loud, as he saw people asleep in the room just next to him. "Trip?" He managed to say after he cleared his throat.

"The tropical island trip. I felt sympathy for you guys so I asked Gakushu to see if you could get a fun day since he was the Student Council president." Rilliane answered, she looked down to her drink and completely ignored the blank stare from Karma. "You can't believe how happy I was when I saw you guys going off on that tropical trip."

"You mean the one from the bet?" Karma spoke and it was Rin or Rilliane's turn to be confused.

"B-Bet?" Rin's voice pitch risen a bit from surprise.

"Asano-san made a bet with Class-E and the prize was that trip, and we won." Karma further explained. Was there something he was missing or Rin was misunderstanding something?

Rin moved half her pink bangs away as she combed it behind to her ear, Karma's amber eyes widen from the colour he saw, the sharpest of greens and yellows. The best way to describe them as the colours of chartreuse phosphorescent. He too noticed of her glasses, black framed on the upper half, nothing like his 'attacker'.

She blinked and something sparked in her mind, like everything came to full circle. "So that's why Gakushu-chan sacrificed his chocolate cake. I was wondering all this time on why he wasted his favourite slice I brought."

'Eh…?' Karma titled his head in confusion.

"It is true to what Gretel says about him, he has always been shy boy." Rilliane giggled to herself as she slipped more of her sweet drink.

"Are you sure…?" Karma looked at her as if she grew a second head. This was going against everything he knew about Gakushu, but lately, Gakushu has been acting different lately. At times he was disinterested but he was talking to Nagisa, other times he though rarely acted how he was back in the main building. Even then, he gotten a reason why from Nagisa when Gakushu demeaned them for the An incident.

"She was his friend, Gakushu-san was just acting defensive for her." Nagisa's voice echoed in his head.

Then he thought, 'But that guy doesn't do friends in the first place, if anything, they are just a
mindless follower for him.' But he quickly shot down that thought away.

Karma slightly glanced up to the pink haired woman who smiled at him. "Akabane-san, I knew him for almost four years. Trust me, he is differently from how he portrays himself in school."

"And besides, even if he may act like he looked down upon you, he must had some trust for you all that you would win the bet." Karma swore that his face was becoming warm from her words.

Karma was lost in his thoughts as he dissected the information he was just given until he noticed a glance of orange on the other side from the corner of his amber eyes.

"Ah Gakushu-chan! Why are you up?" The pink haired female spoke as she turned her head in direction to the living room. Karma almost spitted out his drink, if he did, then the spit take would had been gorgeous.

Gakushu was wearing that hat we wore of the fake date with Nagisa, the black dog-eared hat. He was wearing an extra-large black hoodie as if it was a dress and his strawberry blonde hair covered much of his eyes.

"I smell chocolate." Gakushu answered as he stifled a yawn and rubbed his eyes, he squinted his eyes so much that he would also be shutting his eyelids close. It was good as Karma didn't saw his true eye colour but he didn't even saw the red head.

Rin lightly chuckled. "Of course, here you go." She passed the third mug to the strawberry blonde boy. Immediately, he started to gulped and consumed the drink quickly.

'So that why there was a third cup…' That was all Karma could think of, he soon remembered that Gakushu has a sweet tooth from that fake date.

"Thank you Ri-" Gakushu stopped to let out another yawn, he must be really tired. Karma felt the blood rushing to his nose, and why does he makes it so adorable!? And that hat as well

"It's really late now, you should go back to sleep now. You have a big day tomorrow." Rin stated and Gakushu sleepily nodded.

"Hai~" Gakushu tiredly cheered as he placed the mug on the table and in a dozily state, he attempted to walk to the living room. It even reminded Karma of the walk Ichigo made when he lost his glasses.

'This all feel so surreal…'

Somehow he managed to get to the couch and smuggled his way between the man with black curly hair and the woman with long blonde hair. Suddenly Rin passed a box of tissues to Karma.

"Here." Rin's voice snapped Karma's daze and he realised that he was currently having a nosebleed.

"I'm so sorry!" Karma panicked as he rushed to take some tissues. 'I am a pervert now, just like Korosensei!' In dread, he feared to be viewed such a thing but Rin only smiled.

"Don't worry, he has that effect on everyone." She laughed, she tried to stiffen much more of her loud laughter and waved him off with reassurance. "I've gotten used to it, but it can caught you off guard sometimes."

Karma looked back to the living room and saw the paused movie. "Are you watching the movie?"
Rin smiled to signal a yes, and it allowed Karma to continue on. "Do you mind if I watch it with you? I can't sleep."

"Sure, but it only has English subtitles." Rin worryingly spoke and it was Karma's tone to reassure her.

"Its fine, I can read." Karma smiled but then he quickly remembered of the group of three sleeping in the living room. "I'm not so sure about those three."

"Heavy sleepers." Rin said as she started to explain the basic plot of the film. Rin sat on the couch while Karma wanted to sit at the floor.

The main lead created some sort of system, he attached a string to a bag of white powder at the edge of a table to a lamp on the other edge. He the cuts a cable from the gas capsule and turns it onto full blast.

The music started to play and Karma watched intensely of what is going to happen, "What are you doing?" One character asked, he was tied to a chair and had blood dripping from his mouth.

"When the kids died, you took out their organs." The main character started his monolog as he started down at the tied character.

'And it is badass!' Karma thought. He glanced at the sleeping trio, he had the urge to draw on Gakushu's face with 2nd, but however Rin was next to him. 'How can you sleep through this?'

"Sent the live to one district, the eyes to another... And the heart to Seoul." The main character glared down with anger laced in his voice. "Isn't that right?"

"I didn't do it." The character Karma deduced as one of the villains said.

"Those young children, wandering the country even after death, did that every cross your mind?" The main lead continued his speech.

"What about you?" The pathetic villain answered with a pleading smile. "You ever wonder how much they're worth."

"Even their parent's don't want them anymore, it is a win-win situation. Am I right?" He laughed weakly. Karma knew that this guy was going to die.

"Wrong." The main uttered. "Just now, you should've apologise to those kids."

"Mother fucker! If anything happens to me, you'll never see that bitch again, you get me?"

"Even if I find So-mi, you two are still dead."

'Savage!' And Karma watched to the end of the movie and he loved it, he glanced to Rin and saw that she was fast asleep. He saw a blanket by the arm chair, he went to grab it and back to the couch as he covered her with its warmness.

Then she tensed as she moved her head a bit, Karma froze in place, but he relaxed when her face morphed into a smile as she continued to sleep.

"Allen... come to your mother's arm..." She whispered in English in her sleep, Karma couldn't help but smile at the atmosphere in this household. It was warm and comforting, no wonder why Gakushu was acting so relaxed here.
Although he didn't judge harshly, but wasn't this person too young to be a mother? Unless she was actually older than she looks, she had the appearances of a young university student. Karma looked back to Gakushu sleeping soundly, next to a drooling black and curly haired man, and another by his side was a woman with long blond hair. It looked as if they were really close friends.

"Gakushu has friends where the age gap is too wide." Nagisa's voice reminded him and a memory flashed.

"Why is this important?" Karma asked, he rest his head on his arm as the two ate at the food court at the local mall. The two could see a team nearby working on for the large stage for tomorrow's concert.

"Gakushu-san has a problem trusting us, he always did for everyone in this school." Nagisa said as he put down his drink. It was strange for Karma to see Nagisa have a serious expression and especially for Second Place.

Karma looked on with confusion. "What do you mean?"

"Gakushu-san has a sweet tooth, yet nobody knew until we staged a date of an outsider." Nagisa explained.

"Gakushu-san has friends outside, yet we haven't seen him interact outside of school."

"Okay I get it Nagisa." Karma groaned as he took a bite onto his burger.

"And Gakushu-san distance himself away from us, by blocking his way to us." Nagisa looked straight into Karma's amber eyes with his sapphire blue eyes. "The only person he could trust in school can't be his own father, its Ren instead."

"And to some extent, to me as well." Nagisa slightly dropped his head and stared at his food.

"Why are you telling me all this Nagisa?" Karma placed down his food, for some reason, it was no longer edible for him.

"Because you too are forming the bridge back to him, didn't you acknowledge him that he was right about An?" Nagisa asked, digging the recent memories back to the surface. "That the real Anna Karasuma-sensei knew died, the Australian article you translated for the class, where she and three others committed a group suicide 20 years ago."

The red head remembered, in recess as Gakushu walked out of the building that day, the class researched as recommended by the strawberry blonde for Anna Nguyen. There was three key themes they used; her name Anna Nguyen, 20 years ago and her death.

And finally they found it, an old Australian article that dated back 20 years ago, Rio almost gasped when she read the English title.

'Group of university students committed mass suicide.'

They clicked into the article and was met with a picture of an empty car in the forest. Karma scrolled down and was meet with an ID photo of female with dark eyes and hair staring back at him. It was her, the girl from Karasuma's photo, it was Anna Nguyen.

Further down was three more photos of three male students. They had been dead for 20 years, to their eyes, it was only a coincident that the workers at that local café looked similar to the dead students.
"But how did Asano knew of that incident?

"You gave him that small ounce of trust and it is waiting to be watered, to grow bigger and stronger." Nagisa's voice brought Karma back to the real world from his thoughts. As Karma took in his words, he broke into a devilish smile.

"Since when you were the poetic type?" Karma had a playful smirk painted on his face as he showed his sharp teeth to the blue haired boy.

"Since I'm up against Ren."

That memory ended and Karma looked to Gakushu as he stood in front of him, Rin said that he gave their class that trip to the islands, Gakushu did but through the means to hide his true intentions.

He remembered how easy it was to bring out his emotions when he talked to that worker Van, yet everyone else but Nagisa has trouble on getting an ounce of emotion. One that wasn't indifference or disdain.

Even Korosensei wasn't having an effect on him after since his transfer. There was so many things that he and many others don't know about Gakushu.

Karma slowly reached to pat the mop of strawberry blonde hair. 'Huh… it's really soft.' That moment was interrupted when the front door suddenly rattled. Karma jerked his hand off and leaped behind the arm chair. The door opened.

"God! I thought it will never end." A girl's voice called out and the door closed behind.

"Gretel, I think they are sleeping in the next room." A male's voice ushered the girl to be quiet.

"Is it me or are we sleeping on the couch too much lately?" The voice Karma now deduced to belong to Gretel asked her companion. He could hear her steps coming closer and the TV was shut off.

Karma thanked his assassination skills as he peeked at the edge of the chair to see the two intruders. Both had blonde hair and was cladded in black. He also knew that he heard this voice before, it was the same girl would attempted to kick Nagisa's head off.

"There isn't even any room for me Arthur." Gretel whined as she crossed her arm, but Arthur dragged her away after she took a photo of the sleeping group.

"Then you will sleep in your bedroom Gretel." Arthur firmly stated and Gretel responded with a cheeky smile.

"Are you implying something Arthur~" She asked in a mocking tone but Arthur gave her a neutral expression.

"What do you mean?" Arthur said and Gretel stared blankly at the blonde male before letting out a heavy sigh. It shocked the blonde male from the sudden gesture.

"You really are as innocent as the Strawberry here." And Gretel turned away from Arthur.

Karma inched closer to see the faces, he knew that the one of the rooms upstairs belong to the girl, he pecked to get a look of her face. He couldn't when the pair walked upstairs, the sounds of high heel shoes clanked onto the wooden stairs.
It was now the perfect opportunity to escape. The red head creep out from his hiding place and hastily but also quietly made way for his exit. And once again, he thanked his assassination skills for the day and for the rain to lighten up.

Gretel entered her room and found that her bed was dishevelled. 'That's strange… I could had sworn I neatened it this morning?'

TEASER

"Maybe you should learn Russian?"

"But what?"

"So that's why she looked so familiar."

"It is worse than we thought!"

"Please enjoy the show."

Chapter: Performance
Short Story: Dress-up

Chapter Summary

I bet you didn't know that I draw :D

Instagram: sommer_annie
DeviantART: sommerannie
Paigeeworld: Annie14neko
And I need help from you to write the songs for the next main chapter.

- Arthur's backstory of his beginnings and end.
- A kawaii song
- A seductive song.

I really need help! I am so bad at writing songs!

Dress-up

Remember when Gakushu mentioned to Nagisa that it could had been worse if a corset was involved. This wasn't a distant memory but Gakushu's most recent experience.

Ren was dying, as he laid down on the cold wooden floor face-down. Drench in sweat, he laid close to death. Arthur sat by next the fallen boy.

"Are you sure you don't need anything Ren-san?" Arthur asked.

"I'm fine." But Ren still laid down on the same position as Arthur looked over at him worryingly.
"Where's Gakushu and Gretel?"

"Behind there." Arthur gestured his head to where Ren could somewhat see one of those moveable panels. If Ren didn't know any better but he saw a look of concern painted on the male blonde's face.

"Gr-Gretel!" Gakushu's voice called out raspy and in between breathes. Ren thought that he needed to have his ears check, did he just heard Gakushu moaning?

"Just put up with it a little longer Gakushu-kun." Gretel spoke and Ren heard something constrained and Gakushu let out another moan. Something about that made Ren felt hot and… something he didn't want to describe. "You'll have to get used to it eventually."
"T-tight!" Gakushu gasped. "Ahh!"

Gretel must be making Ren jealous, yeah, that was the most logical explanation.

Ren finally had mustered up his strength, he stood up and along the way, grabbed his jacket to see and take Gakushu away. Until Gakushu's word stopped him in his tracks.

"My organs are going to burst!"

"Eh…?" Ren response as he tilted his head, what was happening?

"There hasn't been an incident where a woman's organs burst out because of a corset." And Ren was given the answer from the female blonde.

"Argggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Gakushu yelled.

Gakushu made an attempt to escape, he came out and revealed that he was wearing a corset. Ren felt pain around his waist the moment he saw how tight the corset was for Gakushu. Sadly, Gretel already caught the poor strawberry blonde boy and dragged him back.

"No! No more!" Gakushu cried with all his might, tears started to fell from his violet eyes as he was dragged back to the dressing area.

'Gretel is really strong.' Ren was very surprised of how strong Gretel really was, as she dragged the boy back with no problem. He quickly had his courage returned and was about to leap in to help the poor cinnamon roll until Arthur hold him back.

"Don't… You're up against Gretel." Arthur greatly paled as he grimly warned the hazel boy. You would think that either Gakushu or Arthur would be the leader of the group, Gakushu because of his experiences back in the main building in many of his duties, or Arthur because of his level-headed personality and somewhat imitating appearances.

But no, it had to be the doll-like Gretel who has the cheek of Karma, the smarts (and temper) of Gakushu, the sometimes level-headedness of Arthur and many other traits. Ren should also add that Gretel has a Gakushu complex.

"We are done know." Gretel popped her head from the side of the moveable wall, as she walked out and followed behind her was a dressed up Gakushu. Ren swore that his red burned the moment he landed his hazel coloured eyes on Gakushu's figure. Gakushu wore a Victorian-styled blue elegant dress, decorated with light blue roses and white ribbons.

"I will get the other essentials, Arthur." Gretel said and the blonde male nodded, he stood and followed after Gretel as they walked out of the room.

'Well this is awkward…' Ren thought as he nervously stood next to the cross-dressing Gakushu and scratching the back of his neck shakenly. Gakushu meanwhile looked away from Ren's gaze and his face flushed pink like cherry blossoms.

"Is it me or Arthur is acting more like a servant?" Ren attempted to break apart the uncomfortable atmosphere.

"It is a thing they did in the past, the mistress being Gretel and Arthur the servant." Gakushu slightly looked back to Ren. He chuckled and warmly smiled. "Every now and again, he sometimes call her Milady."
"Childhood game?" Ren innocently asked and Gakushu nodded.

"You could say that." Gakushu shrugged his shoulders as he slightly glanced to the side again.

"We're back~" Gretel came back bursting into the room with a light blue wig and a makeup set. Gakushu swiftly dived under Ren's shirt. Ren would blush to the colours of Karma's head but he paled white instead, in fear of what Gretel has in store for Gakushu.

"Come on Gakushu." Gretel ran behind Ren and pulled Gakushu away, he had now accepted his face as it was easily seen with his grim face. He might as well get it over and done with, he was caught in her trap anyway…

"Fine…" Gakushu whispered as he seated himself with one of the chairs Arthur brought out. Gretel placed her chair in front of him who was humming to herself.

"Here Ren-san, the new script." Arthur then handed Ren a file.

"But we have the concert tomorrow!" Ren exclaimed, his hazel eyes widened from surprised.

"It is good to plan ahead." Gretel chirped as she implied the eye-shadow for Gakushu. "Gakushu-kun, can you tilt your head a bit?"

Gakushu did so and Gretel started to imply the lip-gloss on his lips. Not that Gakushu, Gretel or Arthur noticed by Ren flinched away when he saw Gakushu's lips.

"Why must you have that talk Gretel?" Ren remembered the talk from yesterday. He shook away any thoughts of kissing Gakushu that surfaced. He looked away and began to read the new song as a distraction, or in this case, a new series.

'Setting: Fantasy Victorian-ish times.

Gakushu/Ichigo: The son forced to cross-dress

Ren/Chocolat: Commoner servant

Gretel/Hazel: Second daughter

Arthur/Earl: Eldest first son

A commoner was accepted into a noble family as a low-class servant, he mainly serves under the supposed third daughter of the family. But in actuality, the daughter is actually a son who was forced to dress up as his deceased twin sister from his deranged and perverted father. The servant founds out but he didn't care, he fell in love from the moment they first met. He was still the same person after all...

Based on the film, the Handmaiden.'

"Alright, we're done!" Gretel cheered, Ren looked back and was taken back of how fitting the attire was for Gakushu. Gakushu adored a long light blue wig, with hot pink eye-shadow and lipstick along with a bashed expression. "I think we should leave the violet eyes, it really brings out from the makeup and blue dress."

Arthur crossed his arms and nodded. "You were always cute than cool Gakushu-san."

"You really look like a doll Gakushu." Ren nervously chuckled and Gakushu shifted his head away in an irritated expression… He messed up.
'I could never flirt with him…. Why the hell did I thought that up!?'

The reason for Gakushu's getup was for a photo-shoot for promotional purposes. They positioned Gakushu behind a white backdrop to look directly at the camera, he stood high and straight as he placed on hand over his chest. A photo was taken as the flash appeared.

"Okay good! Now torn away the blue wig half way." Gakushu did was Gretel instructed, underneath the blue wig was the blonde wig.

'Two wigs… that must be uncomfortable'

And another photo was taken. "Okay, we need another one. Stay where you are."

Gakushu let out a heavy sigh as Gretel approached him, Gretel had him sit on the floor which bunched up the dress but Gretel started to unbuttoned the dress from the back.

"What are you doing!?!" Gakushu yelped at Gretel pulled down the upper part of the dress, showing the corset and some shoulder action. She then draped one of the sleeves over his right arm and left the other hanging off. The strawberry blond furiously blushed bright red from his exposed collar area, showing more of his pale and perfect skin.

Ren barely suppressed a maddening red face from the sudden gesture. Arthur looked away in a red face like the gentleman he was.

Gretel took out a fancy blue hat that has blue roses and a black see-through veil. She left the ribbons attached to the hat that would usually be used for support untied. She even slipped his left arm a long black silky glove. Gakushu was then given a fan.

"Just for some fan service to get everyone excited for our new series." Gretel said as she implied the makeup for Gakushu. And another photo was done, along with another version without the blonde wig underneath.

Gakushu was slowly dying, although he was already dead, the corset was hell on earth. He can't breathe due to how tight it was, how did Gretel lived with this!? Once again, Arthur and Gretel went off but this time, it was to buy some drinks and snacks which left Ren and Gakushu alone together.

'Why must you forsaken me?!' Ren mentally screamed, he noticed how Gakushu looked down to his dress, still in his sitting position as he checked his phone. He also noticed of how Gakushu was slightly shivering.

Gakushu bashfully slipped the sleeves up that hung off from his shoulder until Ren dropped an unzipped jacket over Gakushu.

"You were looking a bit cold there." Ren mentioned as Gakushu looked up to the taller male with a surprised look. He blinked his violet eyes up to him before he smiled back.

"Thank you Ren." Gakushu tugged onto the jacket closer to his body. "You shouldn't had..."

"Its' okay." Ren reassured. Slowly he remembered that he wore that jacket after his intense practice, which tended to have his sweat soaked up by the jacket. 'Shit!'

"Doesn't it bother you? I mean! I was pretty sweaty!" Ren tried to reach out for his jacket back but Gakushu's expression stopped him, violet eye blinked at him as he was dissecting the situation. Gakushu let out a small smile when he figured everything out on why his friend was so worried.
"Of course not, if anything… It smells really nice." Gakushu muttered and Ren felt his heart burst out from his chest.

'Why must you be so innocent?' Ren nervously chuckled, he prayed to God that Gretel and Arthur would come back soon to save him this awkwardness. And thankfully, his prayer was answered.

"Can you feel the love~ tonight?" Although no-one else but Gretel could hear the song, as she was listening it through headphones. She cheekily smiled that went unnoticed by the three males of the group and she walked back into the room. In her hand was bags of treats and drinks.

"Can we ice-skate now?" Gakushu excitedly asked and Ren was blinded from the sparkles that surrounded the little Strawberry. But this time, he didn't have a nosebleed as he has gotten used to Gakushu's cute smile.

'Shit! Our routine has us to dance side by side.' Ren quickly snapped out from the sparkly daze.

"I was thinking, maybe we should go to Disneyland after the concert?" Gretel casually motioned and everyone's heads perked to the idea.

"That sounds good." Arthur agreed.

"It's been a while, hasn't it?" Gakushu casually remarked.

"What!?!" Ren shouted from the antics of the idol band.

Poor Ren. It felt like he was dragged into this but he asked for it, he did agreed to Gretel's request to join as the newest member of Candy Fest. He didn't mind though, it was far more fun than the daily routine from the main building and Class-A.

Spending more time with Gakushu was a plus as well… 'I should really get my feelings check soon.'

Ren lived alone in an apartment complex, nobody but Gakushu knew that. Then when Gretel found out after some 'exploration', each morning when he opened the door and prepared for school. There would always be a box of goods at the front with his name tagged. Ever since he went out to buy some groceries, often to where Gakushu's friends work, he would always get discounts or get them free of charge.

He would always smiled and let out a sigh, before he went to pick up the boxes and moved them inside of his complex.

The main building was becoming a bother for Ren, there was a power vacuum left ever since Gakushu transferred into Class-E. As much he didn't like not seeing Gakushu by his side, it was better now that he was far away from his father's influence. Deep down inside, Ren knew that his talk with the Chairman was useless but he couldn't help it.

He at least attempted to get the Chairman to be a good father, maybe he planted the seed to change Gakuhou Asano.

He didn't want to lose Gakushu the same way he had with another, long before he came to Kunugigoako town.

English class was such a bore as well, he already learnt this when he was a child. And like Gakushu, Ren could speak fluently, he even had a hint of an American accent as he spoke for the class. The hazel haired boy could feel the jealous glares from his fellow classmates, Ren had to start checking
all of his work in case of sabotage.

It was such a hassle, life in the class was too boring without Gakushu.

Ren was walking back to his high-class apartment, Karma noticed him and thought, 'How can he have an apartment like that without a job? He must be well off from his family.'

Ren noticed that the front door was unlocked. He knew that he locked the door the moment he left the building in the morning. He stared blankly at the handle before he opened the door.

"What are you doing here?" Ren asked as he walked into his apartment, at the table was a woman in a business attire next to a male in the same clothing. The woman had ice blue eyes, with silvery white hair kept in a bob-cut. The male meanwhile had lavender hair slinked back, leaving it hanging off to the side and his eyes were the colour of the sea.

"I just wanted to check on you." The woman answered with a concerned look and Ren softened his harsh expression.

"You have your team of stalkers, use them." Ren said, he gestured the person next to her. "He's right there."

The other scoffed and muttered something rude about the hazel haired boy before the female kicked him from under the table. The male crouched over the table in pain, trying to not let out his cries of pain.

"I wanted to be an aunt today." She pouted as she started to shuffle through Ren's tests and reports. Along them were photos of him with Gakushu and his new group of friends.

"A self-proclaimed aunt." Ren corrected, he closed the door behind him. "It doesn't matter what you call yourself, you are more helpful than my own useless parents when they were alive."

"How's school?" The aunt innocently asked, Ren exaggerated his sigh.

"Dull. Science and math was easy, English was child's play, and Japanese was the same. Art was the usual." Ren muttered as he slipped his shoes off, he took a pair of fluffy slippers and wore them.

"Yet you kept to your normal student act. You could so easily be in high-school or college now." The male sneered, as he leaned back from his chair and crossed his long legs over the table. "And you don't follow the path of the arts as your sister did though."

The white haired aunt swiftly kicked his chair over, it sent him tumbling and crashing to the floor, and he cried out in pain. Her icy-blue eyes glared angrily at the fallen man while Ren smirked of his situation.

"Thank you for shutting him up." Ren sneered back, the latter only annoyingly glared back at the young student.

Then Ren started to think of an answer to the man's question. 'It is because I only stayed for Gakushu, he could too have progressed further into his education but he stayed so he could learn of how trust and make friends.' Ren mentally answered in his head. 'He is like me almost.'

'Then again… Gakushu isn't like me.' Ren hid his sad smile from the two occupants in his apartment.

"I heard that you're friends with the rich kid from that Chairman guy, had business with the bugger."
"Scared the living shit out of me too." The lavender haired male crossed his arms.

"How are you a high level government agent?" The female asked as she glanced away from the older male.

"Beats me, how are you a business woman?" The male shrugged with a very 'American' gesture.

"By the way, I'm going away for the weekends with my friends." Ren ignored the purple haired man as he placed his bag on the counter. "I don't want any of your guys trailing us."

"To where?" The aunt asked, she watched as Ren walked to the kitchen. The other male whined as he stood up and picked up the chair.

"Maybe to Disneyland?" Ren shrugged, he opened the fridge to check its contents.

"It's nice for you to be around real friends this time, you were always such a lonely child with a sister complex back then I heard." The male pointed out as he ate from his bag of chips, Ren glared at him from the side before turning back to make his dinner.

"Are you going to the States again?" The purpled haired man asked. "It is going to get suspicious some time. Rumours has been spreading."

"Depends if Aunty could rearrange the visit like last time." Ren said, he finished making his dinner and brought his plate to the table.

"None for us? None for me." The purple haired man let out a fake pout as he clutched where his heart was sorrowfully. Ren rolled his hazel brown eyes, he had the urge to punch his pretty face.

"You have money to spend on high-class restaurants."

"True." The other admitted, he checked for the time on his expensive watch, he uttered that he had to go for work.

The male made his way to the exit, "See you later poet." The slivery haired aunt soon trailed behind him.

"Bye Jones." Ren monotony said, he didn't spare a look to the male as he continued to eat his food.

The female stop by the door, she locked and closed the door as she walked out. "I will check on you again soon."

"See you later then, Auntie Avery."
As Gakushu was slowly being released from the many buttons and ribbons of the corset, with the help of Gretel.

"Remember that time where you were sick this year. We had to restrain you at my house." Gretel recounted and Gakushu chuckled fondly.

"I was stuck in bed for days." Gakushu laughed and it made everyone's hearts fluttered from the sounds.

"Why are we talking about this?" Ren overheard the conversation, he thought that the subject matter was very strange.

"Because Gakushu didn't go to school, I did." Gretel answered in a deadpanned way.

At this moment, Ren's mind was blown. It looked that his eyes would pop right out from his sockets.

"What!?!"

"I dressed up and acted like Gakushu for three days as he recovered, it wasn't that difficult but your school was so boring. I finished the paperwork for that student president council the moment it reached to my desk."

"But I had to live with Gakushu's father for three days, it wasn't pleasant as expected but that is a story for another day." Gretel heavily sighed, Gakushu and Arthur looked on to her with sympathy.

Gretel coughed to clear her throat, and the magic happened. "See Ren, neat huh? I can do other voices as well~"

"Wilson! Wilson I'm sorry!" Gretel imitated Tom Hanks' voice.

"Just keep swimming." Gretel then did Dory's voice. She continued to sing as Ren blankly stared at her.

"I can even do Akabane's voice too." Gretel in her Karma voice cheered, Gakushu had to suppress a shiver doing down his spine, Arthur felt a tick in his emerald eyes due to the 'wasabi' vibe and Ren looked like he wanted to beat up the original Karma. He didn't know why but its there.

She quickly changed to the next voice. "You! Shall not, pass!"

Arthur and Gakushu clapped of her talent. Ren had a flashback moment of when they first met again in years, which Gretel tried to capture his attention through imitating Gakushu's voice. Didn't she said she moved in a few years back!?

"And we have the similar body structure, you are quite slim." Gretel started to grope Gakushu's chest as he froze from contact, Ren had his jaw wide opened and Arthur let out a sigh.

"How can I tell which is which?" Ren asked as Gakushu slowly moved behind him.

"I can't sparkle whenever I'm given sweets." Gretel sighed once again.

"I can control them!" Gakushu yelled, his ears turned pink from embarrassment.

"Just barely." Gretel coughed as she pinched the Strawberry's ears.
"But that is our Cinnamon Roll."

More teasers for the next main chapter;

"You look oddly familiar..." An gazed up and down of Nagisa, James and Johnny did the same. The black haired female scanned the uncomfortable Nagisa again and her dark eyes widen.

"You!" An stand up from her seat, the force was strong enough that her chair had fallen back. "You are that Hana bitch!"

'Eh...?' Everyone of Class-E but Kayano, Karma and Nagisa knew. Nagisa now knew why the three looked so familiar.

"Really? Didn't she had long hair?" James thought out loud before he was slapped by the back of the head from Johnny. The light blonde haired male let out a cry from the pain.

"Ever heard of a haircut, you cunt!" Johnny spatted out in an Australian accent.

(Nagisa is so dead.)
Performance

Chapter Summary

Dance for us Gakushu!

Song inspiration:

1st song: Fakery Tale

Pomp Love: Pomp and Circumstance

Hey Darling: Rinne

4th song: Yi Er Fanclub

Arthur's song: Drug of Gold

Final song: Portrait of Pirate F

Performance

"Thank you for taking me, Tae-sik..." An said as she buttoned up her clothes, they were given from the dark blue haired Mental Ward worker.

"It is my job An." He said as he waited outside of her room, his back pressed against the white wall and with his arms crossed. "Are you sure you want to go out now? That lookalike is still around."

"I'll be fine, Johnny has the emergency kit." An reassured the once Korean black operation officer. "You're sounding a bit tired, Tae-sik."

"I just had a bad dream." Tae-sik bluntly answered.

"Do you want me to make you a teddy bear?" An asked as she walked out of her room and she was no longer in her hospital gown.

"And why do I want that, I am in my forties." Tae-sik scoffed, An simply smiled and she patted his back.

"I won't judge, Kara still has that teddy bear I made him 20 years ago. The almighty cinnamon roll told me that he hugged his plushie closely in front of a class of teenagers."

"And he's 28." An countered with a smile.

"You sure you want to go?" He asked again with worry in his reaper eyes.

"I'll be fine, still worrying for your senior?" Not only did An had Ikeda under her wing, she also had Tae-sik in her care. She remembered how uncomfortable it was for the Korean reaper to have a senior that was at least 15 to 20 years younger than him.
"And besides, the concert is today."

"Candy Fest?" Tae-sik worded and An let out a big smile.

"Who else did you think?"

Today was the big day, it was Candy's Fest concert. The mall was filled with people, waiting for the music to start already as they walked into the large tent. Behind the grand stage, in one of the dressing rooms, Ren was getting his hair done by Gretel.

"Genius idea Gretel. Instead of having my hair covering on the left, let's have it on the right instead." Ren grumbled as he looked on the mirror and crossing his arms. He was wearing the blonde wig and adored turquoise green eyes to match with the theme of their idol group. He also wore the stylized Victorian clothing set.

"I don't know, ever since Gakushu-kun had taken up ice skating. He has taken Viktor as his idol which is a rare feat." Gretel ran her fingers through his wavy golden locks as she combed it over.

"Maybe you should learn Russian?"

"Who?" Ren asked, Gretel picked up the hint of fear in his tone of voice.

"Viktor Nikiforov." Gretel went to his side and showed a picture from her phone, a photo of the Russian ice-skater. "You got yourself a rival now. I found that Gakushu brought a signed jersey of his for ten thousand US dollars."

"The white and red jacket with RU on the front." Ren's eyes widened from the fact as he faced Gretel shakenly.

'You know what I mean.' Gretel looked deep into Ren's now turquoise eyes, Ren stared at Gretel as if he could hear her thoughts.

'I don't remember owning a pair of contacts with that eye colour…' Gretel looked into the colours of the sea before shaking that thought away. It could be Ren buying his own pair, and it was still technically green.

"That's the one." Gretel confirmed and Ren groaned as he buried his face in his hands. She covered a smile that was forming with one free hand.

"So now you admit that you have feelings for the little Strawberry." Gretel teased and laughed as she patted his back.

"Quiet Gretel." Ren muttered embarrassingly, as he still buried his face in his arms.

"But how would Gakushu react you seeing so flustered?" Gretel further teased. Ren managed to relax and dropped his hands, and this allowed the blonde haired girl to poke his cheeks.

"I'll just say that I'm nervous over our show." Ren answered.

And then Arthur walked into the room, he looked to Ren and saw his reddening face.

"Nervous of your first show?"

Nagisa was dragging Kayano and Karma to the mall, Karma was surprised of how strong the blue haired boy's grip was and Kayano was slightly blushing pink from the contact.
"Where are we going?" Karma asked although he already knew the answer.

"What do you think?! We are going to see Candy Fest live and close." Nagisa cheered as he ran through the mall, dragging his two friends along and nobody was complaining.

It was no secret that Kayano was a Candy fan but when they found out that Karma was one as well, no-one let it down for weeks. If anything, they called Karma a Strawberry fan due to his odd attachment for Ichigo. What they didn't knew was that Karma actually met the idol in one of the school breaks.

Although the group of three was surprised to find their entire class, they were waiting in line for an entry. Unluckily for them and the three, they were dead last.

Nagisa peeked out to the counter and saw three workers, a female and two males. He knew that he saw them before, but where? As he locked onto the female, the others followed along and did the same.

"Isn't that the An person?" Nagisa whispered to Kayano, she then leaned for a peek and saw the older looking female.

"The one we thought was Anna?" Kayano answered with uncertainly.

"I think that is the one."

"Is it me or does she has some kind of motherly feel around her?"

This time, Karma leaned over to see the black haired female after being instantly reminded of the kind and pink haired woman named Rin. He could understand from back then when Gakushu was telling the class that she was different from Anna.

The expression in her hazel dark eyes were different, it's subtle but the red head could see it. Her eyes didn't have that spark of innocence when compared to the photo. She had seen many things in her life.

What seemed like hours, when was only around 15 minutes, the three was finally at the table to get their tickets. Class-E was waiting until the final three joined in.

"Welcome to Candy Fest- An's dazzling smile faltered a bit, as she met eye-contact with Nagisa Shiota and his sapphire blue eyes. She blinked as she slowly gave the boy his pass.

"You look oddly familiar..." An gazed up and down of Nagisa, James and Johnny did the same. The black haired female scanned the uncomfortable Nagisa again, soon her dark eyes widened and she let out a gasp.

"You!" An jolted up from her seat as she pointed her finger to Nagisa. The force was strong enough that her chair fell back and down to the ground. "You're that Hana bitch!"

'Eh...?' Every one of Class-E but Kayano, Karma and Nagisa knew. Nagisa now knew why the three looked so familiar.

The waiter with spikey dirty blonde hair, sky blue eyes and lightly tanned skin. The other worker with light blonde hair, hazel eyes and skin as white as snow. They were the two café workers that spoke English fluently as if it were their first language during Gakushu and Nagisa's fake date.

"Really? Didn't she had long hair?" James spoke out his thoughts out loud before he was slapped on
the back of the head from Johnny. He crouched down and covered his head with his hands for comfort.

"Ever heard of a haircut, you cunt!" Johnny spat out in an Australian accent. An turned back from her two male friends to Nagisa and grabbed his collar. He felt a shiver going down his spine from the sudden change of her tone.

"Yes, it is definitely you." An muttered, she was emitting a dark haze and it was surrounding her. "I know those blue eyes."

Everyone swore that they could see flames radiating in the background. An had the face who was itching to kill, although she retained a smile.

"You wouldn't believe how happy I was when I saw Gakushu with you in our café that day, to only found out that you were a gold-digger." An uttered out in distain as she glared down into Nagisa's blue eyes, down to his very soul.

"Nagisa!" Karma called out but it was hold back by a man he recognised from the Mart Team store, the tanned man known as Antonio. His grip was crazily strong.

"So that's why she looked so familiar yesterday." Antonio sang and at this moment, every Class-E student froze in their place. They looked around and saw many more young adults, and many were recognised as the Backers of Candy Fest. They were staring at the group, and many eyes were directed towards Nagisa. As if they were waiting for An to deal with the killing blow.

"Kill her, kill her, kill her." They all repeatedly chanted eerily.

"You almost threw all of our hard work out of the window, thankfully Gakushu had us and Ren to comfort him." An darkly muttered, many of the Backer nodded to her words as they chanted.

The class felt pathetic, even though they had the training of an assassin, they felt like ants as they were surrounded by the Backers.

"I'm not vengeance-seeking type of person, but I can make an exception here." An sang cheerfully, it was clear to everyone that she wasn't happy. It was more obvious when she pressed a pocket knife to Nagisa's cheek. James and Johnny turned away and innocently whistle away as if they didn't saw a friend about to murder the blue haired boy.

'When did she pulled it?!' Karma thought, feeling helpless to help his blue-haired friend. He knew that he wasn't like this but he couldn't help but froze in fear. It didn't help that he was surrounded by the many personifications Death itself, not that he knew that anyway.

Before An could make a single cut on Nagisa's cheek, a voice came to save the day.

"Is there something wrong?" A voice called out, half the girls swooned over of what they saw, as it was Ichigo in the flesh. He wore a white and red jersey and black jeans underneath, he had golden blonde hair but what shock Karma was that his eyes were like his attacker's.

The red head shook his head. 'Ichigo is far too innocent to be a serial killer.' He convinced himself and that flash of memory of Ichigo seeking cover under his jacket surfaced. Karma had to suppress a blush that was creeping onto his face.

'Yes, he is far too innocent…' Karma reasoned.

"Nothing Ichigo, Hazel is waiting for you backstage." An let go of Nagisa and waved to the idol.
She hid the knife behind her back. Antonio released Karma as he skipped his way to the tent. The Backers looked away as if they didn't see anything earlier as they whistled away.

Gakushu felt a twitch in his eyes, he let out a sigh as he rubbed his temples.

"How was that nothing?" Ichigo said as he walked closer to the counter. "I came back buying some cake and found you assaulting one of our fans."

'Busted.' Class-E's thoughts merged, the atmosphere became tensed as An and Gakushu had a stare down. It was suffocating almost for Class-E.

"But Ichi, we have a valid reason." Johnny whined, it took away the tense air from Class-E and James nodded furiously.

"But what?" Gakushu was getting annoyed over this. He crossed his arms as he waited for his answer.

"But she made Gakushu cry!" An pointed her arm to Nagisa. Gakushu almost choked on his spit, he had forgotten that fake date incident. That's right, Gretel told every reaper stationed here about that fake date…

'She told everybody… I almost forgot.' Gakushu mentally groaned and wanted to face-palm. Gretel's complex was terrifying. Meanwhile, every Class-E student stared in an unreadable expression at An.

'He what…?' The thoughts of the students merged. And also, 'Gakushu is friends with Candy Fest!?' Nagisa blankly stared at An before he slumped his head down in guilt. 'Oh yeah… I forgot about that.'

It didn't help that as Nagisa now knew that Gakushu was a cinnamon roll at heart, he knew that he committed a terrible crime. '… I have failed as a big brother!'

"I know that, but Gakushu has put that behind in the past." Gakushu tried to reason with the reapers, and also not exposing one of his many secrets. Nagisa looked up with a hint of hope in his bluest of eyes.

"And then she made Gakushu cry himself to sleep!'" An exclaimed loudly, Nagisa choked on some air and every other Class-E student had a blank look. They tried to picture a crying Gakushu and failed horribly, and Nagisa further sunken into guilt as he perfected the image of a tearing Gakushu.

"Okay! That did not happen!" Gakushu blushed furiously as he denied it. 'Why must you add that detail Gretel!?'

"Yes it did! Gakushu in tears hugged Rillie and passed out!" An yelled back, as she slammed her hands onto the table. It was a surprise that the yelling wasn't attracting any more attention.

"An…” Gakushu muttered softly.

"Let us do our job, we even have a bounty for her head." An pulled out a sheet of paper with the photo disguised Nagisa plastered on it out of nowhere. Class-E had their jaws opened wide in shock.

'Bounty: $300, 000 and no paperwork.' Gakushu quickly went through the poster, it was quite scary of how much reapers had in their bank account. He knew that this was only pocket change for them. Even Gakushu had a couple of millions in his account.
"But isn't that Nagisa, I thought Gakushu told me that Nagisa was a male." Ichigo or rather Gakushu tried to lead the three into a misunderstanding, it backed fired quite horribly for him.

"It is worse than we thought!" An screamed as she covered her face with her hands. "A boy dressing up as a girl to trick and bully our precious angel!"

She cried out the fake tears, she and her two friends dramatically acted sad, and the situation had gotten from bad to worse. Gakushu glanced around and visibly saw the dark aura emitting from the Backers. If Ikeda was here, he be joining along with the other reapers, because nobody bullies the cinnamon roll!

You can tease but never bully to the point where Gakushu cried!

Gakushu couldn't believe that An's deduction was half-right, half-right because she and the others didn't know the reason behind the fake date. She had the same motherly instincts as Rilliane's.

"A trap!" James and Johnny added their two cents to the conversation.

'This is getting out of hand…' Gakushu tiredly thought over his friends' overprotectiveness.

"Guys, Gakushu has forgiven the incident. He told me over the phone." Gakushu attempted another peace mission but when it didn't work, he only had one trump card left. "I'm sure that he would be very sad if his friend gets hurt."

And it worked like a charm, every Backer had a look that said 'No way.'

"This is Gakushu se-" James shakily pointed his finger to Nagisa as he spoke in a stuttering-like voice.

All the reapers there had same thoughts, 'You're his second friend…'

'You're his second friend.'

"You're his second friend!"

"Yes." Gakushu nodded as he dealt with the final blow that left An and the others speechless. This also included Class-E.

"I am sorry about these three and the others, they can get very protective." Ichigo's smile blinded everyone in the surrounding area. He held onto the hands of Nagisa and the blue haired boy wanted to faint from the mere touch. Half of the girls and Karma looked at him jealously.

When Ichigo let go of his hand, Nagisa let something was left in his hand and opened his hands were keychains. A limited edition keychains of Ichigo in his conductor suit. Ichigo quickly went to the table and grabbed a box filled of Candy mechanise, he passed the cardboard box to the boy. "I apologise for the inconvenience, please give them to your friends as an apology gift."

"I hope you enjoy the show." Ichigo gave out another innocence smile before he left for the stage.

'So cute…' The thoughts of Class-E merged. Nagisa was reminded of Gakushu and his cinnamon-ness, as their smiles were quite alike. Nagisa and everyone else remembered of the female counter worker, she placed both of her hands on both of his shoulders. Nagisa waited tensely for her next move.

"You are entirely forgiven." An said in a deadpanned way.
"….." A few seconds go by as everyone stared at the Vietnamese female silently.

"Ehhhhhhh!" That was the logical response from Class-E.

"James, call off the hunt." An turned to James who saluted back to her.

"On it! Guys, hunt is over! The kid is his friend." And everyone rushed in to inspect Nagisa. This time, Class-E was ready to protect their friend, and that was until the Backers started to hug the blue haired boy and covered him in tears and snot.

"Thank you for being his friend!" They all cheered, Nagisa struggled to pull away from their grips and he was surprised of their strength.

Kayano was unsettled of how quickly their personalities changed from murderous to happy go lucky. Rio reminded herself to not drink too much caffeine.

'Nagisa wasn't kidding when Gakushu had friends with massive age gaps.' Karma looked on in amusement. Everyone else had their jaws wide opened, they couldn't believe that Gakushu was actually friends with these sort of people or that he actually has friends.

"You're forgiving Nagisa for being friends with Asano-san?." Chiba asked nervously. Eventually the Backers pulled away from the blue haired boy.

"The poor kid has some major trust issues, you know it has been four years and he only made two friends." Mark spoke out and the others agreed to his words.

'…Really?' That was surprising, everyone but Nagisa and Karma thought.

"Two friends in that goddamned school." One female worker yelled as she gesture it with two fingers.

"I blame the father." Another one crossed her arms and many nodded their heads.

"Have you heard? Rilliane's boyfriend is going to be his step-dad." This was getting so random.

"Everyone had a party when Gakushu made his second friend, that is you by the way and that Ren kid was his first friend." A male with green hair said. Who knew that Gakushu had such interesting and colourful friends.

"They were so cute." James sang and he flipped his laptop around, it was a picture of Ren and Gakushu in their first year of junior high, standing side by side. The Backer cooed over the picture.

"Have it has my screensaver." One bragged.

"I got his pudding song as my ringtone." And Nagisa prevented the blood from rushing to his nose when he remembered of Gakushu's Pudding song.


"He is still cute now." Johnny pointed out and the group started to laugh warmly, it left Class-E being mesmerised by the photo. Gakushu was so adorable with that his pout-like expression and next to him was Ren who sheepishly smiled.

"But that act of his is getting old."

"What…?" Terasake shared the blank stared as the rest but Nagisa's and Karma's faces.
"I thought he was just acting rebellious, but then I found out that it was just an act for him." Clearly An ignored their stares and in flavoured of joining in another conversation with the other workers.

"What do you mean how he acts in school?" Isogai asked a bit loudly, in hopes that he could get back their attention. It worked as the Backers looked back to Class-E.

"You know, the cold and emotionless leader who dislikes sweets." Johnny explained.

Nagisa had to hold back a chuckle because he knew that Gakushu had a massive sweet-tooth, so that last detail was amusing. It also added more to the fact that Gakushu was acting during his time in the main building.

"Parts of it is true to him though, his temper." James mentioned.

"Achoo!" Gakushu sneezed. Ren gaped of how cute it sounded. Arthur went over to test out his temperature.

"I hope it isn't the flu again…" And now back to the Nagisa and the gang.

"It didn't help that he barely ate any sort of sweets during his duration in the main building. He somehow portrayed his anger for Class-E's antics and lack of sweets as his cold persona instead." James explained, it somewhat made sense for Nagisa.

"When he was actually just grumpy."

They were making Gakushu Asano sound cute in every moment and Class-E thought that they were just bullshitting. Nagisa meanwhile was taking this all in smoothly. If anything, everything was piecing together.

'Gakushu did seemed to be calmer in our class and we don't get much of his father's influences.' Nagisa thought it was because of Korosensei's growing influence but it was actuality because Gakushu was eating sweets again.

"But his temper didn't blew out that way it usually did." A random Backer spoke out.

"You have Ren to thank for, his anchor." An pointed out. Nagisa let a stab of jealously for the hazel haired boy.

"Remember to thank Ren for having your building still standing." And all of the Backers turned to the class.

"Oh, the show is about to start!" An exclaimed as she checked the time on her phone.

Johnny and James started to usher the class into the area, as the other Backers gave the class gifts, as they each pass through.

"Please enjoy the show!" They all sang so cheerfully.

'Well that just happened…' But at least they get to see the show. They went inside the massive tent and it was pitch black inside. They soon realised that one of the gifts were glow rods. They needed to thank Gakushu soon for this, as he just indirectly gave them free stuff.

The music started to play, the gigantic screen turned on but there was no idol on stage. Then the words came out and it was from Ichigo's voice.

"It is another sleepless night, another night where you can't drift away." It showed of a silhouette
and the figure laid still as its clothes swived side to side. At first, it appeared to be a break-up song with lyrics like;

"What is the point of you holding on? Alone in this place if all it reminds you of me."

"I tried to appear to you but you can't seem to see me."

"Trying to comfort you as you say your goodbyes."

Although the story behind the song was sad, the music played was happy and upbeat. It cuts to the same figure now recognised as a male, staring up into the sky.

"Even if I'm not here, everything would be just fine."

"You shred your tears as you say goodbye even if you don't mean it, please don't cry with that face."

"Please, I beg of you."

Ichigo sang with an 'o' sound, going along with the upbeat song, everyone couldn't help it but to wave their arms along with the song. The video showed of a close up of a person with the outline of their hair dancing in the wind and their eyes closed.

It then cuts to a boy sitting along in a chair, dressed in black. "It's a sleepless night, you watch aimlessly by the window in a blank look."

It cuts back to the first scene, but now it was in colour and with clear image of the male, who laid then as his clothes dances with his eyes closed.

"As I stood next to you, I thought… You looked so sad as you looked at my picture"

"Even if you desperately cling onto the memories, everything will still be okay."

The next scene was the boy sitting at the table, with the chair in front of him empty. Many people believed that it was a break-up song but it was a well written one. Although, many are getting tired of the cliché.

"Isn't it best to move on without me and seek out another? I think it is best for you to move on without me."

"As you looked up to the sky, you reached out for the memories."

"Even if I'm not here, everything would just be fine."

The boy was zoomed in closer and watched in a sad expression at the empty chair. Next it showed the boy standing, looking off to the distance as his clothes dances in the wind

"You say goodbye even though you don't mean it, as you shed your tears."

"Please don't cry yet you continue to cry."

"Please don't cry with that face, I beg of you…"

"I beg of you!"

The boy's face morphed into a mixture of pain and grief, the outline of his tears dripped down from his face as he hid with his hands.
"Even if I'm not here, standing side by side, it would still just be fine."

"Even if the sound of my heart was long lost ago, I'm sure one day you can see me again."

"Let's meet somewhere someday, so~ please live on."

A girl appeared and hugged him from behind, she glowed in a golden light as her long hair and dress flutter. As if she was an angel…

"Until then, see you later."

She whispered into his ear, his closed tensed eyes quickly set wide open as a flash of memories quickly passed by.

The song of 'o' came again and everyone waved together. It was so fun, even if there was no Hazel or Ichigo dancing. Half of the girls in the tent wanted to cry from the emotions of the song it was generating.

"Tonight was a night you could sleep."

"You stand here alive."

"Even if my body is gone, I will still be with you."

The song ended and when everyone looked back down to the stage, three of the Candy Fest was there in poses. And the next song began as the smoke machines started.

Everyone in the crowd cheered as their shook their glow sticks madly. The show was getting started with a techno-song but nobody was expecting moans in the song.

All of the females squealed with Earl was nicely dressed in a black collared shirt that showed his toned body, with tight black jeans and matching his attire was a white tie. The raging male fan-boys over Hazel who was in a short dress where there was dark see-through material on the neck and naval area.

While those two were looking hot, Ichigo who was wearing similar clothes to Earl but with a black jacket, it just made him adorable. But he wasn't wearing the white shirt beneath and revealed some skin of his chest.

But the lyrics they sang made half of the audience wanting to melt.

Ichigo and Hazel: Matching the pace of our breathing. I can feel it seems to explode.

Hazel: The bites around my body, this surely must be your marks.

Ichigo: Drowning in love, I just want to melt in your arms.

Ichigo, Hazel and Earl: Come on! Let us dance! This dance of love, as we passionately dance this game of love my darling!

And thank you whoever decided for the dance routine to have a lot of hip swinging. Ren in his Chocolat getup was in the crowd, he wore a green hoodie and watched the performance. His act was for the end of the show, so he might as well watch them dance, as it was better than to just wait.

As the three danced in sync, Gakushu or Ichigo spotted Ren in the audience. At the moment, when their eyes met, Gakushu winked at him.
Gakushu winked at Ren!

‘…I want to die.’ Gakushu immediately regretted his action but he continued to dance. He was getting too into character with the song. 'Damn you Gretel!' Ren was taken back from the gesture and he felt his face burn, that his face would glow red in the dark tent.

Ichigo, Earl and Hanzel: *Burn, burn, burn!*

'Why must songs relate to my predicament…?' Ren wanted to hide his burning face in his hood. He tried to convince himself that Gakushu was just getting into character with the song.

Some of the audience was picking up a pattern of the concert. After the 'Pomp Love' song, another music video sang by Hazel, popped up as the three idols went back stage.

The song was called Hey Darling?

The imagery showed of a girl, looking like Hazel, standing alone in a white empty space with hands covering her face. In front of her was person, who looked just like the female idol but the eyes were violet instead.

"Hey Darling? Darling, darling!"

"I tried to ignore your voice, and carry on."

Hazel pushed her lookalike back and walked away from her.

"I see you looking in front of me, telling me what I hate to hear."

"That's strange? My wrist has gone more red than usual".

"I ignored that person's voice as it lectures on as I lay in my white bed."

It was a song about suicide, many of the audience members came to the conclusion that the 'darling' or her lookalike was a representation of her suicidal thoughts. "Hey Darling? Darling, darling."

"The days pass on, each time I hear your voice."

"Your voice break me into reality and see the hurt around me."

"One time when I was in hospital. The other when I looked down at my wrist all red."

"You speak again, you speak again and I looked down to see a capsule of pills."

Hazel attempted to run away, with tears in her emerald green eyes, away from her double but she tripped over. Her double was there still, standing in front of the fallen girl with a sad expression.

"Hey, tell me what should I do? What should I do?"

"Oh Please tell me, please tell me what I should do?"

"Hey Darling? Darling, darling."

Hazel quickly attempted to suffocate herself but her double rushed in to pull her arms away.
"What's this? You are telling me to live?"

"Please live on, they say, they say."

"You never know when the next day is where the light finally shines bright."

"Hey Darling? Darling, darling."

"You never know when that day will come if you are gone."

"Please live on, I'm sure that tomorrow would surely be a great day."

What was up with Candy Fest's obsession of surprising everyone with their songs, not that the audience complaining. After the video ended, the group came back on stage but with entirely different clothing. Chinese-themed cosplay.

So basically the new and yet unleashed videos was a way to get them changed and ready for the next song number. It was so cute for Hazel and Ichigo to do those kung-fu moves in sync as they leaped and kicked the air.

Hazel and Ichigo: "Gradually I will be able to say the same words as you, right?"

Earl, Hazel and Ichigo: "I will be able to say I love you soon~"

Ren stood and cheered as the three preformed, he noticed that the entire class of End was here. Even Karma was here, cheering on and eyeing more towards Ichigo…

'Who knew that he was a Candy fan?' Ren thought as he blankly stared at the red head that went obviously unnoticed. He observed of how Karma’s amber eyes were directed more to Ichigo with admiration.

'Wait… Isn’t he and Gakushu rivals…?' Ren thought grimly. He couldn't even imagine the reaction of Karma finding out that one of their idols was actually Gakushu Asano. And then he got into touch with his poetic self, or it could be because he was reading too much romance novels?

Anyway, rivals technically end up together… Not on his fucking watch! Ren surfed his way through the crowd and back onto the stage, almost stomping back in. He knew why he had the urge to punch Karma. Just in time, the second dance routine ended and the other three walked to the dressing rooms.

"You're almost up after Arthur's song." Gakushu called out, to which Ren timidly nodded. And all of the hazel haired boy, who was currently wearing a blonde wig, his worries were gone the moment he saw Gakushu's legendary smile… for now.

"You'll be fine." Gakushu patted Ren's back with reassurance before he went into the dressing area. Ren still had that warm feeling left after Gakushu's touch on his back.

Ren silently stood outside of the dressing room door as he could hear Arthur or Earl's song. It was about a servant and his mistress, the servant was once a poor orphan until he was picked up by the child mistress and the song is about the times they spent together.

Ren dare say that it was a song about unrequited love of the servant for his master. At least, it was for the hazel haired boy. The song was set with a hard rock flair, incorporating electric guitar, bass guitar, drums, piano, and the flute. Since Ren was at the back of the stage, he could only hear the lyrics.
"Ever since childhood, I was just a poor young orphan who was trying to meet with ends meet."

"I was bitter against the world as I wandered behind the lines of poverty."

"Every day, the only way to keep me sane was to play that piano that sat in the corner."

"As my fingers touched the keys and let the music play, it at least soothed my deformed heart…"

"Then one day as I played, a girl passes by and was captured by the piano… That was how I first met her...."

The song continued to explain of the girl's standing of the higher class and how the boy soon became her servant. Their growing friendship, their talents, their promise, their hobbies and the girl's loneliness. It was explained in the song that she was the only daughter in a family filled with sons, she too had a twin brother but he will eventually leave her to pursue a higher education as their parents wanted.

"Her mirror shattered and was stained in blood"

"She was no longer herself as she fell into despair."

Then another plot twist came for the audience, her twin brother was killed in an accident which left her in a depressed state.

"She stopped playing music as she sunk into darkness, I sang to keep the light still lit."

"Day by day, her smiles lessened and no longer held that brightness it once had."

"I couldn't say anything, I didn't know was to say to her…"

"I am just a mere servant after all…"

"If only I was there on that day, then maybe I could had saved your happiness."

"If only I was able to save you…"

Another twist came after that, Candy Fest had a love for surprises.

"As I walked to your room, with a tray in my hands, it has all of your favourite sweets."

"I slowly opened to the door and was met with silences, and then I looked up."

"I saw you hanging lifeless in the air. Below was photos of your missing twin"

"If only I was able to save you…"

An instrumental break began with a guitar solo, as the photos of the servant and the girl flashed.

"And now I freed you from your ropes, watching you sleep so soundly that you would never wake up…"

"I had failed my duty… but."

"Don't worry, I won't let you go alone. I took out a sword and stabbed it into my chest."

"If I failed in this life, then I promise you that I won't again in the next life...."
"Don't you remember that promise I had for you, that I won't leave you alone…"

"Here I am, side by side, I'll be with you as long as it takes…" And the music stopped.

Ren could hear the cheers and applauds after Arthur's song ended. This was it, his first debut onto the stage. He looked back to see Arthur, Gretel and Gakushu fully dressed and prepared for the final song.

Arthur the blue pirate and Gretel the green fairy walked to the other side of the stage. Gakushu was wearing a similar version of Gretel's.

"Ready Chocolat?" Gakushu said with a smile and a flame was fit ablaze in his green chartreuse phosphorescent eyes.

"Ready as I ever be Ichigo." Ren nodded, he too had determination in his turquoise green eyes.

Everyone waited in excitement and tensely, this next one was going to be the very last song. What they all knew that Candy Fest had a secret as advertised in their ads?

What was it going to be? Will it be announced after the show?

The music started to play as the movie like screen lit up. Who cares, have fun now and think later.

Everyone crazily cheered as they waved their glow wands and the video screen lit up.

Earl: In the dead of night with the full moon, if you open your window, letting in the cool air in.

Hazel and Ichigo: Such as this, you will be visited by fairies of a distance land.

Earl, Hazel and Ichigo: And be taken to the land where dreams never end.

Then a four voice sang along with the band.

?: To the Neverlands…

The curtains pulled away to reveal the original members along with one more person wearing a Victorian attire. Everyone blankly at the fourth person, a boy who's height was in the middle between Earl's and Ichigo's, and he had blonde hair covering his right turquoise green eye.

The video zoomed into Earl's face as he smirked and flipped his cape, "Hahaha!"

The instrumental music plays as a flash appeared on the screen to reveal the title of the song, Neverlands. Earl and Hazel came from the left, dancing and twirling into the stage while Ichigo and this Chocolat character waltzed their way from the right.

Then the Backer members came in sliding their way with props, two which Class-E recognised as Johnny and An, they were pushing a wooden office table to the middle of the stage. A similar model of Gakuhou's. After completing their task, they danced their way off the stage and following them was Earl.

Which left only three of the idols of the stage but Hazel and Ichigo disappeared as well, the singing started as Chocolat positioned himself behind the desk.

"No! No! No way! I had enough with adults and their stories!" He sang as he slammed his fists onto the table. "It is all filled with bullshit, they just tells lies."
He closed his eyes, with a pout-like expression, he rested his head on his hands. "I wish I can just fly away from here..."

Hazel and Ichigo's head started to raise up from behind the desk with cute and cheeky expressions

"If that is what you wish for?" Ichigo sang.

"Then let us grant you your wish son of noble." Hazel cheered. Chocolat jolted up and took a step back from the sudden appearance of the two original members and the crowd cheered wildly.

"EH!?"

"To the place where fun and dreams never end, we are the fairies of Neverland!" The two green fairies sang in unison with joy.

Ichigo: "Adventures!"

Hazel: "Activities!"

"You can play all day without a care in a world."

"But what about studies?" Chocolat asked in a singing manner.

"Don't need it." The two sang has they made a cross shape with their arms above their heads.

"What about the future?"

"Don't worry about it." They still retained the x-shape arms, then standing side by side of the Victorian boy and extending their hands to him.

"Take our hand and we will take you to the land of dreams-come-true!" They took hand, take a step back before running and jumping onto the desk as their leaped out.

"Come on! Come on!"

"Hope to the world of dreams we go! To the Neverlands!"

"What a wonderful place to stay! Such a fun place to visit, let us go to the land of children!"

They chanted as they somehow gotten their hands on a mystic looking cloth, it was large enough to engulfed Chocolat that they cover him.

"I hope you have a pleasant stay!" They unwrapped the cloth and revealed Chocolat in a new outfit, a peter pan themed clothing on if you described it. The audience loudly cheered as they shook their glow wands in cheer.

Sooner or later in the song, Earl came storming into the stage with a large pirate ship prop, almost all of the crowd resisted the urge to laugh at their humour.

"Oh! Hohoho!" Earl sang as he waved his sword prop towards the three other idols.

"Oh no! The demon king has taken over our kind bandit!" Ichigo and Hazel cried out.

Soon, much to everyone's displeasure, the concert ended. Everyone involved with the event, Candy Fest and the Backer came forward to the stage and bowed to the crowd. Karma knew that he lost his voice that day from all of the yelling.
Today had been a good day and Karma took dozens of photos of Ichigo.

"Thank you for coming to our show, please give our newest member Chocolat a big warm welcome." Hazel gestured to Chocolat who madly blushed red as the crowd cheered once again.

"I hope you enjoyed our show."

Class-E was happily chatting away at the food court, eating their lunch and talking about their experiences of the concert.

"He was so cute!" Okuda was talking about Ichigo.

"What about Hazel, she was beautiful like a doll!" Terasake called out.

"Earl is hotter!"

"But what about Chocolat!?” And before you know it, Class-E was fighting over who in Candy Fest was better.

"Oh boy…” Kayano whispered as she watched as her classmates started to bicker, she spotted Karma stealing some of their lunch as they argued.

"Can't we love them all equally?" Nagisa ushered but he was promptly ignored, he let out a sigh and went back on eating his lunch. They will stop fighting eventually and he was right, but not in a way he expected.

"Are you Nagisa Shiota?" A familiar voice called out, Nagisa shifted his head towards the direction of the voice and in front of him was a feminine figure, salopettes galaxy dress and a white blouse underneath. She was also wearing a bright yellow unzipped hoddie with the hood on. She also wore dark sunglasses.

Karma heard this voice before, from yesterday night as he hid behind the arm chair. Not only that, she sounded like the idol, Hazel as well.

"Yes." Nagisa nodded, confirming of her question. They all saw a smile quickly plastered on her face.

"My name is Gretel, but you probably know me as Hazel." Gretel did a little curtsy and she took off her sunglasses. Everyone who stared at her gasped of the realisation that Hazel was standing before them. "It is nice to meet you."

"I wanted to thank you for becoming friends with Gakushu." Gretel flashed a smile to the class as she bowed and many of the males felt like they wanted to serve her. "Do you remember me?"

"I was the one who tried to kick your head off…” Gretel cheerfully said as if it was a normal occurrence.

"…." That was basically the response of the class.

"And I was the one who started the hunt for your head." Gretel again happily reminded the gang. "I wanted to apologise of my actions."

"No, it's fine." Nagisa kindly smiled as he slowly shook his head.

Gretel smiled back, "Let me give you a gift then."
Gretel leaned in to kiss both of Nagisa's cheeks, Kayano blushed madly while half of the boys glared jealously at the blue haired boy. Nagisa blushed the shade of Karma's hair and Karma, for some reason, felt a twist in his chest.

"But remember this Mr Nagisa Shiota, if you hurt Gakushu in other ways again." Gretel eerily whispered into his ear, her emerald green eyes lost its innocence glow and was replaced with a dangerous glint. "If you destroy all of my work on helping him to trust this town again."

Her voice lost its' youthfulness, she spoke in a monotone voice as she titled her head slightly. She held a pen dangerously to his cheek as if it were a knife. "I will kill you, right then and right there, Nagisa Shiota."

The way she said it told everyone that it wasn't just a bluff, it was serious. Karma, Kayano and Nagisa knew that she would do it. After all, she was about to kick Nagisa's head off during the fake date, and she placed Akari in hospital when going on the recount from Gakushu during their introduction of the 'Pudding Thief'. That killer intent was real, the reason why nobody died yet was because either someone was there to hold her back.

No longer had her face had that cheerful smile from before, her smile morphed into a thin frown and her expression was emotionless. "Do you understand me? I do not want to regret my decisions."

Gretel walked away backwards from Nagisa, playing with her ballpoint pen in her hand. "That is my warning to you, I hope you take to heart."

"Who are you to Gakushu?" Nagisa asked, he did his best to look straight into her emerald green eyes.

"Why do you ask?" Gretel almost smugly asked.

"Because I want to know if you too are the best person for Gakushu-san." Nagisa confidently answered, it took the blonde haired English girl by surprise as seen from the slight widening of her eyes. She then smiles, taking a similar expression whenever Karma was amused.

"Fufufufufufu, how interesting of you." Gretel held back her chuckle, at the corner of her eye, she spotted Arthur blending into the crowd as he eyed at Gretel.

"I'm just his big sister." She answered happily, she switched back to her cheery personality and she quickly skipped away after her answer. She walked to Arthur and the two disappeared into the crowd. It obviously left Class-E in a state of confusion, with more questions created than answers.

"He has a sister?" Isogai whispered to a fellow student.

"What's up with Gakushu's friends being bipolar!??" Terasaka exclaimed loudly. Everyone looked back on what they just witnessed today.

"Achoo!" And Gakushu let out another sneeze as he packed for Disneyland.

"You know, wouldn't it be funny if Ichigo was actually Gakushu?" Rio joked.

"Why the hell did you thought that up!??" Terasake yelled back.

"Gakushu is acquitted with Hazel and the Backers. Similar body and facial structure and what not." Rio waved the bigger male off.

"That is impossible." Okuda answered and she went to sip her drink through a straw.
"Yeah, wouldn't that be the discovery of the century." Maehara laughed and several others joined in. "That Ichigo is only a persona where Gakushu goes out in a disguise and perform?"

"Achoo!"

"Please don't let it be the flu again." Gakushu said to himself. The last time he was sick, he was stuck in a form of a toddler for three days. There was the only time where he had cat and dog ears on separate cases.

*A Grim Reaper has the strangest of illnesses but that was a story for another day.*

Next on the short story plan;

· Sick day
· Fun day
· A story of a servant

I had to rush this, I really need a beta-reader again…
A day out with friends.

'Why… Why must I endure this?' A certain hazel haired boy thought as he sat in one of the train carriages with separate rooms. Currently and obviously, he was sharing with Gakushu, Gretel and Arthur the compartment.

However, Gakushu was napping soundly and leaned his head on Ren's broad shoulder. Ren did his damn hardest not to blush like a tomato, as he felt the warmness coming from the strawberry blonde boy.

Ren knew that they were all going out after finishing the concert but he never imagined that it would be straight away. He was about to take a shower when Gretel broke into his apartment, he didn't even knew how she managed to do it but she did.

"Come on! Let's go!" Gretel cheered as she dragged Ren by the arm, she already took Ren's luggage as she walked out with Ren in hand. Luckily, Ren earlier was just about to take off his clothes for his shower when Gretel broke in.

"Gretel! At least let me take a shower!" Ren yelled, as he tried to pull away from her grip, but to no prevail. Ren was up against a Grim Reaper's strength after all.

"You can have one once we get there." She stated, they walked out and Gretel locked the door for Ren. Before he knew it, he was on a train cart with a napping Gakushu by his side.

Gretel and Arthur sat opposite of the pair, Gretel yawned as she went to cover her mouth with her hand. "I haven't got a good night sleep in days." She whispered as she leaned against Arthur's shoulders.

'Why… Why must I endure this?' A certain male blonde thought as Gretel leaned against his shoulder. He almost shuddered from the contact.

"Wake me up once we get there." She said and she quickly dozed off. This left Arthur and Ren in an awkward atmosphere.

'Now what…?' Arthur and Ren thought as they stared at each other.

"Nice weather we're having." Arthur weakly chuckled, as his emerald green eyes drifted to the window with the passing scenery.

"Yeah." Ren answered back, both looked on to the moving scenery.

"It is quite beautiful..." Ren said, as he stared at the once sunny background turned to be rained on.

"...."
'Curse my Britishness!' Arthur mentally screamed as he crossed his arms and his smile twitched. Ren remembered that Arthur and Gretel were from England, he knew this after some 'get to know you' conversations during dancing practice. He was slightly amused, as he knew that England was humorously known for their rain.

The two males slightly look back to Gakushu and Gretel.

'A least we have Gakushu'

'At least we have Gretel.'

'To look at.' They thought separately, as they glanced back to them who were napping on their shoulder.

'… I should get my feelings check.' Ren thought as he mentally slapped himself.

Row, row, row your boat.

'I swear to god, Gretel planned this…' The thoughts of Gakushu and Ren merged at the two stared at Gretel. She spotted their stares and waved to them from her boat, rowing the row boat was Arthur.

Thankfully, the rain stopped as soon the group got out of their train. However, Gretel saw that there was a lake and some boats, she dragged the three males over and ordered at they must have this boat ride.

Gretel took Arthur, which left Gakushu and Ren to be paired out and there they were. Awkwardly, looking at each other as they sat in an uncomfortable atmosphere, with Ren on rowing duty and Gakushu sitting opposite of him.

'Why did Gretel had to deduce that I have feelings for Gakushu?' Ren mentally groaned.

'Did Gretel found out my feelings for Ren?' Gakushu grimly thought.

They looked to the other side to see Arthur on rowing duty, as he insisted being a gentleman. Gretel sat at the boat with a parasol opened and the two looked to be chatting about something. They really looked like a couple from a distance, it probably didn't help that there were other couples in the lake as well.

A sad thought came to Gakushu's head, they were probably doing it to remind them of the days before their unforgivable act. The servant and the master. Gakushu shyly looked back to Ren, both unsure on what to say.

"How was school Ren?" Gakushu asked out of nowhere, hoping that it would start some sort of conversation. Although the strawberry blonde by mentally hit himself for asking such a boring question.

"It is no longer fun without you." Ren carelessly blurted out. Ren quickly had to change the content of his comment, from 'I miss you because I have feelings for you' to something other than romantic.

"I have to check my work to see if it was sabotage." Ren said hastily. "It's not the same without you."

"You know that you can ask Gretel for help." Gakushu said. "Have Gretel go out on adventuring and she will convince them one way or another, Seo stopped pestering me but that could be because
of the Pudding thief."

"Like those stalker photos." Ren suggested and Gakushu flinched a bit.

"That is just for the photobook if anything, thankfully." Gakushu whispered, he turned slightly pale and he shivered a bit. "And I know that Gretel is overhearing out conversation."

"And I'm hacking into the school system as we speak." Gretel said cheekily, as she was at a reasonable distance from the pair that she was still able to listen. She held her phone in one of her hand free from the parasol.

"I will get to it after this day out, maybe Monday?"

Then Arthur rowed the boat away again as quickly as they passed by. She could really sometimes be a female Karma, but they knew that she means well. She was just overprotective, like everyone other one of Gakushu's friends.

"Something tells me that this isn't the first time." Ren said, oddly enough with a smirk as he looked back to Gakushu. He grabbed the oars and started to row away.

"Maybe, we may or not had been involved of ratting out some girls who were meaning to go out with you just to get close to me or for status." Gakushu answered back with a smile and a shrug.

"By the way, how did I do? My debut song?" Ren asked, Gakushu lit up and began to ramble on how good he was during the performance. He also added that he looked good in his Peter Pan costume. The hazel haired boy felt a warm feeling inside of his chest as he listened to Gakushu's genuine praises.

"You did seemed a little bit distracted though."

Ren then firmly and calmly denied it. "I was on task."

Ren looked up to Gakushu whose face was quickly resembling to Gretel's, the way he was cheekily smiling. He slyly asked "Did someone caught your eye from the crowds?"

"Was there someone you like in the crowd?" Gakushu teased, although deep in his heart, he was a bit saddened at his feelings won't go out to Ren, but he should support him. That was enough for him, Ren deserved someone better than him, someone who didn't committed suicide in hope for a better life.

Gakushu convinced himself that being the best friend was good enough, he will be happy nevertheless for his friend, and he will cherish those happiest of memories he spent with him.

And the face Ren was making was hilarious.

The hazel haired boy leaped at Gakushu and he had forgotten that they were on top of a body of water. Gakushu laughed out loud as he easily pushed Ren away, then they lost their balance and the boat tipped over. The two boys fell into the cold water and both quickly resurfaced from the water.

"At least you got that shower you wanted." Gakushu joked and he let out a laugh, as he clung onto the capsized boat.

Ren let his face burning once again for the day, why couldn't the cold water help him? He didn't wanted to tell Gakushu that he was actually looking at him, and also throwing daggers at Karma for looking at 'Ichigo' too much.
"It is more of a bath if anything." Gretel voiced with glee, the two boys looked in direction of her voice, their boat easily surfing their way through. Gretel looked down as she held onto her parasol.

'She looks like a noble lady…' The thoughts of Gakushu and Ren agreed. And they were helped to get onto their boat. Gretel, being the character she was, she brought along spare towels as if she knew that it was going to happen.

'I guess this would have to do.' Gretel mentally sighed to herself, she watches as Ren covered her little Strawberry in the towel first.

'It will have to do, now what should I do next?'

Bubbles

"Ren-kun, do you mind giving these clothes for Gakushu-kun?" Gretel nicely asked as she presented a batch of new and folded clothes in her arms.

"Sure." Ren complied with her request, he was troubled of why Gakushu was taking too long in the bathroom. He went to the bathroom as he knocked the door to signal that he was coming in.

"Gakushu, I have your clothes." Ren said, he waited outside of the door.

"Okay, come in." Gakushu responded. Ren opened the door, and then walked into the bathroom. And what he saw next was something he couldn't be unseen. The strawberry blonde was covered in bubbles and he was making a family of bubble beings as he hummed to himself.

"Thank you for the clothes, I'm almost done." Gakushu let out a bubbly smile to the hazel haired boy before he turned back to his bubbles.

Ren just stared as Gakushu continued to make one more final addition to his bubble family. His eyes unconsciously drifted down and he saw Gakushu's chest. 'His nipples are pink…'

And Ren mentally slapped himself for thinking such a dirty thing, as this was the innocent cinnamon roll for goodness sake! He knew that his face must be as bright red as a tomato, what he was witnessing was too adorable

"Ren?" Gakushu whispered, as he waved to his friend, then a burst of blood rushed out from Ren's nose and he collapsed to the floor.

"Ren!" Gakushu leaped out from the bathtub, along the way, he grabbed a towel to cover himself as he rushed to his friend. Ren was barely conscious and he caught the scent of strawberries, when he barely opened his eyes and saw Gakushu hovering above him, and that he was bare chested.

Poor Ren passed out again, his mind overloading from knowing that he was resting on Gakushu's lap.

"I think you shouldn't let Ren come into after all." Arthur spoke to Gretel as they sat in their beds. Arthur looked at the opened bathroom door and Gretel's eyes were struck to her phone.

"Needed another attempt on matchmaking for the day." Gretel simply said with a devilish smile.

"You're lying." Arthur answered back in a deadpanned way as he turned to the blonde haired girl.

"You know me so well Arthur."
**Disneyland**

*Is there anything else to say?*

It was obviously that the group was having the best time at Tokyo's Disneyland. Going by An's words, *"It's magical, what do you expect?"*

Gakushu, Gretel and Ren all had Goofy vests, Mikey Mouse hats and other sorts of gifts. Gakushu got himself a life size plushie of Piggy. The moment they stepped into the park, the three acted like excited children as they jumped up and down while cheering 'Disney!'

You would think that Arthur would be a little bit irked that he was the one carrying all of this stuff. If anything, he thought it was a blessing from the heavens.

Poor Arthur could never do well on rides, even though many of them were mild in turns of adrenaline. The excitement mainly comes from the novelty of the theme park, as it was Disneyland after all.

Arthur was already feeling a bit sick from just riding on the tea-cups, however the other three wanted the cup to spin madly. Him being the carrier, it prevented him from going on any of the rides, he liked being helpful and he could easily take photos of the three.

'It was a win-win situation.' Arthur reasoned.

They took a group photo in front of the castle, and then many others with the Disney characters.

Eventually, all four exited the park and Arthur called in a taxi to bring their brought stuff back to their hotel room.

"Here is our identification papers for the hotel and a tip for your work." Arthur explained, the driver was already happy that he was getting payed but when he received that extra tip. His mind exploded, he was given at least a couple of grands extra.

'Rich kids, you love and hate them. And I am loving this group more!' The taxi driver furiously thanked and bowed to the group. Gretel and Arthur smiled like angels to the man, while Ren blankly stared at the scene before him.

'How much money do they have to spend on!?' Ren watched in bewilderment and Gakushu read his mind.

"You should see what Ikeda was spending on, I swear that he will come back from Dubai and driving around in his gold-plated Ferrari." Gakushu said in a manner that it was a normal occurrence for him. He did spent ten thousand dollars on a red jersey owned by Viktor Nikiforov.

Soon the taxi drove off to do its job.

"Let's go to another park!" Gretel suggested cheerfully, joining along was Gakushu and Ren. "I want to go on a rollercoaster!"

'…. Damn it.' One only certain person from that group thought as he was dragged to the park that specialised on rollercoasters.

*One moment later…*

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" Arthur screamed in terror as he goes down
the slope of the rollercoaster.

Ren and Gakushu were laughing together, and Gretel was cheering on for more.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!" Arthur screamed once more with tears raining from his emerald green eyes.

Poor Arthur.

Once the ride ended, Arthur passed out and later woke up on Gretel's lap at the food court area. This time, the blonde male internally screamed as he did a good job on suppressing a maddening blush.

Poor Arthur.

Ride home.

When Ren opened his eyes, he looked to the side and saw a window, it was dark and it was only. He remembered that they were all being driven home and should get back just in time for school.

The only driving was a male named Ikeda as he been told, the same man that Gakushu said that he would be cruising around in a gold plated Ferrari. Currently, the light haired male was using one of his Lamborghini's to take the group back to Kunugigoako town.

Earlier when Ikeda arrived to pick the group up, Gakushu had the look that he wanted to kill the man right then and there.

"Did you like that gift I sent you? You wouldn't believe how easy it was to found a case that was white gold and diamond encrusted in Dubai." Ikeda boldly laughed as he patted and tangled Gakushu's hair. The strawberry blonde harshly slapped away his hand away.

"Be lucky that I won't be again to break your bones right now." Gakushu darkly muttered, as he glanced to the older looking male. It looked as if they were having a stare-down, Ren could see the sparks radiating from their eyes.

"That's right, you have your anchor here!" Ikeda boasted loudly as he patted Gakushu's back, and Gakushu felt a tick in his violet eyes. Ren had to defused the situation from getting as tense as it was, he knew for some reason that Gakushu would had ended up breaking one or several bones.

"Gakushu, I brought some strawberry flavoured Hello Pandas, do you want some?"

Ren soon realised that the car stopped, he glanced by at the window with ease as he sat at the far right and saw that they were at the servicing station. Ikeda walked out of the car, he filled the car with its needed fuel and walked into the station.

Ren was about to close his eyes shut and leaned in the opposite direction, away from the car window, then he felt something soft rubbing on his shoulder. He turned to see a mop of strawberry blonde hair. Gakushu was sleeping once again on Ren's shoulder.

Arthur was sleeping on Gakushu's giant sized Piggie

Ren looked to Gakushu, he pondered of how Gakushu's eyelashes are long. He stared quietly of how adorable the cinnamon roll was.

And he leaned in to kiss his forehead. He might as well do one romantic thing, his feelings for Gakushu was killing him.
However, what Ren didn't know that in the car, reapers tend to install cameras around the place. Like on the front mirror and on the back of the front seats. Ikeda was one of these people, it was a habit of his as he typically was a part of spy missions. Which explained why Gakushu barely see him around in the Department, or it was a habit of the reapers as there were cameras everywhere in his hometown.

'Don't you just love convenient reaper technology~' Gretel thought to herself as she looked down to her phone, it showed the surveillance video of Ren and Gakushu sleeping together.

And her smile slowly turned into a frown, as she sadly watched them, she looked to Gakushu and a tear almost escaped.

'Yes, it wasn't a mistake…'

I usually do suggestions from Fanfiction.net but I'm transferring over to here ^^

The suggestions of the month are;

· How and why should Class-E be suspicious of Gakushu being a part of the Department?

· How much of Ikeda do you want to see?

· Should Gakushu and Ren confess their feelings, if so then how?

· What other reapers have breakdowns, if so, who and what triggers it?

· Should the Department reveal themselves more to Class-E?
Short Story: Sick Day

Chapter Summary

The Strawberry got sick and big sister Gretel took over his place as he recovered.

Sick Day

_Gakushu caught the flu that was going around in the Department. But this flu only affects Grim Reapers and it was in a very special way._

_This was one of the strains._

"Achoo!" Gakushu let out a squeak-like sneeze and it blew off some bubbles. He shivered after being drench from the cold rain after his night shift. Currently, he was at Gretel's house to get himself a nice rosy bubble bath. He couldn't let his father found out about one of his cutest traits.

"Gakushu! Are you done?" Ivan walked into the bathroom, he saw that Gakushu was covered in bubbles and he was making a family of bubble beings.

"Almost." Gakushu turned to the Russian, the dark curly haired man placed Gakushu's clothes by. "Thank you Ivan."

Gakushu pulled the curtains back as he turned on the shower and washing down the bubbles away. After he finished that, he reached outside of the curtains with only his arm for a towel.

Ivan smiled and he walked up to the strawberry blonde boy, as Gakushu walked out of the bathtub. As he covered himself in a towel, Ivan came and dried up with hair with another towel.

"Really Ivan?" Gakushu muttered, he didn't pull away though.

"What? I heard you sneeze earlier, it is a very cute sneeze." Ivan exclaimed as he rubbed Gakushu's hair harder.

"I am your dad for the day, you have my hair after all." Ivan chuckled as he pulled away the towel he just used to dry the strawberry blonde mop. Observing his work, Gakushu's hair was tangled and curly like Ivan's black curly hair.

"No, you are the uncle." Gakushu corrected but plastered on his face was a wide toothy smile, as he tried to push away the Russian while still maintaining the other towel covering him. Ivan soon walked out of the room to give Gakushu some privacy as he changed into his casual clothes.

"Lucia, you're next." Gakushu yelled as he walked out of the bathroom and downstairs, in a black tank top and cargo pants. His hair was neatened up. Lucia got up from her seat at the sofa, she, Ivan, Gretel and Arthur were at the living room and doing an animated Disney movie marathon.

They were currently watching Bells of Notre Dame.

"Okay Gakushu." Lucia sang and then Gakushu let out another sneeze. Lucia stopped, she stood right in front of the strawberry blonde boy, and she checked for his temperature with her hand over
his forehead.

"Gakushu, you are a bit warm there." The blonde German voiced in concerned.

"Lucia, I'm fine." Gakushu insisted as he slapped away her hand.

"See there something wrong?" Arthur joined in the conversation, which also caught the attention of Gretel.

"I think Gakushu is sick." Lucia commented, Gakushu scowled but it looked more of a pout.

"I told you, I'm fine."

"Gakushu, we are reapers, we don't have sickness like humans."

"It will be fine, I can endure a silly cold at school."

"It's the flu." Gretel corrected and Gakushu's cheek turned red from embarrassment.

"I can handle the flu."

"Strawberry, the symptoms for this strain is that-"

Gakushu let out another dainty sneeze and suddenly, a puff of smoke appeared and consumed the cinnamon roll. Everyone started blankly at the smoke, knowing what had happened and waited for the smoke to clear up. They all looked down at the budle of clothes with no Gakushu in sight.

Then a head popped out from the shirt. His eyes widened as he looked up to everyone, his mop of strawberry blonde hair was tangled, it slightly curled up and he titled his head a bit.

"Why are you all so big?" Gakushu voice was higher pitched, he gasped as he covered his mouth with his small hands. Ivan and Lucia had the most massive nosebleed that year, as Gakushu was currently a toddler. He looked down to his now small hands, he reached for his face and found it to be more chubby and his cheeks more bouncy than usual, he pinched himself as if he tried to wake up from this nightmare.

"Ehhhhh!?" Gakushu yelled as he struggled to get up but he was trapped by his now oversized clothes. His shirt as basically a dress for him now.

"That is the symptom, it forces you to de-age." Gretel said, everyone looked down to the de-age Gakushu in complete awe. They never saw Gakushu this young before, and they mentally thanked for the flu that was going around for giving them this. Ten pages were already filled for the Gakushu Asano diary.

Gakushu gaped his mouth wide opened, he tried to turn back to his older self.

"Transform!" Gakushu chanted but nothing happened. "Transform! Transform! Transform." Gakushu was still his toddler self.

"Allow me, transform!" Gretel said and a puff of smoke appeared, now Gretel was in her 20 year old self. Everyone but Arthur looked in awe of what they saw before them, they never seen Gretel in her older body, as she often resided as a teenager. Gretel chanted again and turned back to her previous image.

"See Gakushu-kun." Gretel gestured to Gakushu who held a dejected look on his face. She resisted urge to dive in and hug him.
Gakushu sighed, he knew that he couldn't go to school or back home because of his current state. "What should I do…?" He vulnerably whispered, tears threatened to spill from his big eyes, being a toddler made him a bit more emotional than usual.

"I have to go to school tomorrow…"

"Don't worry, I can easily pretend that I'm Gakushu Asano." Gretel cheerfully reassured, there was so much confidences in her voice that Gakushu was actually considering her offer. He didn't had any choice either way.

"Are you sure?" Gakushu whispered with hope filling his voice. Lucia and Ivan swooned over him and Arthur took photos. The cinnamon roll was far too innocent and vulnerable in that form.

"Sure I'm sure!" Gretel insisted and Gakushu brightly smiled, he nodded as he finally agreed to her request.

"I should get Gakushu back to the Department, I heard that Rilliane was affected as well." Ivan went and scooped up the small Gakushu in his arms. Gakushu tightly hold onto the Russian's black military uniform as if he could so easily drop. He still wore his shirt as a dress.

"Bye guys." Gakushu waved back with his small and chubby hand. Lucia, Arthur and Gretel waved back as they watched Gakushu and Ivan left for the Department.

"Gretel, don't you have to go to Gakuhou's home now?" Arthur said in realisation, Gretel uncharacteristically slumped.

"… I have to live with that man, don't I…?" Gretel groaned in despair, Arthur looked to her with sympathy and patted her back.

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**Day 1**

Gakushu was currently at one of the medical wards at the Department, he laid in bed and was bored out of his mind. Currently he was playing on his phone while the other was a biscuit.

His bedside was already filled with gifts he started to share with the other sick reapers, there were all obviously strawberry themed. Rilliane was next to him and who was currently stuck in a body of an 8 year old. She was sitting by his bedside, writing in her notebook. Behind her was stacks of manga, waiting to be read. In the same room were de-aged reapers in bed or wandering around, just chatting away without a care in the world.

All, including him wore a simple white night gown and circular framed glasses that were generally used for reapers who hasn't graduated yet from their classes.

A reaper from the Icelandic Branch named Greta was conversing with another female reaper from the Norwegian Branch named Ira. Both having the appearances of a 6 year old.

Gakushu spotted a nine year old reaper from the French Branch, another male de-aged from the Indian Branch and another from the Dutch Branch.

Another was from the Japanese Branch who sat in his bed and was completing a quiz. If Gakushu remembered it properly, the boy with neatly cut dark purple hair died two years ago when he hanged himself in his aunt's home. Others described him to be similar to Gakushu, as he lived under his mother's expectations and he always had to be the best in school.
But his mother still loved her son, as distorted or misguided it was, from what Gakushu had gathered, he still received his mother's attention. She would asked what he wanted to eat for dinner and he didn't had to do all the extra work outside of school that Gakushu had to do. Unlike his father, sometimes he didn't mind it when involving his job at the Department.

But it was his dream for his father to love him back, the dreams of his father, Ren and his reaper friends playing in the daisy meadows still haunted him. He thought he was a similar case to Gretel and her nightmares, although it had lessened for some time, it didn't count as a mental episode as it didn't hindered a reaper from completing their shifts for days.

"Is this it? We wait in bed until we're back to normal." Gakushu couldn't believe that this was it, he could be doing his shift until Rilliane's words helped better explain the situation.

"Basically, it doesn't help that we have the strength of a child though…" Rilliane explained as she flipped to the next page. Gakushu let out an 'o' sound, he thought that he felt weaker than usual.

"William-san? Asano-san? Is that you?" A male's voice called out in surprised. The two de-aged reapers turned their head to see boy around the age of 7 with ruffled dark brown haired hair. He had rectangular glasses over his chartreuse phosphorescent.

"William!? Is that you?" Rilliane exclaimed in surprised as she dropped her book. Gakushu stared at his senior in awe. William too exchanged surprised looks to the three.

"I see you got the flu as well..." William T. Spears said, reverting back to his monotone voice.

"Gak-kun! Rillie! William! You are all so cute." Grell called out as he walked or more like dashed to the group. William and Gakushu instantly hid behind Rilliane as now she was the oldest of the three, in terms of appearances.

But Grell still persisted and the three started to run as far away as their little legs could take them.

"I am so getting him back as soon this passes off!" William angrily exclaimed.

"Let me in it too!" Rilliane cried as she carried Gakushu in her arms. Nobody will get this buddle of cinnamon!

Then everyone stopped running when they saw Gakushu's pale complexion, if they knew any better, they saw that he was looking a bit green.

"I think I'm going to be sick." Gakushu then covered his mouth with his tiny hands and his bouncy cheeks swelled up. Everyone around him panicked, knowing what was going to happen next.

I hope that Ren is doing okay.'

Grell offered the small toddler some strawberry flavoured pocky and a pink mochi plushie.

'I wonder how Gretel is doing...' Gakushu thought before he threw up again in his bucket, he felt William and Rilliane patted his back to soothe his pain.

'I hope she is fine...'

I'm so bored!' Gretel mentally moaned mentally out of her mind. 'This class is a joke!'

Gretel, who was now disguised as Gakushu, completed with the male uniform of Kunugigoako Junior high and a strawberry blonde wig. Along with the violet coloured contacts and some makeup,
you could never spot the difference between the two.

Unless you do the sweet sparkle test, but nobody in this school knew about Gakushu's sweet tooth. Gretel begrudgingly thanked Gakushu for not revealing that trait of his, but it didn't make up for the lack of trust he has for his hometown. Especially for his long-time best friend Ren Sakakibara who he has yet reveal his cinnamon self, and Gakushu was the closest one to him in this goddamn school!

Gretel had already finished the set work for each of her classes, it didn't help that she memorised each of Gakushu's textbook in attempts to pass the time.

The teacher spotted the bored look of the disguised reaper and called 'him' out to read a passage from the English textbook, hoping to catch 'him' off guard. Gretel as Gakushu, in a bored look raised from her seat with the opened book in her hands.

She mentally sighed from boredom as she read in perfect and flawless English, "As I raised from my seat to touch the golden light I see before my eyes, I hoped to be engulf by its comforting warmth."

"Is this death, I thought as I faintly smiled and slowly closed my tired eyes. I jumped from my chair, with the memories flashing by to stop me in my path, I took no notice as I kicked away the wooden chair."

"As the light consumed me, darkness soon followed and I never heard the sounds of my neck snapping."

Gretel sneered at the paragraph, it reminded everything of her unforgivable act with the way she died. The class applauded for her perfect English as she sat back down to her seat, some might say that there was a hint of a British accent.

When Ren was called up to read the next verse, Gretel took note that there was a bit of an American accent as he spoke in perfect English.

'It must be all those trips to America that Gakushu has been telling me.' Gretel remembered many times were Gakushu could had spent time with Ren during the school breaks, however the hazel haired boy would have some business in America. And Ren would come back with gifts for Gakushu from his numerous trips.

But there was one gift that Gakushu still treasured to this day, a gift he first received from Ren and it was homemade. She continued her train of thoughts of how Gakushu and Ren would be so cute together.

Other than that, class was dull, she never knew how Gakushu would endure this and daily too! She wondered if Gakushu would gazed at Ren to pass the time, or he worked on his poetry/song book, he could be reading Rilliane's work in class. She did write often in his notebooks.

Science was only manageable as Ren was her lab partner, they talked here and there while conducting an experiment. Even Gretel could see that Ren was bored out of his mind, although she never knew that he was into the sciences. She thought he was more of the artsy kind of guy, until she caught a glance of his notebook filled with complex theories and experiments.

Clearly, they were not set from school but rather outside of the educational building, as if he did them in his spare time.

At lunch time, she spotted Ren flirting with the female body students as she walked around the building. She hid behind a wall, glaring at the girls as she huffed her cheeks.
'No! Ren is going to marry the cinnamon roll!' Gretel declared, at least she had something to do spare her time on while in this school. Okay, humans and reapers couldn't get married for obvious reasons but she didn't like the vibe she was getting from the girls in this school building, something screamed to her as 'bitchy' and 'back-stabbing'.

And Gakushu and Arthur wasn't around to stop her. She internally smirked, it wasn't like she was going against the Departments rules. Since reapers couldn't intervene or prevent a person fated to die, it wasn't like she was going to kill them or prolong their deaths.

And Ren always wondered why the girls were always so scared to flirt back at him. Not that he was complaining about it how, he knew that the girls that flocked around him would backstab him in some way sometime or later.

Ren was bored too, so he played his playboy act to pass the time and he collected information of his classmate's characteristics. The only one he couldn't figure out was Gakushu Asano, he didn't mind though, because that friendship between him and strawberry blonde was definitely real.

As Gakushu explained it to Gretel one time, the reason why Ren was different from the rest of the main building, it was that passion in his hazel brown eyes. Even after he found out that his father was the Chairman of the two they went to, that passion never wavered.

Who knew that passion grew stronger and intensified later in the year?

Day 2.

"Transform! Transform!" Gakushu yelled but to no prevail. He was still his toddler self.

"Transform!"

"Gakushu-chan, you mustn't exert yourself." Rilliane spoke out as she lifted her head from her storybook. "It will pass."

"But Rilliane! Everyone keeps pinching my chinks!" Gakushu yelled as he covered both of his cheeks with his hands as if to protect them. And another nurse came by to pinch his cheeks before walking off to do her rounds.

Gakushu gave Rilliane a look that said 'see!'

"To be honest, everyone wanted to touch them, even when you are your normal self." Gretel's voice called out, the pair looked to see 14 year old Gakushu in front of them and smiling.

'This is so surreal.' Gakushu thought and he marvelled of one of Gretel's many talents.

"How's Ren?" Gakushu innocently asked and his hair bounced.

"He is only making my stay at your school bearable." Gretel answered with a pain filled groan and soon she started to complain of how boring school was and the living conditions with Gakuhou Asano.

"Holy shit! You too Shu!" A voice called out, Rilliane, Gretel and Gakushu turned their heads and met with a mop of light coloured hair and another mop of jet black hair tied in pig tails.

"…Ikeda?" Rilliane looked to the right, and then she looked to the left. "An… You too?"
Gakushu and Rilliane then looked up and saw Tae-sik, holding the two in his arms. Gakushu noticed how more careful he was with his main senior, An as she sat like a doll in his arm while Ikeda was held with Kim's arms around his stomach.

"Hi guys, I see that you got the flu too." Gretel greeted the group as she started to pat on An and Ikeda's hair.

"Yeah, and I was planning to go out drinking with the guys tonight." An pouted as she crossed her arms, she currently had the form of an 7 year old. Ikeda looked like he was the oldest, in terms of appearance as he was around the ages of 10 to 12.

"An, it's only Tuesday." Tae-sik shook his head in disapproval and An let out a 'hmph' sound.

"Hey Shu, did you know that my bed is next to yours?" Ikeda offered a cheekily smile to Gakushu who paled significantly.

And Gakushu moaned as he buried his face with his cute little hands.

"Looks like big brother is here." Ikeda smirked.

"You mean distant cousin." Gakushu corrected.

"Does anyone have a sewing kit around here?" An asked as she jumped out of Tae-sik's arms.

"Anyone?"

Gretel had to deal with Class-E and their antics, not that they noticed her at all, as she wore her reaper uniform. She was wandering around because of how bored she was, she even rediscovered the tunnels Gakushu made in attempts to escape from the German and Russian drinkers.

She reached to the top summit of the mountain and looked around. As she hid out of sight, she couldn't believe of what she was seeing, there was a giant pudding outside of the Class-E building.

She gaped as she couldn't conclude the reasoning behind its creation. She took a photo of it on her customised smartphone and made a mental note to make one once Gakushu gets better.

She later sighed because of what the day had in store for her, another dull day at school with Ren only making it better. Before she walked back to the main building, she hid behind a tree when she spotted a hint of scarlet red along the similar physical traits of Gakushu Asano.

She then mentally slapped herself for this move, this person couldn't possibly be able to see a reaper in their uniform, but she hid behind the tree. As Karma passed by, she took note of how his eyes were almost shaped like Arthur's but it also look like Gakushu's. The structure of his face and body, even the hairstyles were just like the youngest reaper of the group.

'He almost looks like Gakushu.'

And following that logic, if Gakushu looked similar to Hansel, therefore Karma would also look like her twin. However his eyes were the colour of her golden locks. She then clicked her tongue as she cursed the heavens. Karma, who has the face of Hansel also had scarlet blood hair. The colour that dyed her brother's beautiful blonde hair in his own blood.

Fate was definitely playing a game here. But it wasn't good to be negative all the time, so she distracted herself in her more positive and cheeky thoughts.
‘I wonder if I should make a love triangle, Ren and Karma fighting for Gakushu's love.’

‘Chocolate verses Cherries?’

‘But Gakushu is closer to Ren.’ And she continued that train of thought.

*A bored Gretel is a scary Gretel.*

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**Day 3**

When Rilliane looked up from her yaoi manga, she saw that Gakushu wasn't in his bed as it laid empty. ‘Where is he?’

"Where's Gakushu-chan?" Rilliane asked a nearby nurse who was passing by, on his name tag, it reads as Aðalbjörg. She thought how fitting it was for this reaper from the Iceland Branch whose name meant 'noble' and 'help, save, rescue' and working in the Medical Divisions.

"He's at the playground, he wanted to get some fresh air and some fun." Aðalbjörg answered before he left to check on the other patients. His tousled pastel blue hair and it curled inward as he walked.

"Oh… okay." Rilliane contemplated if she should go and supervise on Gakushu. She decided that Gakushu should have some fun without her meddling or constant worrying. Gakushu was still a reaper and it was only the playground.

She was jump out from her white bed to go out and play with Gakushu, but Thomas Freeman came into the picture.

"Thomas… you got the flu too?"

In the Department, there was anything you could imagine, cinemas, shopping malls, food courts, cafés and all sort of places. Then why do reapers go out in the human realm for some fun? There are many reasons, but it wasn't that surprising that they also had play areas.

And since barely anyone visited these playgrounds, Gakushu thought it was a good idea to go out to use his muscles again after being a lot of time in bed. It was peaceful and quiet, the strawberry blonde boy liked this.

It fitted the situation since he de-aged himself as a toddler.

And no-one in sight to pinch his cheeks!

Gakushu tried to play on a swing, as he lay on the seat on his stomach and he struggled to push. He kicked the air with his little legs with no prevail. He sighed for his short stature and he went off for the slide.

After seeing of how disappointing that was, he looked around and see that many of the sets were too big for him to reach.

The monkey bars were crossed off, the flying fox was scratched off from the list, some of the ladders and climbing walls were gone. Gakushu cursed the flu that forced him to transform into a toddler, why could he at least five?!

He then went to the sandpit and started moulding some cake out of the sand. It was fun, for a while and he didn't know what to do next. He turned right and then turned left as he absorbed the quietness
and loneliness.

It was almost suffocating once all of the excitement died off. There wasn't even the sounds of birds chirping or insects buzzing. He knew that the playgrounds here were more enjoyable when you have someone else to play with.

He frowned as he sat there alone, then the memories came into his mind, all those times where he saw parents spend time with their children at places like this. He remembered on memory on that see-saw set, where a daughter and a mother played together happily and gleefully. One where a father pushed his daughter on the swing.

Another with a father watching and supervising his son sliding down the slide, the laughs, the joy, the hugs and kisses. He created all of these scenarios with him and his father, but he knew that it will never happen. Only in his dreams of those daisy meadows.

He felt the tears stinging his eyes, being a toddler made him more emotional and he didn't like it. But since there was no-one around to see him, he cried as he crouched down and hid his face in his knees.

But he wasn't that alone.

"There you are Shu! I have been looking for you~" A certain voice sang out in a teasing manner, a light haired boy slowly approached the toddler with questionable intentions.

"Oh Shu~" Ikeda chirped as he positioned his hands for the ultimate tickle. The toddler jolted from the sound of his 'cousin's' voice and turned around to him.

Ikeda froze and Gakushu realised that he showed his tears to the light haired boy. The Strawberry quickly dried off his tears with his sleeves and ran for it.

"Shu!"

"Wait!" Ikeda called out, but Gakushu continue to run as he ignored his yells. It was still a time were Gakushu hid his tears from those even in the Department, although he showed his truest of self and many of his true emotions. He never liked to cry in front of others, but that all changed in a later future.

As he ran far from Ikeda, his foot missteps and it prompted him to roll off and down the grassy hills.

"Shu!" Ikeda called out as he rushed to the tumbled boy. Gakushu tried to lift himself up from the ground, there were tears rolling down his chubby cheeks and there was a scratch mark on his forehead.

Ikeda rushed to him like heroic prince, he slide his way down and effortlessly down the grassy hill to the toddler Gakushu.

"Are you okay!" Ikeda yelled out in worry, Ikeda bent down and checked for more injuries. It looks like the flu also made reapers more easily prone to injuries, it also gave them more human traits. The light haired boy inspected the scatch on Gakushu's knee and Gakushu hissed from the pain.

"There isn't nothing serious thankfully." Ikeda smiled in relief, he looked up into those same coloured eyes he and all reapers possessed, the tears still flowing down from Gakushu's eyes.

Now, if anyone came by and saw this, he or she would be extremely worried of what Ikeda would do next. After knowing and witnessing several of these two interacting would send the thoughts of
worry and paranoia to anyone. It would often involve Ikeda teasing, stealing some sweets and Gakushu chasing after him angrily.

But if that person were here, they would be surprised of what Gakushu said next.

"S-sorry, it was only instinct." Gakushu hiccupped, he rubbed his eyes with his hands and his lips trembled.

"Shush, its okay." Ikeda comforted the boy as he softly patted the mop of strawberry blonde hair. It was nothing like the usual ruffling to tangle his hair, it was instead a comforting gesture.

What many others didn't know that Ikeda was one of the few people that Gakushu would openly showed his tears to with no problems (at this time). As much as Ikeda teased Gakushu and Gakushu disliked the man, they had these rare moments still.

It all started with Gakushu's first transfer to America to gain more experience, Ikeda was there as his partner and to supervise him, and it was the time where Gakushu witness his 'first murder'.

Although it irked Gakushu as he never liked crying in front of others, even those from the Department and he rather did it alone with no comfort.

He didn't mind if someone did comforted him as he cried.

He knew that those from the Department won't judge, he just felt embarrassed, that's all. Gakushu still wanted to be cool rather than just being cute but he was learning.

"What's wrong, I know that you don't cry for no reason." Ikeda asked, there was no teasing in his voice any more.

Gakushu felt his throat being perched, his voice choked as he struggled to answer. "M-memories, b-b-bad memories." And more tears rained down than ever before.

Ikeda nodded, he didn't pressed for him to explain any further and gently comforted him as he cried.

"Oh, I got something for you." Ikeda said, he took off his backpack to which Gakushu just noticed. After he shredded the bag, he took out a small pink teddy bear. It was the one that Ren made for him during their first year of friendship, the one Ren made for Gakushu's birthday.

"Why?" Gakushu whispered as he reached out for the toy bear, it was much bigger since Gakushu was deduced to a toddler.

"You have been saying how much you been missing the kid, I thought that this would make you better." Gakushu felt his face flushed a bit when Ikeda explained his reasoning.

So he tried to counteract with it with their usual interaction. "So you broke into my room, in the Department, did you stole anything else?"

"Nope, I have the money to buy anything I want." Ikeda chirped, catching on with what Gakushu was doing.

"Then why do you keep stealing my sweets."

"Because it's funny."

Gakushu stayed quiet for a moment, as he buried his face in the teddy bear. "Thank-you Ikeda…”
Ikeda smiled bright as he patted Gakushu's head. "Don't mention it, I always hated to see you cry."

"Come on, I offer you a piggy back." And Gakushu accepted Ikeda's request with no problems.

Once they reached back to the ward, Rilliane came running up to them with tears in her eyes.

"What happened!?"

"I fell and rolled down a hill." Gakushu explained bluntly as he dropped himself down to the ground. Then Rilliane started to smother him, hugging him tightly and covering him in snot and tears.

"I knew I should had come with you!" Rilliane cried, Gakushu tried to free himself from her hold and he failed miserably. Her motherly instincts were too strong. "I'm sorry Gakushu-chan!"

"I failed as a mother!"

"Rilliane, I can't breathe…” Gakushu ushered. Meanwhile, Ikeda was laughing his ass off and was rolling on the grounds of the medical wards.

"I'm so sorry Gakushu-chan!"

And Gakushu was thankful that Rilliane did this rarely now. But he wished that he could say the same for Ivan and Lucia.

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**Day 4**

"Ikeda! Get back here!" Gakushu screamed from the top of his lungs as he chased Ikeda around the Department. Both of whom were now back to their not-so-children self. Ikeda was holding Gakushu's favourite of strawberry shortcake in his hand as he ran.

"Run Forrest! Run!" Ikeda laughed as he ran with Gakushu followed in pursuit.

"Not again." Johnny sighed to himself as he watched the two in their chase. "This is too early in the morning."

"Damn it Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled angrily.

"They are really like siblings." An commented and back to her normal self.

"I'm free from the clutches of Gakuhou Asano!" Gretel yelled in joy as she arrived to the Department's central building, she rather do paperwork than to live under the same roof as that man.

"Free!"

"Run Forrest!" Ikeda joked and Gakushu tackled him to the ground. Now they were wrestling.

"Give it back!"

"Looks like Ikeda is playing around again." Gretel said.

"You think that Ikeda would get sick of Shuuie breaking his ribs." Johnny spoke.

"I think it is their way of showing their love for each other." Gretel sang and Johnny eyed at her weirdly.

"Really Gretel?"
"Yes, now that you excuse me. I'm going to help Arthur on his paperwork shifts."

"Ikeda! Just give it already!"

"Hahahahahahahahaha!"

EXTRA

Gakushu was still awake, he could hear the sound of the de-aged children sleeping soundly as he hid under his blanket. Rilliane was sleeping quietly but Ikeda was snoring.

Although he didn't wore his glasses, he could still see the outline of the bear in his little arms. He lightly blushed as he looked into the bear's beaded eyes.

'Hey Ren… Do you mind hearing my wish?' He received no answer as expected, but he continued on.

'I know it's selfish but…'

'Do you mind waiting for me?'

'Once I am human again, once I am able to earn my forgiveness.'

'Can we be friends again?'

There was no answer still and Gakushu knew that.

But he could already hear his friend's voice calling out to him, saying "of course" and it brought some comfort to him. He must work harder if he wanted to be reincarnated with Ren soon.

And Gakushu fell asleep, with the bear in his arms, it being hugged tightly as Gakushu dreamt that same dream again.

'Ren… my one…'

My first friend.

And he shredded a single tear as he slept.

Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven'.

"But I know that Rilliane would never wish for such a thing."

"I will shoot you little piece of shit."

"Stop it you idiot!"

"Was that really necessary Shu?"

Chapter: Gunpoint
It was very early in the morning. Gakushu was awakened by the sound of his phone going off and it started to ring, playing the song 'History Maker'. The strawberry blonde boy groggily reached out to the desk beside his bed for his phone.

There were several texts he had missed and all were from Viktor, the reaper from the Bulgarian Branch.

When he finally grabbed it, he picked it up and answered the phone. He let out a yawn before he said, "Hello?"

"Hey Gakushu, I need you in the Technology division."

"I will be right there." And Gakushu ended the call, he dragged himself out of the comfort of his bed and dressed himself in his ice-skating gear. His ice-skates were at the reaper run gym, his designed them himself but Gretel was the one who created them. He went to the bathroom to brush his teeth and neatened his bed hair, and it looked like he was the only one up and this early today.

Gretel was sleeping peacefully in her room, Arthur decided to take the sofa for the night and he slept with no problems, his face though looked like he was deep in thought.

He folded and placed his school uniform in his bag and he walked out of the house on his tip-toes.

Gakushu used one of the doors from the nearest reaper-run Team Mart convenience stores, he entered the reaper realm after he greeted Antinio and headed his way for the one of the many scientific divisions. Along the way, he greeted passing reapers going on their shifts or jobs. From the French, to the American, to the Indian, to the Jordanian, and to the Egyptian, Gakushu greeted all sorts of nationalities.

The automatic doors opened wide and it allowed Gakushu to enter into the white room. In the middle of the room was Viktor, he sat in his office chair and his legs rested on the table. Gakushu could tell that this man never tidied himself, as seen with the messy table and his messy black-blue bed hair he didn't bother to neaten up.

"Morning Viktor." Gakushu yawned, he glanced up to see the lit screen and Ritsu's face.

"I could had sworn it was the afternoon." Viktor turned around, he had a Rubik cube he was attempting to solve. The scientist then threw it to the boy, he easily caught and in just under ten seconds, Gakushu had finished the cube.

"You are probably using the time from your European clock." Gakushu said as he threw back the puzzle to Viktor. The Reaper world didn't really have a sense of time, as it rather mimics it. That was why Gakushu and every reaper that was dispatched in the human world has several clocks for each time zone to keep track of time in their phones. And the app was created long before the Victorian Era.

"Did something happened?" Gakushu asked as he walked closer to the desk. He spotted a bowl filled with pink wrapped bon-bon candies and took one for himself.

"Ritsu was getting worried, you didn't come for two days." Viktor twirled back to face Ritsu.
"Hi Ritsu, sorry that I haven't visit you in the weekends but I wouldn't have anything to say about Class-E." Gakushu slightly bowed as he apologised. "I did found out that the entire class went to the Candy Fest concert, never imagined that Akabane was a fan though."

"What are you doing Viktor?" Gakushu asked as he eyed at the desk, it was filled with content and blueprints. Then his nose started to itch when he caught a scent of burning tobacco. 'I just had to come at the wrong time.'

"First on the list, I'm making a program to make the girl feel and understand emotions."

"Why?" Gakushu then grabbed another handful of bon-bon candies to distract himself from the bitter smoky smell.

"The Department has no use for Ritsu anymore, so I decided to keep her and she didn't need to go to the trash compactor." Viktor explained and Gakushu let out an 'o' sound. "So~ I got myself a new friend, we have been getting along."

Ritsu nodded and Gakushu raised an eyebrow over this. He was now concerned of Ritsu's wellbeing, even if she was an AI program.

"This room would be converted back to a standard lab or surveillance rooms later, take your pick."

Viktor pressed a button and mute symbol appeared on her screen. She tried to speak out but no voice came out of her mouth, Gakushu noticed that Viktor was writing on a piece of note paper.

He showed it to Ritsu. 'Sorry Ritsu but this is going to be a private conversion. You won't be able to interrupt or hear our talk. Don't worry, this doesn't concern you or your class.'

"Don't AI have the ability to read lip movement?" Gakushu asked, although he appeared calmly on the outside, inside he was internally screaming.

Bulgarian boringly explained. "This one used to, we erased that program the moment she entered into the Department."

The Bulgarian reaper turned back to the strawberry blonde then gave him a file report. "Here, a little birdie of mine has been telling me about your research on Rilliane's little brother."

"...You hacked into my history log, didn't you?" Gakushu let out a groan, he took out his phone and started to update it. He knew he should had gotten that update yesterday, but he was having such a fun time with Ren and the others.

"The kid is still alive, although he's gone in the public's eye, he's still active in the government's eye. He sends in reports to the American government." Viktor casually said, after Gakushu finished updating his phone, he quickly read through the report. "Saying how they should improve on their computer defence systems and advice on their tech."

"So not only Allen is considered a prodigy in the field of sciences since the age of five, he is also talented in law and technology." Gakushu spoken his mind out a bit as he popped another candy into his mouth. "That would also include mathematics as well..."

Viktor looked to Gakushu with a lazy smile. "Imagine him as a reaper though, he would be a big help for my division."

"And he and Rilliane would be reunited again." Gakushu answered with a small frown and he shook his head. "But I know that Rilliane would never wish for such a thing."
Viktor returned an emotionless expression to Gakushu's answer, he knew that no one in the Department would wish for someone to endure this role of a Grim Reaper, and he quickly switched back to his usual cheery self.

"One of our several little American moles, Alfred said that this has been going on since he disappeared after Rilliane's death, the government allowed him to disappear the way he did because he is useful and giving them that secret edge."

"Nobody knows where the boy is right now." Viktor leaned over to the table and rubbed his cigarette into the ash tray. He pulled out another fresh one and a lighter, Gakushu's nose twitched from the fresh smell of a newly lit cigarette. "One time, they received information and it was traced back from Belgium, another time was in Brazil."

"Can't you use the Identification Division to find him? Although his records are destroyed, surely we have some papers ourselves?" Gakushu covered his mouth and nose with his hand as he spoke.

"Tried it, I asked one of my connections, Yuri for his files but it can't be accessed." Viktor answered as he blew out the smoke, thankfully not into Gakushu's face. "And I own him a favour now."

"Why?" Gakushu worded, he then caught an oncoming bon-bon candy throw by the older reaper.

"Something about the files getting processed in the list or something like that." Viktor exhaled out the smoke once more. "I wish he actually explained it, I think we reapers love to be vague."

"Have you not seen us laughing when we were watching the governments when William came into their conference about Neubert on TV?"

"The one where we snuck in Ikeda, in uniform with a camera?" Viktor pondered and Gakushu nodded. "And the one where we played bingo with?"

"They thought that Christopher was a clone after William left."

Viktor chuckled as he pressed the button that allowed Ritsu to talk again. "Alright Ritsu, we are done now."

"…Gakushu-san, why are you wearing those clothes?" Ritsu asked, interrupting with the flow of the conversion to the strawberry blonde boy.

"Ice skating practice." Gakushu answered with the look of determination in his eyes.

And Ritsu thought that she was malfunctioning when she saw sparkles surrounding the boy.

"Gakushu has been coming to class so late lately." Nagisa spoke out loud to himself as he sat by his school desk. "Well, he's on time but not first…"

It was kind of unsettling of how Nagisa was so concerned for the strawberry blonde boy, as if Gakushu used his persuasive abilities to had him wrapped around his finger. It was probably how fishy it was when they named Nagisa as the 'second friend.'

But the way Karma saw it, Nagisa acted like an overprotective brother, he didn't know why was it was there.

"Good morning boys and girls!" Korosensei burst into the class with life, ready to jumpstart the morning, but as he counted, he knew that one person was missing. "Where's Asano-kun?"
"I'm here." Gakushu called out, everyone almost jumped of how he just appeared out of nowhere. "Was I late?"

"No Asano-kun, you are right on time." Korosensei said as he ushered Gakushu onto the room. As Gakushu walked, the class was having a difficult time, other than Nagisa and maybe Karma in seeing Gakushu as his 'old self'. Ever since that Candy Fest concert on learning new information about the strawberry blonde, and many were denying it like Terasaka.

Others like Karma and Nagisa were taking it rather well, Nagisa agreed on everything of what the Backers said. Kayano, Isogai, Rio and Okuda were just following behind them.

Gakushu walked to his desk and set up his work. He mentally sighed in relief, 'right on time.' He got so caught up with his ice-skating that when he finally checked for the time, he only had 15 minutes before the bell rings.

The first lesson on Monday was English, and they had to write a narrative in the language. 'Child's play.' Gakushu mentally huffed, he retained that same bored look throughout the class.

"Oh Second-Place, do you have any siblings?" Karma whispered to him, Gakushu blinked and he tilted his head a bit to the side in confusion. He couldn't scowl or act annoyed that Karma was speaking to him, or that he used that blasted nickname.

"No, I'm the only child." Gakushu said as he shook his head, he turned back to do his work that he was already almost completing. Karma would had said bullshit on this by Korosensei caught the two talking in his class.

'….What?' That was the thoughts of the entire class merging. 'Then how do you explain of your big sister and big brother!?'

'What did Gretel say to them? Or was it An and the group?' Gakushu thought as he zoned out almost all of Korosensei's lecture.

'I knew I should had stay for a bit longer to make sure they didn't mention anything about… my real self.'

'But Korosensei understood Van and his Vietnamese.'

'… I really want some cake now…' He could already feel a headache coming this morning and he just ate some strawberry cake earlier. He prayed the heavens that his teacher won't reveal that secret of his.

PE came as soon it arrived, the daily objective had failed, which was restraining one's reaper influenced strength. And there was another failed attempted from his classmates on assassinating their 'alien' teacher, Korosensei but that was beside the point. Gakushu was still waiting on orders if they ever came because of his reports on Korosensei's characteristics.

Gakushu was deep in thought as he performed his warm-ups, which were many on flexibility and once again, he impressed the entire class when he did the position of a Biellmann spin. There were also other activities for assessment. And he was over thinking, it was a bad habit of his.

He had been hearing rumours that the higher ups knew of Korosensei, and they only got involved when new information was found that directly links his teacher back to the Department.

It would make sense but why bother to have him enter Class-E, but they wanted a mole and one that
won't drew noticeable attention. And Gakushu was their perfect candidate, he was a student of the school Class-E was set in and his transfer wouldn't batter an eyelid. Karma could also see reapers in their uniform as well.

'I guess that makes sense…'

'Then why have Thomas do that inspection thing, he would easily draw in attention and the Department, if the rumours are true that they already knew Korosensei was human. But they still needed identification and Korosensei didn't look human which was an understatement, his memories helped to place a name or tile on his face.

But he could had done that in uniform, where Korosensei wouldn't even notice his presences. But the Department did showed of their power when Thomas cut off one of the octopus's tentacles with a weapon that wasn't green. Needing to add some influence on the class, fear maybe?'

As Gakushu was lost in thought, Chiba and a fellow classmate was doing some ball exercises when they accidently kicked it directly to Gakushu who did his gymnastic like exercises on his own.

"Gakushu! Look out!"

Gakushu without even looking, he caught the ball with ease as he continued to walk as if a ball didn't came straight for him. 'What if Korosensei's body was because of a reaper's DNA? But how and where can a human obtain our DNA?'

'But Gretel had said that humans are known to be adaptable.' Gakushu tried to reason with himself with several excuses, even though they were not answering his questions.

"Ah… Asano-san?"

Gakushu continued his train of thought, not noticing the many eyes plastering on the strawberry blonde as he trailed on with the ball in his hands.

'Damn it! Why am I even thinking about this!? Gakushu ended his thoughts abruptly and rather angrily as well. 'Why am I even questioning this!? I am only following orders!'

'But why is there a human yellow octopus as my teacher in my father's school?!'

'And why does he allow it in the first place!?'

'Who wants to become a yellow octopus!?'

'Why do they have an AI program as one of their students!?'

'Why can't I have anything normal in this class!? God damn it!'

He had forgotten to hold back his strength, he pressed the ball hard and with such force that it exploded… Gakushu snapped back into reality as he looked down in his hands, there was the remains of the ball.

Everyone looked on in silent at Gakushu with blank faces, and even Korosensei had a poker face.

Nagisa looked like he was the one taking it well, as he was the one who saw Gakushu punched down a tree. Although that was very hard to take in, he was sure that it was a lucky shot and the tree was sick.

Although Gakushu looked collected and calm on the outside, inside he was internally screaming and
panicking. ‘…Not again!’ And then another came, 'When did I have the ball!?

"We really need to replace the balls, we had that patch for years." Korosensei muttered to himself and soon came the conversation along the class.

"Why do we always get the crappy equipment?"

"Because we are the End Class."

"But we beaten the others and their asses."

Gakushu subtly glanced at his teacher as if he were his saviour. And then the bell rang to signal lunch came. He really needed that cake now.

Lunch time came as Gakushu sat at his usual spot, however he was nervous and jumpy as he slowly snacked on his melon bread.

Why? It was rather simple, the Pudding song.

'We may or may not had mentioned the Pudding Song on Saturday.' Johnny texted the boy. Gakushu pray to God that they didn't add some context. That and the other time when he was caught by Nagisa. Gakushu almost punched a tree out of embarrassment.

He let out a sigh, he swore to God that Antonio planned for that to happen but it was his fault as well.

"Gakushu-san, sorry that I'm late." Nagisa's voice called out, Gakushu perked his head up and was about to greet his friend.

"Hi Nagisa-"Gakushu abruptly stopped after seeing a certain devilish red haired boy next to Nagisa and approaching to him.

"Yo Second-Place!" Karma called out with his devilish smile as he waved, and Gakushu internally screamed.

"Karma wanted to join." Nagisa said as he sat himself next to Gakushu who continued to tensely munch on his pastry. As violet contacted eyes met with amber golden eyes, Gakushu was quickly forming a plan on how to deal with Karma Akabane.

'Just like of him like Ikeda… but I don't want to break his ribs!'

'But Ikeda has one of those moments, as much as it was hard to tell with all of our fights. Or admit.'

"Yeah, as much as I hate to say." Karma pouted as he let out a sigh. "But I wanted to thank you for saving my ass last Friday."

"Let me guess, you laid there on the floor because you got yourself into a fight with a gang." Gakushu darkly joked, no longer could Nagisa sense the cinnamon-ness from the strawberry blonde boy. Now he saw someone who closed off their bridges, just like the boy from the main building.

Gakushu knew the true reason as he was the one who knocked Karma unconscious but he couldn't say that, obviously. 'And I need to be more careful when I do my nightly shifts, Akabane will be more active to find the killer.'

'Who else does the night shifts in Kunugigoako town?' Gakushu pondered. 'I am sure that they got
"Haha, very funny." Karma let out a humourless laugh as he sat down, forming a triangular shape as the three sat together. "I tried to catch myself a serial killer and I failed."

And that line resonances a bit with Gretel, Gakushu thought that it was because of his smile, as if it was nothing but a milder hindrance. 'No, it could be the schemes they make, they were usually the masterminds. It is just the intentions were different.' He almost had the image of Gretel overlapping Karma.

"You what?!" Nagisa almost screamed into his friend's ear and promptly started to lecture on the red devil.

Gakushu started zoned out from the pair's argument, he tried to create as little presence as he could as he took out his phone and started to watch some ice-skating videos.

'Born to make history.' Gakushu hummed to himself. When he sense that the conversation between the two friends was about to end, he turned off and the screen went black.

"It doesn't matter, I was saved by Second-Place when he scared off the killer and picked me up."

"More like dragged you." Gakushu commented in a monotone as he put away his phone in his pockets. His keychains rattled and he pulled out a book of poetry and a language dictionary.

'Her words, Rilliane Williams.' Karma read the title of Gakushu's book of the week in his head. The Strawberry borrowed the book from his senior.

'This is getting nowhere…' Nagisa thought as Gakushu buried himself in his book, so he decided to change the topic of the conversation.

"So Gakushu-san, why didn't you tell us that you knew Candy Fest?" Nagisa pointed out, Gakushu perked his head up from the pages, and his short strawberry blonde hair bounced from the gesture.

Karma and Nagisa resisted the urge to touch and pat his soft hair. Karma knew that his hair was soft and pleasant to touch, Nagisa wanted to see if his hair was as soft as his cheeks.

"You never asked." Gakushu blurted bluntly.

"But they are like YouTube celebrities!" Nagisa retorted with passion.

"But then you would be friends because of my connections, not because of m-" Gakushu carelessly whispered to himself before he finished his sentence. Nagisa felt his heart breaking, he should have known this because of that fake date incident, where he created the illusion that he was going out with Gakushu because of his father.

"It wasn't important at the time, I didn't want to boast about my connections."

Nagisa resisted the urge to bear hug him and cover him in tears and snot. Ivan and Lucia would had been proud. Karma said nothing and had an unreadable expression.

"But how was it? How was the concert?" Gakushu asked in a polite smile and Nagisa instantly brightened up.

"It was awesome!" And Nagisa started to ramble on of how amazing the day was, Gakushu happily took it in as he listened.
"Although, your friends are quite… how should I say this?"

"Protective." Gakushu answered for Nagisa.

Nagisa nodded before he continued on with his speech. "Hazel, or I should say Gretel."

'So she did revealed herself…'

"Said that she was your big sister."

"It is just titles, like how you see Class-E as a family, they are also family to me." Gakushu gave out another short answer, but it was detailed at least. Gakushu went back to his book when Karma spoke to Nagisa and blocking out their words from his ears.

He noticed a gap between the pages, like a small bookmark was placed and when Gakushu opened over to the page. There was a small piece of folded paper.

'Did Rilliane wrote me another poem?' He thought to himself, he felt a spark of excitement from the mere thought of it. He internally smiled as he started to unfold it but only to be met with chaotic writing.

Gakushu froze as his violet eyes gazed at the messy handwriting. He has seen this type of writing before, this and with the scribbles of faces on the lined crumbled sheet of paper. She only did this when she has her mental breakdown.

Curiosity got the better of him as he continued to read that sheet of crumbled paper.

'What colour? What colour? What colour?' Those lines repeated many times as it littered the page.

'What colour are my eyes again?' There was tears marks on the sheet as Gakushu slowly analysed the page. He knew that he couldn't gave her most wanted answer, as words couldn't described to the detail of her once ocean eyes nor that her mind blocked off the images.

'What colour?' It said again as Gakushu drifted to the end of the page at the bottom.

'What colour?'

'What colour?'

'What colour?'

'What was his face like again?'

'… So that is why she has a mental breakdown.' Gakushu connected the dots. He sadly smiled as he continued to reread the page.

'What colour?'

'Rilliane…'

He could already picture her in the Ward, as she sat on the white floors on her knees, and behind the glass panel. She would mutter to herself for her eye colour, as the pages spawned around her as she would leaned over and scribbled. Her brown hazel hair would be let loose with some strands covering her face.

'Rilliane…'
There was a time where Gakushu tried everything to help his main senior, he dressed up as Lucia's child to comfort her and ease her unstable mind. For An, he could always be on the lookout for lookalikes for her abusive former partner and warn her and the others. However for Rilliane, he could do nothing but watch on, he couldn't show her pictures of her former self because her mind blocked off the photos.

Although Rilliane said it was fine, that this will soon pass, it didn't help to soothe away the hopelessness Gakushu felt and how useless he was. It was good that Rilliane had hers rarely.

"Gakushu-san."

"Gakushu? Are you okay?" Nagisa's voice called Gakushu back from his thoughts. He slowly lifted his head to see the both of them, even Karma Akabane looked at him with worry.

'That's weird…' Gakushu thought.

"Nagisa, thank you for sitting with me but I have to go for a bit." Gakushu said as he raise from the ground and tucked away Rilliane's note into his pockets, before he could take a step away, Karma quickly grabbed onto his wrist.

Gakushu flinched, not from the pain but from the surprise from the sudden gesture.

"Akabane, let go." Gakushu held back his yell, he knew that he had to be careful when holding Karma's grip. He didn't want to have Karma go to hospital to fix a broken wrist, and worst case scenario, a broken arm.

"What's wrong? Is there something on my face-" Gakushu slowly touched his face and felt something wet, especially around the higher part of his cheeks. He now realised that he was tearing up behind his contacts. He would had sobbed, he was learning to show more of his emotions, including his tears to others (especially those from the Department and Ren), but Karma was here as well.

Karma Akabane was here…

'Shit! Now I cried in front of the red head demon.' Gakushu panicked, almost terrified of what Karma would do or say next. He felt sick to his stomach as dread started to fill in his system.

Gakushu shook his head as he wiped away the salty tears with his sleeves. "No, it was just the dust. That was all." He gave out his excuse and neither of the two brought it, if anything Karma's grip around his wrist was becoming tighter.

"Gakushu-san, it is okay." Nagisa soothed with caring words as he reached out to pat his head.

Nagisa mentally slapped himself for thinking of how Gakushu was looking right now, with how his tears rolling down his cheeks made them softer and chubbier. 'There is a time and place for that, Nagisa!'

"I told you, I'm fine." Gakushu said as he slapped away Nagisa's hand. "Something was in my eye, now let go of me Akabane."

"You're crying." Karma pointed the obvious.

'I'm not crying! Gakushu snapped back in denial as he swiftly and successfully pulled away from Karma's hold. But if anything, more tears rained down from his violet eyes which furthered to betray his words. He couldn't help it, he knew why he was crying, he was crying for Rilliane, his friend, his
big sister who took a role of being a mother to Gakushu Asano.

He wasn't crying for himself, as he was crying for her. He was crying because he felt useless.

"I'm not crying…" Gakushu whispered in denial, he glared back at the amber eyes as he lashed out to the red head. "I'm not crying you bastard!"

Karma noticed that Gakushu was becoming more frantic and Gakushu hated himself more that he showed his tears to his worst enemy, the devilish Karma Akabane. He wished that Ivan or even Ikeda was here to take his place instead, why did he decided to show up?!

He at least knew what Ikeda would do in this situation.

He rather face with a situation of explaining to Nagisa about the famous pudding song.

"Gakushu… you're not fooling anyone." Karma softly spoke, Gakushu realised that he dropped that nickname and he didn't like it. The dread grew and grew inside of him.

"I'm really not crying, it is only the dust." Gakushu reasoned with the pair, and more to Karma who only frowned at his answer.

"Gakushu…" Nagisa whispered in a sombre tone.

"Gakushu, why are you so hesitant on hiding away everything?" Karma asked, Gakushu couldn't detect any taunting or anything with malice in this voice.

"Why are you so scared of us?"

Gakushu made an attempt to run, but Karma knew well ahead that the strawberry blonde boy wanted to make his escape. Karma tackled Gakushu to the ground, Nagisa ran up to the two swiftly and in worry for his two friends.

Gakushu couldn't do anything, he already showed his reaper influenced strength today and he was only saved with an excuse from his teacher. He wanted to escape but he didn't want to break or hurt Karma. "Get off of me!"

"No, I won't." Karma stated, he noticed how much smaller Gakushu felt, although they were similar height. He cupped at his chin and tilted toward to him. "Not until you answer my questions."

"Karma! That is enough!" Nagisa yelled as he was about to pull Karma off from the youngest student of Class-E.

Gakushu's face contorted into fury and with a hint of pain. "You of all people should be laughing at me!"

There, he finally said it.

"Hey isn't it funny Akabane! Your rival! This so called second-place is fucking crying!"

The Strawberry pushed Karma over, Karma flinched from the pain as Gakushu got himself up from the ground. "Crying over a note! Crying over of how useless I really am!"

"This is who I am! I'm not that strong boy that you knew, this whole town knew and the image I desperately clung to for all these years."

"It was all your fault! If it wasn't for you planning that whole fake date that day! Everything would
had been fine, you would never saw me like that!" Gakushu ranted, his mouth spewed out and without thinking. He knows it, he knew that he would regret his words because they weren't but his emotions got the better of him.

And Nagisa knew that.

"Just do it already! Get it over and done with!" Gakushu yelled in passionate anger but Karma said nothing. He waited until the strawberry blonde calmed down, he breathed heavily due to the yelling before the red-head spoke.

"...Why would I?" Karma said and it completely caught Gakushu off guard. His jaw gapped opened from surprised. "Why do I have to laugh at someone's tears?"

"Why would anyone?"

And for some reason, it sounded so similar with Gretel and Ikeda.

'Why would anyone?'

"It's okay, it's not healthy to keep your feelings hidden away." Karma gave Gakushu a smile, not a smirk Gakushu often associate with Karma, but a gentle smile. Even Nagisa was shocked.

"Go ahead, I won't judge you nor laugh like Nagisa..." Karma continued to help Gakushu in his little way, Gakushu couldn't help but not think of Gretel. And if Karma was like Gretel, then Gakushu couldn't help it but to let everything out.

And the way he positioned himself was like Ikeda almost, that relaxed and casual stance, yet he had the grace and similar appearance of Gretel's.

Gakushu still tried to hold back the tears, his leg for some reason shook and he sink back to the ground. He bit his lip as he resisted the urge to cry, crying in public but and when Karma started to pat on his hair, all the tears flowed so easily. He no longer denied his tears as he hid his face in his knee and arms. He let out a sniffle and he stayed in that position for a couple of minutes.

Free from his mask once again.

"Gakushu-san... are you feeling better now?" Nagisa finally asked, Gakushu slightly lifted his head up and nodded. Gakushu looked so much younger and innocent in front of them.

"I'm fine." He muttered, his tears dried up but his eyes were red. "Like last time, can you please not tell the class about this?"

"Sure, won't we Karma." Nagisa glanced to his red friend with his blue gaze, as he knew that Gakushu was going on his own pace after seeing it with Karma.

'... But Korosensei...' The alien teacher entered into Karma's mind, Nagisa seemly had the same thought and the both paled at went unnoticed by the cinnamon roll.

"Would you like to talk about it?" Nagisa shifted back to Gakushu, and he started to nibble on his chocolate bar as he sniffled. The blue haired boy did a good job there not having a nosebleed, he started to imagine the flat dog ears drooping on Gakushu.

"No, it is something you wouldn't understand... it's too personal." Gakushu whispered and his eyes looked down to the ground. "It's about my friend..."
"I understand." Nagisa said, and he nor Karma pressed on for further details.

And it continued for some time, with mainly Nagisa starting and running the conversation as he comforted the boy. Karma mostly stayed at the sidelines until he checked for the time on his phone.

"Here you go." Karma sang, he passed the strawberry blonde with his favourite brand of strawberry milk.

"…Is it poisoned?" Gakushu asked as cautiously looked at the carton. He remembered of the peace offering Karma gave him not too long ago, he still hasn't drunk it yet.

"Seriously, you think it is poisoned?!" Karma exclaimed, he snatched the strawberry milk carton from Gakushu's hand suddenly. He had the straw stabbed into the box and started to drink before he returned it to Gakushu by shoving it into his hands.

"There, I'm not dead." Karma said with a smirk, but on the inside, he was getting frustrated of Gakushu's lack in trust in him and in the Class (excluding Nagisa). Did he forget what just happened?! Gakushu only blinked his violet eyes at Karma and was silent for a couple of seconds.

"I am your friend too!" Karma proclaimed with determination in his tone, expression and flared in his amber eyes. Nagisa looked to him as if he was proud.

Then the unexpected came, Gakushu's frown slowly morphed into a kind and warm smile.

It wasn't the fake and polite smile they once often seen back when Gakushu was in the main building. It was a real and actual smile. And Gakushu let out a chuckle, his cheeks turned slightly pink.

"I guess you are." Gakushu said and the bell rang, he stood up walked past Karma and into building as he sipped his given strawberry milk. It looks like Gakushu has trusted Karma now and Karma felt his face became hot for some reason.

"Um… Karma." Nagisa voiced called Karma back into reality and the red head realised that he had a nosebleed. He was then handed a handkerchief by the blue haired boy.

"Shit! Don't you dare say anything…" Karma's frantic voice slowed down as he looked to Nagisa. He too had a nosebleed.

"...."

"

"… So~ Nice weather we are having, right Karma?"

When the final bell rang, Gakushu was the first as usual to leave the building and it obviously created questions for Class-E.

"Where does Gakushu go? He almost always leave first."

"I… I actually don’t know…"

"I'll find him." Itona spoke as he turned on one of his projects, a remote controlled drone with a surveillance camera. He then switched on his laptop screen and started to control the device.

"What do we really know about Asano-san?"
"He is friends with Candy Fest." Karma pointed out. "And several of his friends has an obvious age gap, almost all are not Japanese."

Korosensei immediately took out his notebook to write all of this glorious knowledge down.

"He likes soccer, singing and dancing, baking, writing." Nagisa tried to count off the hobbies of Gakushu from the top of his head. "His favourite flavour is strawberries."

Terasaka and Karma tried not to laugh for how funny it was, that a strawberry blonde boy loves strawberries. Second Place was good but, Karma was going to call him Strawberry for now on.

Karma just realised something, that worker from the convenience store, Antonio Abano. Whenever the red head saw him to buy some strawberry milk, the tanned man would often had a nosebleed and said that it was the cinnamon roll. He knew that it was strange but he would shrug it off. Then he had the same effect from Gakushu and Antonio knew him… Gakushu was the cinnamon roll.

Everything made so much more sense. Then he had a devilish thought, wasn't Korosensei a bit of a pervert?

I think Gakushu is staying at one of his friend's house." Karma then added and at this, Nagisa let out a loud sigh of relief. "He has have some major trust issues."

"And it revolves around his father…" Nagisa whispered.

The class was noticed of how it was only Nagisa and Karma that was conversing about Gakushu. Like two concerned older brothers.

"I found him." Itona spoke up and every eye was directed at the screen.

This year had been very eventful for Gakushu Asano.

At the beginning of the year, he started off his first day back to school by already smashing his alarm clock because his phone was getting repaired. Then he questioned Rilliane about the state of the moon and quickly scratched it off from his mental list. Sadly Ren was away in America for a few weeks at the start which left Gakushu somewhat alone during school.

Then Gretel signed him off for the Department's fighting tournament without his knowledge, which resulted Gretel pretending to be him as he trained. He shuddered at the activities that were made for the game. Then he got his arm bit by a Bizarre doll which in turn helped him figured out one of his opponent's weakness.

There were that time when Gakushu got sick and de-aged himself the age of a toddler. Then another flu struck him which left him with the characteristics of a cat and a day after that of a dog. He had the animal ears to prove it but he could only spoke in animal noises. This was the year where he witnessed his first suicide.

And boy, then he got involved in an incident which resulted in the Department making a new program for juniors, specifically for those who lost all or majority of their human memories. It was where one junior learnt what the unforgivable sin actually was… By slashing Gakushu's chest with the Death Scythe and witnessing the strawberry blonde's memories. And then there was the whole Class-E business.

And he made two new friends from this town, Nagisa Shiota and the unlikely guy in the world, Karma Akabane.
So what has Gakushu gotten himself this time? He was currently held at gunpoint by a lone human male. As Gakushu was lead back to the mountain and zoning out from the man's monolog and his hatred for the Asano family.

Gakushu just wanted to get some cake (and see Ren), but no~ He had to hear how this man blamed his father for his current living conditions. Gakushu resisted the urge to punch a tree or this man in the face, but he might as well play for a bit. He needed to vent, it has been a while…

Meanwhile, the class watched in horror that their fellow classmate was being held at gunpoint from the screen. What was he going to do? Everyone froze in their place from how tense the atmosphere was.

"A revolver model eh? How boring of you." Gakushu let out a yawn, he closed one of his eyes and the other glanced at the horrid man as he faced him.

"I will shoot you little piece of shit."

"Shoot me then." Gakushu said in a bored tone, his uninterested eyes dazed elsewhere. Eyes were shot wide opened, from the man and of the class.

"What!?" The gunman exclaimed, he didn't believed of what he just heard. That was the same reaction from Class-E.

"I thought you wanted to shoot, go ahead then." Gakushu said again with no fear in his voice, everyone else could see a sneer slowly forming on his face. "What are you waiting for?"

The class knew that Gakushu was prideful and confident in his abilities, but this was too much!

"Let's get it over and done with." Gakushu spoke in a polite smile, the smile he often used back when he was in the main building.

Nagisa and Karma were about to dash out of the building, however blocking the door uncharacteristically was Korosensei.

"Korosensei! Get out of the way!" Karma screamed at his teacher but the yellow octopus wouldn't move a bludge.

The overprotectiveness in the two kicked off by a landslide.

'Why?'

"Are you really ready to have your blood soaked of a child? Can you take that responsibility?" Gakushu continued to egg the man on.

"Stop it you idiot!" Karma yelled at the screen, the class was filled with yells and screams as they watched in horror as the gunmen pushed the trigger towards him.

"Just shoot, this isn't the first time you know."

"Fore!" A voice called out and a golf club was met to his attacker’s face, and he then collapsed to the gun.

The class froze as all eyes were brought to the screen once again, the older male was face down on the ground and a black converse shoe pressed down onto the back of his skull. It made sure that the other remained on the ground.
Nagisa let out a sigh in relief, and Karma felt something was lifted off from his chest.

"Was that really necessary Shu? It was a good thing that I wanted to try out golfing today, but I think I'm too young for it to fully enjoy it yet." The voice let out a sigh, as he leaned over a bit, his golf club acted as his support as he rested his chin where his hands laying on top of his club. It was just laying into the dirt above the downed male's head.

It was a young male, he wore an unbuttoned light blue shirt with a black top underneath. Matching this were some white jeans and a black leather belt, his light chestnut coloured hair slinked back on one side while the other was left to be wild. He also wore a camouflage patterned backpack and black sunglasses. Now that everyone from Class-E saw him for the second time, they thought that he could be from a men's fashion magazine.

"I told you already, it's Gakushu." The strawberry blonde said as he wore a bored expression on his face. His eye twitched and his head ached already from just the mere sound of Ikeda's voice. "How many times do I need to repeat myself?"

'No! I won't get a headache today!'

"How can you say that to your awesome big brother!?!" Ikeda cried out with fake tears. He puckered up his lips to create a dramatic pout.

'This is definitely the man who wrote that note for the gift the other day…' Korosensei pondered to himself. 'He does act a bit like Karma-kun…'

'This is definitely the same man who helped Gakushu when Class-A tried to bully him.' The rest of the class's thoughts merged.

"You mean a very distant cousin." Gakushu corrected as he dug into his pant pockets and grabbed a candy bar.

"We had a thing!" Ikeda cried out as he made a dramatic and over-the-top pose, Gakushu only shrugged as he unwrapped the plastic wrapper his snack.

"Did we really?" Gakushu let out a sigh as he bit into his chocolate bar.

"A bit here and there." Ikeda chirped in a cheeky tone. "And why are you eating while I'm talking, talk about rude."

"I had not killed any trees since Wednesday!" Gakushu yelled, but then he remembered that he was still on school property, and his yelling would attract attention. He took in a deep breath, Gakushu coughed as if he didn't just yelled or acted out from his act. "Please let me keep it up until the end of the month at least."

No matter what, Ikeda always managed to have Gakushu slip out from his mask almost completely in public.

This time, Korosensei was surprised from the sudden outburst of Gakushu. The rest already saw this but it was still very difficult to take it in, because this was Gakushu Asano. Nagisa although was smiling from how cute Gakushu was being again.

"…That is quite impressive." Ikeda had the look of surprised on his face, as if he was proud of Gakushu for this accomplishment. The older male muttered something about Gakushu's sweet obsession under his breathe.
Gakushu let out an annoyed groan, he quickly finished up his chocolate and he crossed his arms. "Why are you here?"

"I don't know, something about this place feels nice and nostalgic." Ikeda shrugged his shoulders. "I have been walking around here for a bit here and there."

"Can you go now? Don't you have a job in Paris calling for you?" Gakushu asked in a French accent, as if to mock his saviour. He glared back to Ikeda with disdain in his eyes.

"Sorry Shu, but I'm here in your town for the next month or two. Never thought that your town would be so boring though and I had to end my Dubai holiday early for this."

"Looks like your very distant cousin isn't so distant anymore~"

'Wait, isn't this the guy who brought Gakushu that expensive phone!?' Isogai thought.

"The only interesting thing is that serial killer going around lately." Ikeda let out an exaggerated sigh. Gakushu darkly muttered under his breathe of why Ikeda was even dispatched here if he found it so boring, but orders are orders.

"He is very morbid…' The class and teacher's collective thoughts.

"Can you please keep this a secret, especially from Gretel?" Gakushu said, his face turned visibly pale.

"I do not make to have him endure Gretel's wrath to the full extent." And the two had to suppressed a cold shiver from going down their spine. Who were they kidding, they already knew that they were up against Gretel, the girl who has the Gakushu complex. They might has well just delay the inevitable.

Nagisa was full on pale, everyone else but Karma and Korosensei felt a shiver going on his spine. Karma was more interested in the blonde female reaper, but he didn't know why but he was Karma.

"Funny because you have the same temper as her." Ikeda teased, he wanted to get rid of the tense atmosphere and from thinking of what Gretel will do to this poor unfortunate man.

"I do not have a temper!" Gakushu angrily yelled at Ikeda's ear, before he quickly covering his mouth when he realised that he was yelling again. Ikeda laughed his heart out, Gakushu's scowl just made him more adorable than angry.

"Awwwwwwwwwww." Nagisa swooned and he received strange looks from his fellow classmates.

"Say that to my cracked ribs." Ikeda laughed but he slowly stopped, he looked on to Gakushu, Gakushu thought he imagined a hint of worry behind those dark sunglasses.

"You shouldn't do that stunt again, you almost blew off a chunk off last time."

"What are you talking about?" Gakushu asked as if he didn't knew anything, then the two and the class heard a pain filled moan coming down from the other third person. Ikeda then stomped on his head and forced him to taste dirt once again.

"Really? Ticking off that guy to shoot your brains out." Ikeda continued as if he didn't just inflicted more pain and injuries. He lifted his foot up from the skull, he went over to the side and grabbed the
revolver. And then Ikeda sat on the downed man's back.

"The bullets…" Ikeda worded with a hint of surprised as he disassembled the gun, he found that bullets in the barrel were gone. Gakushu then dropped the golden bullets in front of the light haired male.

'Korosensei knew….' Kayano worded in her head, she and many others glanced to their teacher as he continued to watch the screen. They all knew why Korosensei didn't go and diffused of the situation and save Gakushu, Gakushu didn't need saving to begin with.

"You knew sensei?" Okuda muttered and he silently nodded. They all knew that their teacher wanted to see Gakushu's abilities.

"But how did he steal them?"

"Like how he caught a thrown knife? We don't know."

"It is quite easy to misdirect the man, he was far too normal." Gakushu said as he clapped his hands to clear away the dust in his hands. Ikeda swiftly picked up the bullets and dug them into his pockets.

'Reapers, we love to use vague terminology.' Ikeda thought, what Gakushu was saying was that the man was too human.

"Oh I get it, you wanted to see his reaction when he found out that there isn't any load in the gun."

"But really, I don't want you pull off that stunt again." Ikeda spoke in a serious manner, Gakushu was almost caught off guard as he watched the reaper slowly rise up from his sitting position.

"I'm surprised that you care Ike-"

Ikeda looked down at the strawberry blonde, he leaned in and grabbed a handful of his soft hair. Gakushu yelped from the sudden gesture and Ikeda pulled upwards. He smudged the make-up from that side of his head.

The class who watched the scene from a screen gasped. There was a faint scar at the side of Gakushu's head for the world to see. Gakushu winced his eyes, Ikeda used a little more force that Gakushu would be able to endure.

Nagisa felt a twisted in his chest, and Karma's amber eyes widened from such a near-death injury.

"You still got that scar from last time and it is going to stay there for a while." Ikeda said as he eyed to the faint scaring at the boy's temple. "The bullet only gazed your head."

"Let go!" Gakushu angrily yelled, he was about to claw the male's hand and then Ikeda released his hair promptly so.

"It is a miracle that your father hasn't noticed it yet." Ikeda stood high, he was almost hovering over the small boy. Gakushu cursed his luck over his height, his eyes were strongly filled with killer intent and it was directed at Ikeda. "And don't look at me like you want to break a rib again."

"Gakushu!" Another voice called out, it promptly caused the killer intent to disappear and the two turned in direction of the voice. It was Ren and he was quickly approaching them fast.

"R-Ren! What are you doing here?" Gakushu gasped, he hastily flattened his hair so that the hazel haired boy didn't see that scar at the side of his head.
"You were taking too long and I felt something wasn't right, so I came here." Ren explained between breathes, he ran up to Gakushu and looked like he was going to collapse.

"What happen-" Ren paused as he noticed of another person lying face first on the ground. Gakushu turned pale, white as snow when he realised that he had no story to tell that won't make his best friend worry. Luckily, or unluckily, Ikeda spoke out for his 'little brother'.

"Shu here got held at gunpoint." Ikeda bluntly answered as he took the gun and placed it into his backpack.

'Why the hell did you say that!?' The thoughts of the class merged and Gakushu agreed with them.

"You bastard!" Gakushu yelled, he lunged for Ikeda but thankfully, Ren managed to catch him between the arms. Gakushu downplayed his strength by a landslide but he was still clawing the air for Ikeda's head.

Nagisa, Karma and Kayano had a flashback of Gretel from that fake date incident. Everyone else watched on in fascination as they analysed the two different sides of Gakushu.

"Let go of me Ren! Lemme at him! Lemme at him!"

'You know, they could actually be siblings… they are too alike to each other.' Nagisa was deep in thought.

"Please calm down Gakushu!" Ren yelled as he attempts to restrain the cinnamon roll in his arms. "Calm down!"

Gakushu was being held in the air as he screamed and kicked, he barked in fury. "Let go of me!"

"Shu, you are just like An sometimes. You often to hide these sort of things."

"Shut up!"

"Everyone else knows about this problem, it has been acting up since the weekends. Johnny earlier today found out another one was after you. And don't forget Ivan and the incident with a bloodied pole." Ikeda explained, Gakushu slowly calmed down while Ren's grip loosened. Ren was surprised by all of this and Gakushu just learnt why Ivan did what he did. It was the same for Class-E.

"Ivan had to stop a letter bomb from being delivered to your school." Ikeda further explained. "The kid might as well know what you are experiencing."

"Even I came here, tailing after the guy when I found out from his friends were boasting."

"I didn't know anything about this too…" The mental image of Gakushu having drooping dog ears was strong in this one.

"Then you can do it together." Ikeda let out a rare gentle smile, similar to An's smile but that what happens when your senior was An.

"Yes!" Nagisa yelled at the scream, everyone turned to the blue haired boy and was surprised by the look of determination in his blue blazed eyes. "We can do it together."

"Is he going to be taken to the police?" Ren asked as he venously glared down at Gakushu's attempted kidnapper.

"He is and goddamn lucky too." Ikeda said as he landed a kick to his stomach, the two and the class
swore that they heard a rib cracked.

"Here, I've been hearing that you gotten yourself a new hobby." Ikeda shredded off his backpack, opening it and he grabbed out sports jack, it was white, blue and had a bit of red here and there.

"Is that Yuri Plisetsky's Russia jacket!?" Gakushu excitedly asked, sparkles surrounded the boy. Some of Class-E's student had to slap or pinch themselves to how that they weren't hallucinating. "And it's signed!"

Ikeda had created a mental image of Ivan boasting to his German friend, Lucia of how the Strawberry was more interested in Russia.

"Of course it is, what else is it?" Ikeda smiled as he handed the jack to the small boy, and Gakushu's smile brightness increased by tenfold. It also blinded everyone from sheer cuteness.

Gakushu almost squealed as he quickly unfolded the jacket and wore it. His cheeks flushed the colours of gentle cherry blossoms and his violet eyes twinkled in excitement. Not only that but he had sparkles surround him, the holy sparkles. Nagisa did his damn hardest to not have blood gushing out from his nose.

Ren had by now gotten used from Gakushu's sparkles, but it was still adorable on the cinnamon roll. When Ikeda and Gakushu was focused on the jacket, Ren took a photo of the horrible excuse of a person who wanted to harm the almighty cinnamon roll.

Only Korosensei and Ikeda noticed this action, as everyone in Class-E were too mesmerized by the sparkles that surrounded Gakushu Asano.

'Did the kid just took a picture of the guy?' Ikeda thought of the strange gesture, and he definitely didn't missed that look in Ren's hazel brown coloured eyes. He knew those, Ikeda saw them too often when he was in the Department or with his reaper friends.

Those eyes, they had seen death, and not just any kind of death, he saw someone or at least the aftermath of someone committing suicide. And those brown eyes, directed down to the fallen man said this.

'Don't make me lose another important person ever again.'

Ren quickly shifted his mood to happiness as he turned to Gakushu who was rabbling on about the Russian Fairy. Maybe he should learn the language after all. He gently smiled as he went and took another photo, but this time of Gakushu.

Gakushu then froze, he looked up to Ikeda who held a smug look on his face. '….Goddamnnit!'

"Aren't you going to say thanks, Shu~" Ikeda sang as he dug into his hoodie pockets.

"Thank you Ike-"

"Big brother." Ikeda corrected with a smirk, Ren mentally sighed and thanked the heavens that he saved that container of strawberry shortcake.

"Thank you, b-big..." Gakushu stuttered as he slowly drifted his eyes to the ground.

"Thank you big b-" Gakushu looked up, coincidentally towards where the camera was as it moved around. His eyes were narrowed and there were small tears forming as he struggled to say what Ikeda wanted to hear. Innocence was radiating from the Strawberry, as if it were possible in some of
the student's eyes but Nagisa was taking it very well.

Half of the class had blood dripping down from their nose, and some of the desk were painted red.

"Thank you, you pudding thief!" Gakushu yelled as he kicked Ikeda's shin, he turned back and grabbed Ren's hand and he ran down the mountain in a flash.

'…..' That was the response from Class-E.

"Run, Forrest! Run!"

Ikeda stood there laughing, as if he wasn't kicked earlier and he smiled to himself. "Looks like he couldn't say it after all."

Nagisa had passed out to the floor with a nosebleed and a smile. "I can die in peace now." This added some commotion in the class, with lines spoken out dramatically, urging Nagisa not to die. Itona moved the drone in closer as he tried to get a better look of Ikeda.

"But he will come around, after all it took him six-" Ikeda turned in to the direction of the portable camera and froze. It was at that moment where everyone's voice was stolen. It wasn't what they were thinking.

"A camera?" Ikeda eyed towards of Itona's invention. Ikeda suddenly disappeared and quickly reappeared closer to the surveillance camera. The last thing the class saw was the man's sharp eye colour of chartreuse phosphorescent and the screen went to black.

Yes, it was what they were thinking…

"What just happened?" Isogai whispered.

"Caught, we were caught… just like that." Maehara answered. "How did he spotted that camera?"

"He must have had really good eyesight…"

Korosensei looked on to the empty scene, 'He looked just like Gakukou's old student, he looks just Ikeda-san…'

'It's only a coincident, but he looked if Ikeda grew up… if he was still alive'

Ren returned to his apartment after practice, the sky was filled with darkness and it was lit up by the bright yellow lights from lamps and buildings. As soon he locked the door behind him, he swiftly took out his phone from his pockets and called for a number.

He quickly went into his contacts list and pressed on Lance A. Jones. As soon he heard the deep voice from the other end, he wasted no time and went straight into business.

"Jones, I need you and your stalker talents." Ren called for Jones, he had earlier sent a picture of Gakushu's attacker and attempted kidnapper to the purple haired man.

"Is it about your love life, did this man talked to your girl or something?" Jones teased from the other end before he let out an exaggerated sigh. "Really now poet?"

"Gakushu Asano was held at gunpoint today." Ren said darkly, Jones paused and Ren smirked at this. However that smirk morphed into a frown, he had other things more important to worry about.
"And there were more incidents connecting to this, a letter-bomb was nearly sent to our school and another group attempted to corner him a few weeks ago." Ren further explained, as he slipped off his school shoes and wore his fluffy slippers. "He and the others must be working for someone, find anything about him and his possible employer."

"Have your team surveillance this town, station more around my school and I do not want it noticeable Jones." The hazel haired boy demanded, as he almost slammed his school bag onto the counter hard.

"I'll get to work." Jones answered back in a serious tone.

"And send me the mastermind's name, I will freeze his or hers bank assets." And with that, Ren ended the call. Jones blankly stared at his phone and he let out another sigh.

"Why did I taught him hacking skills when he was four again? I knew that he was bored... and he wanted to expand on technology."

He pondered and placed his hand under his chin, "But he was happy to teach his sister about it."

Next time on 'Until the day I'm forgiven.'

".....Wolfie? Is that you?"

"And I'm going on a dispatch mission in rural Japan soon."

"Are you Karma Akabane?"

Chapter: Karaoke
Short Story: First Murder

Chapter Summary

A Christmas chapter if you squint. Like, really, really squint.

First Murder

_Experience, if a Grim Reaper experience their 'first suicide' and then surely they would definitely witness their 'first murder'. A reaper, they will always see the worse and cruellest of humanity. That's why you would have partners for those that are Junior._

_Gakushu witnessed his first murder when he had a small transfer to America for more experience._

A smaller and younger Gakushu stared up to Ikeda, with the expression of 'who got to be kidding me' written all over his face. He was already ready for his shifts in America, he agreed to Rilliane's request and luckily she already prepared with the paperwork. It was good that his father was away from the country so he could do this excursion, although Lucia's episode earlier still shaken him a bit.

He wore his reaper uniform, the black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up. It was only buttoned to the waist down, underneath was some military-styled white cargo pants. Matching this were some black boots tucked in. He also wore a dark blue scarf and black leather gloves. His smartphone was in his pockets, along with his de-sized Death Scythe that told others that he was a KH fan. He was ready and prepared.

But nothing would get him ready for this.

"Please behave Ikeda." Rilliane let out a sigh and feared of what would happen next the moment she entered into the conference room. The Department had decided to pair up Ikeda and Gakushu together for the boy's transfer to America. She glanced over at Gakushu who looked up to Ikeda with a bored look and Ikeda returning a playful smile.

She knew that Gakushu and Ikeda didn’t started off well, with Ikeda running off with Gakushu's strawberry jelly the first time they met and Gakushu chasing after him.

Gakushu even used the chandelier one time, grabbing onto it as he jumped off the balcony and swinging it before jumping on Ikeda for a touchdown. That 10 year old boy broke three of Ikeda's ribs, but since reapers were immortal and generally healed quicker than regular humans. Ikeda was back on his feet after a day in bed.

Since then, Gakushu was always suspicious around An's Junior and it didn't help as Ikeda would always start the chase. Also adding the fact that Ikeda installed himself as being his big brother and has constantly teased him. Always stealing some kind of sweet from the boy with an almighty sweet tooth.

Already today, Ikeda snatched off a candy cane after it was given by a reaper named Noct. But since Noct was carrying a sackful of the minty flavoured candy, he quickly gave Gakushu another one before his temper got the better of him.
Noct was a reaper Gakushu made friends with, how they met was both funny and adorable. Gakushu was on one of his school breaks and he couldn't hang out with Ren because he was all the way in America. So he went into one of kitchens, Noct happened to be there, covered in flour and in front of him it was pot that was on fire.

Gakushu panicked and grabbed the nearest fire extinguisher, spraying foam all over Noct's failed cooking attempt. "Foooshhhhhhhhhhh."

"…." The two were quiet as they looked over the foamy mess after Gakushu finished with the extinguisher.

"So, what were you trying to make?" Gakushu attempted to start a conversation with his fellow reaper.

"I just wanted to make caramel…" Noct turned his head to Gakushu and he could see the tears started to form around the corners of his eyes. When Noct faced his creation back again, Gakushu looked around the kitchen and saw that it was a complete mess.

There were other pots and pans that were used in the sink and has yet to be clean. The white tiled floor was laced with flour, on one of the workshop benches were failed cracked eggs and a bag of exploded flour.

Gakushu could already imagine of how that flour scene went, it was because he had done it himself too many times. Whenever Gakushu gets excited, he sometimes forgot to control his strength and it will always be guaranteed that he will get jumpy and happy to bake a cake. So when he would grabbed the bag of flour whenever he was excited, the bag would often or not explode, spraying the white powder everywhere and dusting Gakushu's body in its powder.

"It had been decades and I still burn the simplest of things." Noct said with a sad frown and he looked like he wanted to cry. He covered his face with his hands. "I can't even melt chocolate without burning it."

"To be honest, there is no reason to learn to cook in the Department in the first place. We do it for fun really." Gakushu was still learning on how to comfort others and he wasn't sure if he was doing a good job of it.

"But I really want to be good at this!" Noct exclaimed, he turned to directly face Gakushu as he shook his fists in an up and down motion. "Wouldn't it be cool! Making food for your friends!"

"I really wanted to make food for Iggy like how he always did!"

'…. Why does that sounded romantic? I think Gretel is influencing too much….' Gakushu thought as he looked deep into Noct's reaper eyes that seemed to be sparkling.

"Iggy?" Gakushu asked, a thought came to his mind that he could be talking about Arthur and Noct let out an 'o' sound as if he came to a realisation.

"Oh! That's his nickname. His real name is Ignis." Noct explained and it was Gakushu's turn to let out an 'o' sound.

"Sorry that I didn't know, I only joined the Department at the start of the year," Gakushu apologised and he slightly bowed down a bit.

"You were the one who graduated from his classes in a month!" Noct exclaimed as he gasped. Gakushu felt a tinge of pride in him over this accomplishment although he showed it with a bashful
"That's me, the name is Gakushu Asano of the Japanese Branch. I work in the Retrieval division."

"You can just call me Noct. I work in the Retrieval division as well."

"… Are you Australian?" Gakushu asked innocently.

"… Uh?" Noct confusedly responded, he tilted his head slightly to the side to highlight his confusion.

"Your name, is it Noctifer? A bringer of night or darkness; the evening star?" Gakushu pointed out and Noct had a blank look. "You shortened it. Like how Anna calls herself An."

Noctis then laughed, he could tell that Gakushu was making an effort make him feel better. He had the rumours that has been going around in the Department about Gakushu. "Close enough, it's Noctis and the branch I was once from no longer exist so I'm officially from the English Branch"

"Like that character from the spin-off game that has been talking too long to release." Gakushu joked and Noct felt a growing smile etching on his flour covered face.

"Yeap, that's the one." Noct let out another chuckle. Gakushu smiled as well, he didn't know why his father taught him to not smile the way he did and was thankfully of his friend's effort to help him unlearn those teachings. He could even say the word 'friend' so easily down, it was a downer to know that he couldn't show this to his father, the school, or his hometown.

"Do you need any help there?" Gakushu asked, as he pointed to the burnt and foamy remains that was supposed to be caramel.

"I don't want to trouble you." Noct whispered but Gakushu shook his head.

"You won't, I was going to bake something anyway. I can help you along the way."

Gakushu later learnt the reason why Noct wanted to bake a cake so badly was that it would be a get-well-soon gift for his flu stricken friend, Ignis. And the flu symptom of the day was… actual human-like flu symptoms.

_They basically bonded over sweets._

"So the sleepy kitten and the sweet loving puppy became friends. It is like what they say, those alike stick together." Gretel commented when she learnt of Gakushu's newest friend, looking to Gakushu with pride and at Noct with joy.

"Gretel." Noct and Gakushu said in unison.

"What? You both are cinnamon rolls." Gretel exclaimed, she then dove in and both hug the two bundles of innocence tightly in her arms.

Noct preferred his younger form, like Gretel, as he resided in his 15 year old state. He explained that it was easier to move around. He did acrobatics, Gakushu ended up following Noct around like a puppy for a few days after seeing his talents at the reaper-run gym. It was a habit he quickly broke within a year, it was a missed habit to the Department.

Gakushu was always light on his feet, he was more flexible than professional athletes but this was a reaper! Noct could even use a gun in mid-air and shoot the target. The way he twisted his body and
manoeuvre it was always breathe taking. Like how Gakushu felt his breathe being take away after watching An performed.

Too bad that Noct was always because on spy missions, and like Ikeda, Gakushu could only see his friend a few times in a year. Although it wasn't hard to not spot him, his black spikey hair bobbled from every step he took to which Gretel nicknamed as 'duck fluff'.

"Rilliane, can't Gretel come with me? What about Noct? He's free this time."

"Sorry Gakushu, orders from the Department." Rilliane patted his head. It was so hard not to resist taking a photo right then and there of Gakushu Asano pouting. The Department was hoping that the two would get along, since Ikeda was talented in his work as a spy and Gakushu since he was one of the brightest of reapers.

"Can't we swap with someone else?" But Rilliane shook her head and Gakushu tried to convince with the power of his puppy-dog eyes. However Rilliane already had practice with Allen, so it had no effect on his main senior although she internally smiled at the attempt.

"Like I said, orders are orders and they are not going to be flexible this time." Rilliane explained and Gakushu still had his eye game one. "This is a transfer and Ikeda conveniently has a dispatch in the town you are assigned to." Eventually, Gakushu dropped his puppy and hopeful eyes when he realised that there was nothing he could do about it.

"Ikeda, behave yourself. I expect that all of your ribs remain unbroken by the end of this transfer."

"You got it, let's go Shu." Ikeda cheered as he saluted to Rilliane, and he was so dragging Gakushu by his hood as the two walked off.

Gakushu attempted to free himself from Ikeda's grip. "It's Gakushu!" Rilliane prayed to the heavens that Gakushu's temper won't get the best of him.

Eventually Ikeda let go and Gakushu didn't had to resort on attacking the man, even if he did, Ikeda could had easily dodged them. As they walked, Gakushu anticipate that they were headed for the doors but the two passed the doors. "Aren't we going to use the doors?"

"Nah, we need to have full experience of a Grim Reaper first and I need to pick some things up." Ikeda explained as he guided Gakushu to one of the stops. "I'm sure that you haven't used the trains, I always see you walking to other divisions."

"Why do we have trains when we have doors?" Gakushu asked, he stood instead of sitting down of the black metal benches.

"We are, not yet. Trains help us to get around the Department, sure we have doors but it can cause some serious traffic when you have reapers coming back from the human realm. So it is usually used when moving back and forth from the human realm." Ikeda explained and Gakushu was taking the information like a sponge. Gakushu then mentally sighed to himself.

'Why couldn't you be like this more often?'

"If you see doors in the Medical Division, it is only used to get around its wards since it is a big place and only then." Ikeda demonstrated this point as he grabbed out his own key he used for dispatch missions on one hand and the other a picture of Medical division's key. "That was why your usual keys doesn't fit."

The thought of the Mental Ward still lingered in Gakushu's mind.
"We mainly use it to get to divisions; Forensic, Identification, Judging, Technology, Retrieval, Medical, Management. You catch my drift, Shu?" Ikeda playfully sang and Gakushu felt a twitch in his reaper eyes.

"Gakushu." The said boy corrected, he rubbed his temples to calm himself, as he was getting tired of correcting Ikeda and his use of that nickname. That and 'Forrest'.

The train soon arrived, the two and other reapers boarded the train that was decorated in red streamers. It was strange to see since almost every reaper was wearing black and white clothes and the train's interior was monotone grey.

Gakushu quickly took the last seat that he saw, he smirked to Ikeda who clearly wasn't happy about this. The strawberry blonde resisted the urge to stick his tongue to the light haired man as he settled for the straps that dangled from the top.

"I gave you the seat because I thought you would be too short for the straps." Ikeda retorted and Gakushu glared back. It was Ikeda's turn to smirk.

"Hey Ikeda." A male voice called out, Gakushu and Ikeda turned their heads in direction of the voice. It was good since it made the tension between the two effectively disappear. A man was walking up, he had lightly tanned skin and curly brown hair that reminded Gakushu of Ivan. He wore a simple black and white European style suit set.

"Hey Antonio, have you met Shu?" Ikeda gestured to Gakushu. And Gakushu's correction went unheard. Antonio went and stood next to Ikeda, grabbing onto the straps as he glanced down at Gakushu.

"I believe I haven't." Antonio turned to Gakushu and extended his free hand out. He had that bubbly smile that Gakushu would always associate with the man for the next coming years. "I am Antonio Abano from the Spanish Branch, I worked in the Identification division."

"Gakushu Asano from the Japanese Branch, Retrieval Division." Gakushu too extended his hand out and shook the Spaniard's hand. Eventually Ikeda started a conversation with his Spanish friend which left Gakushu in the dark, not that he mind and he went to texting his friends.

"Going to do shift work, Antonio?" Ikeda asked his friend.

"Nah, I just finished work earlier and I'm going to the mall for some dinner. Maybe getting myself some Galets soup." Antonio was almost drooling and his stomach roared, Ikeda let out a booming laugh as he patted his back hard and repeatedly.

"I hope you don't feed me that polvorones and mantecados like last time." Ikeda whined, Gakushu's head perked up and hoped to get some information to later tease him back. As that saying goes, 'Karma bitch!' as quoted by Johnny. "Lard isn't good for my beautiful booty."

Antonio laughed back. "What about you Ikeda, KFC for dinner?"

"Why do we go to malls in the human realm when we have here?" Gakushu innocently asked, looking up to the two with big eyes as he finally joined in the conversation.

"Why not both?" Antonio asked in Spanish, gesturing both of his arms out as he shrugged. With no doubt that he was referencing that catchphrase from a taco commercial. Antonio blankly stared at Gakushu who laughed as he got the joke.

'So cute…!'
Eventually, the train stopped where Ikeda wanted to be and the two left the train after saying their goodbyes to Antonio. Unknowing that Antonio had sprayed the floors with blood from his nose.

"So where are we going?" Gakushu asked, as he walked side by side with the name as he rather not want to follow behind him like a duckling.

"I need to pick up my uniform." Ikeda simply answered and Gakushu scanned over his senior's clothes.

"But you're wearing your reaper clothes." Gakushu pointed out, unsure if it was reaper clothing because he assumed as it was black and white. Ikeda wore his black hoodie jump and white jeans.

"But I want to look cool and awesome since I'm guiding my little bro." Ikeda said, he went to pat the mop of strawberry blonde hair and was already getting it tangled.

"If anything, you would be a cousin I would meet once a year." Gakushu explained as he slapped Ikeda's hand away and started to comb his hair with his hand. "Or should I say, want to meet only once a year."

"That's mean!" Ikeda let out another whine, he faked the tears that flowed out of his eyes and Gakushu let another twitch in his eye. "Noct has the same work patterns as me and you're nicer to me."

"Whatever, distant cousin." Gakushu said, he rolled his eyes in annoyance.

"But Shu~"

"It's Gakushu! Hurry and pick up your clothes!"

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With some kind of miracle, a Christmas like miracle, the two arrived in America and Ikeda has yet to have his bones being broken. It was probably because Ikeda gave the boy wasabi flavoured candy canes, it was something although Gakushu would had preferred strawberries. Then again, he would always preferred strawberries.

"First one is Sophie Madison." Gakushu said as he went through the booklet, he finally snatched the book off from Ikeda who wouldn't let him go through the list. Ikeda gave the excuse that he was leading.

The strawberry blonde glanced and scanned Ikeda, his reaper uniform consisted dark suit set and a black pea-coat. He also wore a dark trench-coat.

Gakushu read through the personal details, her date of birth and death. Before he went over the details of how she was going to die, a speck of snow fell onto the page which caused Gakushu to look up. "Oh! It's snowing."

Gakushu could barely keep the excitement out of his voice, he managed to stop himself in time but Ikeda caught on.

"Have you built a snowman before?" Ikeda asked as they continued to walk, heading to where the first soul of the shift was destined to die.

"Not that I recall, probably no." Gakushu shook his head and he gazed at the floating drops of snow with awe. He was so entranced by the snow that he didn't noticed that Ikeda went off for a bit. As he slowly continued to walk with sparkling eyes, he felt a harsh tug on his hood as it was pulled down
and before he could react, he jolted from the cold and wet feel that touched the nape of his neck and soon going down his spin.

"Ack!" He squealed, he tried get foreign object that was contacting with his skin out to only go deeper down his body. It was stuck underneath his skin-tight black shirt, it was tugged into his military-styled white cargo pants. So Gakushu pulled out his shirt from his pants and ice fell to the ground.

"Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled to the man who was laughing and rolling on the ground. He fought the urge to go and break all of the man's bones.

"What!? I wanted snow but I could only find ice." Ikeda was clutching his stomach as he laughed his ass off.

"Where the hell!? Everywhere else is closed!" Gakushu yelled, it didn't matter if anyone nearby could hear because they couldn't in the first place as the two were dressed in their reaper uniforms.

"Not petrol stations." While Ikeda spent the next ten minutes laughing uncontrollably, Gakushu went off to the same petrol station. And when Gakushu came back, he dumped a whole bagful of ice all over the man and he smirked when the man yelped from the cold.

"I don't know why a station would serve ice when it is winter, but it has done its job." Gakushu spat out, he felt a smirk soon forming on his face as he observed his work.

"You're so mean~" Ikeda let out a whine as he got up, Gakushu swore that he will break a bone of his after his transfer was done.

"You're the one who started it!" Gakushu angrily yelled at his ear. His scowl though only made him look more adorable.

"Temper, temper." Ikeda playfully taunted as he walked off, Gakushu angrily followed behind him and practically stomped his way.

"I do not have a temper!"

The two were at the door, in a very narrow street as they stood in front of the first soul's house. Gakushu already had his Death Scythe prepared in his gloved hands, detached from his phone and sized up to its' proper size. His booklet was in his other hand.

"Ready for your first soul in American soil?" Ikeda asked, he too has his Death Scythe in hand and ready which was in a form of a long stun baton.

"Of course I'm ready." Gakushu spat out, only ten more seconds and he will collect her soul. But when he was about to swing his tool to active the Cinematic Records.

The door abruptly opened, Gakushu who stood in front of it felt a splat of liquid sprayed onto his cheek. It still felt warm, Gakushu peered his eyes into the dark room and his eyes widened from what he witnessed.

"Was that supposed to be human?"

"Gakushu! Don't look!" Ikeda yelled, he immediately pulled Gakushu back, his back on the older man's chest as hands wrapped over his eyes and around his body. However it wasn't enough, as the murderer talked away and not noticing of the two reapers as it should, Gakushu could still catch on
the lingering smell of blood, it was intense and it was sickening of how strong the scent was.

It was stronger on the murderer, as he walked past and that trail soon disappeared after closing the door behind him, but that was only from one carrier. The image was struck in his mind, the way as the victim just stared at Gakushu and how her body was mangled, the force from the knife was strong enough that her limbs was barely attached. It was so brutal, it was normal for anyone, for Gakushu to be shaken to his core.

"Ah…” Gakushu took in short and shallow breathes. "Ah… -ah."

"Ngn!” His cheeks swelled, resisting the urge to show his moment of weakness, but he failed and he vomited out his stomach's content. It spilled onto the front of the door, his body trembled and the light haired male could feel those trembles.

Gakushu breathed in heavily, gasping for air and Ikeda couldn't even fault him of that. Ikeda still maintain his hold on the strawberry blonde boy, "Gakushu, I am going to head in first. Okay?” He couldn't speak, so he only nodded.

And slowly, Ikeda unwrapped his arms and processed to enter into the victims room. He stepped over Gakushu's vomit and his face scrunched up as his leather shoes stepped into a forming blood pool.

He opened the door with a small gap and he squeeze himself into the home. "Shit, he just had to go overboard. Tsk, gangs." Ikeda spatted under his breathe, he took out his death scythe and stabbed it into the barely recognisable woman. Soon her life was told through the Cinematic Records as they appeared.

Gakushu timidly came inside as he felt that it was his duty, this was his shift but this was too much. Nothing like what he studied in his classes, just after a few steps into the room and a hit of nausea came back to him. His hands were shaking too much that he dropped his key-themed Death Scythe and it made a 'clang' sound.

Gakushu ran out of the house and vomited out until there was nothing left. Ikeda walked out of the house as he watched Gakushu tried to support himself by using the wall.

"You can toss me the book-" Ikeda's breathe hitched as he looked to Gakushu, paled like snow as he stumbled forward. His footing slipped and he leaned to the left, Gakushu felt all of his strength draining fast and his eyelids became heavy.

"Gakushu!” Ikeda called out but the world slowly became a blurred mess.

Gakushu passed out as soon as his head contacted with the floor and he welcomed darkness with open arms.

At least it would provide him some sense of comfort.

When Gakushu Asano opened his eyes, he felt a pounding headache ringing and he flinched from the discomfort. As he tried to get up which he just realised that he was in bed, a figure stopped him when he was halfway up.

"Easy there. You hit your head pretty bad there.” A familiar voice called out, Gakushu could just make out the figure and it was Ikeda.

"But my shift!” Gakushu protested.
"Don't worry. When I dropped you off here, I did the rest." Ikeda reassured and Gakushu couldn't help up sigh in relief. When he was given back his glasses, he glanced at the unfamiliar room.

"Where are we?" Gakushu asked.

"My place, I have dispatch in the area remember?" Ikeda softly explained, he passed a glass of water to the small boy and watched as he drank. "Being a police officer and all."

"You are?" Gakushu spoke with surprised, Ikeda nodded as he took the nearest chair, place it near to the bed and sat on it.

"Yeap~ But I had to take a course to be official. I thought it was more fun if I did it in the human realm, so I went to an official academy in Australia." He happily explained as he rested his chin with his fist.

"Why Australia?" The Strawberry cutely and innocently asked.

"Wanted to make An proud, with her being Australian and all. It really helped on my English too." Ikeda laughed heartedly and it helped to lighten the mood. Although Gakushu was uncomfortable about it.

"…. Why are you being nice to me? Aren't you going to make fun of me?"

"There is a time and place Shu, I tease but I don't bully." Ikeda extended his hand out, Gakushu came prepared for his usual ruffling but it was gentle. Nothing like the one that would get his hair tangled, this instead was soothing as Ikeda softly patted his hair. "And I say that you're taking it better than I had."

"Didn't you saw that I vomited?" Gakushu whispered as he subconsciously moved closer to his hand.

"At least you have a clear mind and are talking now, I was an unresponsive zombie for a full day, An had to spoon-feed me my dinner." Ikeda recounted. "And others went mad, like how Arthur reacted when he saw his first suicide."

"But."

Ikeda quickly cut Gakushu off from finishing. "Shu, I'm sure that they didn't go into full detail of the scent of blood, whatever injuries they would had endured. Nothing is like from the textbooks, no matter how many times you study."

"Words are different from experience."

"Let me say this, don't be afraid to ask for help. I see you wanting to be comforted and I understand why." Ikeda looked on with a frown when Gakushu flinched a bit. "I heard what the rumours and what your father said is bullshit."

Gakushu looked back up to Ikeda, almost in awe at his words. "Even if you try to deny it, I could easily saw it through."

"So don't be afraid to seek or ask for help." Ikeda pulled away his hand from Gakushu's hair as he got up from his seat.

"I will get you some food-" Ikeda paused when he felt a tug on his clothes. He glanced down and saw that Gakushu instinctively was gripping on his uniform, and the strawberry blonde looked like
he didn't knew what he just did.

He gentle smiled, a smile that reminded Gakushu of An from the Australian Branch. "Would you like me to stay here?"

"Please…" Gakushu nodded, his face flushed like a strawberry and his lips trembled. "Just until I could go to sleep…"

The hand he used to tug at Ikeda's coat was shaking madly. Ikeda smiled as he sat back down on his seat. He helped Gakushu to lay down on his bed. The boy still hadn't let go of his grip.

"It is a pretty cool Death Scythe you got there, you got to love reaper technology that allow you to de-size your weapon to a key-chain whenever it's not needed." Ikeda exclaimed, he held out Gakushu's phone and there it was, his Death Scythe was back to its keychain form and attached to his phone.

'Ikeda must had done it.' Gakushu thought as he looked over at Ikeda who examined the keys.

"Of course, it fitted to the theme of all those keys I have attached to my phone." Gakushu said and he felt a yawn coming up.

"But did you had to make it obvious that you were a KH fan, you look like a member of the Organisation." Ikeda joked as he placed the phone on the nightstand that was beside the bed.

"Sounds like the Department." And Gakushu highlighted that last word with a playfully tone. He was slowly drifting off and Ikeda saw this, so the light haired man took off the black framed glasses and Gakushu closed his eyes. He felt more comfort as Ikeda pulled the blanket closer, if Ikeda could do it then why couldn't his father do it as well?

'It was because Ikeda is too different from him…'

The sounds of his laugher and Ikeda's slowly faded away into the world of darkness. And there he was again, in the world of dreams where the daisies had no end in sight.

Ikeda stayed there until his breathing became even, his face relaxed and the grip on the man's sleeves loosened. Chartreuse phosphorescent eyes glanced over at Gakushu's phone and a think frown morphed on the senior's face.

He focused more on the key-themed Death Scythe, he found it cruel even and it was more so when he believed that Gakushu chose it, perhaps subconsciously even? That key, it symbolised of Gakushu locking away his true self, locking it whenever he was around his father and his school, and before his unforgiveable sin.

Like what Ikeda said, he saw it through even when Gakushu didn't notice or when he was denying himself.

"… Merry Christmas Shu."

And when Gakushu woke up the next morning, he couldn't help but have a smile on his face, as he read a note he found that was beside his phone.

'You have shifts at night, so let's go to London for that Boxing day sale! I want to buy an elephant!'

EXTRA
"Ikeda!" Gakushu screamed from the top of his lungs as he chased after the man, comically the pair ran in circles. "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Run Forrest! Run I say." Ikeda called out between laughs.

"Not again." Rilliane let out a tired sigh, this was becoming too.

"You think that Ikeda would get tired of having his ribs being broken." Johnny said as he sipped his coffee. "What is it this time?"

"Chocolate with strawberry bits." An answered for him as she spotted a bar in Ikeda's hand.

Johnny then asked her, "Wasn't Ikeda your junior?"

"I think it their way of showing their friendship." An said, she ignored the strange looks from the Australian blond haired man. Gretel called out in agreement with the woman.

"Aw~ I want to watch this." Noct whine, he was sitting in one of the lounge areas before being dragged off by Ignis.

"Not until you finished your paperwork."

"Ikeda! Get back here!"

"Hahahahahahahahahaha!"

As much as Ikeda teased Gakushu and Gakushu disliking Ikeda at times, they really do care for each other. In some sense, Ikeda was really like an older brother for Gakushu.

EXTRA

"Gakushu-kun, where do you want to go for New Year's?" Gretel asked as she sipped her English breakfast tea. They sat at one of the Department's numerous food courts. On one table sat; Noct, Arthur, Gretel and Gakushu.

"Why you asked?" Gakushu asked as swallowing a bite of strawberry shortcake.

"We need to do something." Gretel muttered, she and the others had a dark look on their faces.

"We were too busy to spent time with you on Christmas." Arthur had a grim look on his face, he rested his chin with both of his hands.

"And I forgot that it would had been your first Christmas with the Department. I should had made it special than just giving you a candy cane." Noct muttered as he stabbed into his cake with a fork.

"It didn't bother me." Gakushu bluntly answered but it wasn't good even for the three.

"But it did for me, so I want celebrate this occasion because it makes your birthday the more special." Gretel exclaimed.

"And it is your first birthday with us as well." Noct pointed out as he stuffed his mouth in chocolate mud cake. "And too think that your first murder was on Christmas, talk about a shitty gift."

"It's fine really." Gakushu reassured, "You guys have been me too much already." And by too much, Gakushu was talking about the roomful of gifts he received when went to his room in the
Department. As soon as he opened the door, Gakushu was swallowed up by a large amounts of gift wrapped presents.

Gakushu gulped at the looked he was given by the three senior reapers, it was clear to him that he couldn't win this battle.

"Well…. I always wanted to go to New York for that occasion." Gakushu nervously answered, he scratched the back of his head and tried to divert his eyes away.

And that was how Gakushu spent the New Years, watching the Ball Drop with the Grim Reapers. And his room was visited again with more gifts.

More teasers for the next chapter, and I changed the chapter's title from Karaoke to Primary Colours.

"It is about the class of assassins."

"He had made two new friends from this town in a year."

"A matchmaking book eh?"

"Well Gakushu-kun, we wondered if we should hang out for a day."

"Can you two just fuck already?!"
Primary Colours

Chapter Summary

Karma and Nagisa watching the interactions of Gakushu's friends, Karma wanted some popcorn and Ren was mainly glaring at the red-head.

Primary Colours

"Wake up."

"Gakushu wake up, its morning." A voice called out to the sleeping boy, Gakushu felt something on his shoulder and it was gently shook. The voice sounded distorted as Gakushu struggled to wake up.

That gentle touch nudged a bit more.

"Five more minutes." Gakushu mumbled as he buried himself more under the comfort of his strawberry themed blanket. The kind voice playfully sighed, the strawberry blonde could tell that it was male's voice and it sounded familiar.

"Not even for some strawberry milk?" He attempted to bribe the boy with his love of sweets. Gakushu popped his head out from the blankets and could vaguely make out the outline of the male in front of them. He had a lean body, pastel green hair that covered the left side of his face and those too familiar piercing chartreuse phosphorescent eyes behind his chic black framed glasses.

Gakushu knew this man, this man who Lucia absolutely adored and dopes on.

"….Wolfie? Is that you?" Gakushu asked as he searched for his black framed glasses, he was then handed them by the man and he quickly puts it on. It was the German scientist and actor, Wolfgang Mühe, or how many others knew him as Wolfie.

Wolfie smiled kindly, the light radiating from that smile was too bright, and Gakushu's eyes was not yet adjust for this early in the morning. "Good morning Gakushu."

Gakushu rubbed his eyes from how intense Wolfie's smile was in the morning, that gentlemanly smile of his. 'So this was what the others were experiencing…'

'Wait…Why was Wolfie here, shouldn't he be doing his usual work in the Forensic Divisions?'

"What are you doing here?" The strawberry blonde innocently asked.

"I barely see you because of my work, and I'm going on a dispatch mission in rural Japan soon." Wolfie answered with a soothing voice as he opened the curtains wide. The sky was dusk and its' light dim.

"I hope I could see you before I go and lessen my chances."

"Oh… I see. Is there someone coming as well?" Gakushu asked again, he knew that these type of missions, especially for those from the Scientific Divisions that they usually have a partner or in a group.
"Kim Tae-sik from the Korean Branch is coming, I think he is the one who works at the Ward.”
Wolfie placed his hand on his chin in thought as Gakushu dragged himself out of bed. The two
walked their way to the bathroom.

"He is.” Gakushu confirmed and he opened the bathroom door. Already inside was Gretel who just
finished her shower and was just dressed in her undergarments. Gakushu quickly shut his eyes
firmed and shut the door after he yelled his apologises.

Even behind closed doors, the two could the blonde haired girl chuckling.

"So, when are you going?” Gakushu shyly asked the German male, he almost stuttered.

"This afternoon.” Wolfie answered, his face wasn't blushing because he only had eyes for his
beloved Lucia. Gakushu was because he was the innocent cinnamon roll.

"You can come in now.” Gretel called out.

Gakushu opened the door but this time slowly. Gradually revealing Gretel and full clothed, dark
navy blue and white Sailor-Lolita shirt with a matching knee height navy skirt. "Morning Gretel,
why are you early?"

"Morning Gakushu-kun~ I have the paperwork shift in the morning today." Gretel greeted back and
with a cheeky smile as Gakushu's face was fully flushed like a tomato.

And started their usual morning conversation, with the three asking what was happening in the
Department and outside of work.

"Rilliane is still stuck in another conference meeting." Gretel said as she brushed her hair. "This time,
it where the Department has to act as the neutral party."

"Again? It has been a two days now.” Gakushu exclaimed, he also dropped his toothbrush into the
sink.

"I heard that she lectured both the Angels and the Demons for over an hour.” Wolfie mentioned as
he helped to flattened Gakushu's bed hair. "Bickering like how Johnny and An bicker."

This time, the meeting was with the Demons and Angels. Grim Reapers were there to act as a neutral
party as they were neutral beings in the first place. And who only involved themselves in human
matters when the whole of humanity is at risk or if it connected back to the Department in some way.

"Yeah but when they bicker, it is adorable and hilarious." Gretel corrected the green haired German.

"Remember the last time that happened in one of the meetings?” Wolfie reminisced.

"After I just joined Class-E, she told me the full story.” Gakushu mumbled as he brushed his teeth.
He knew that the two wanted to hear the story, after he spitted out the toothpaste solution into the
sink, he did just that.

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FLASHBACK

Rilliane was impatiently tapping her finger on the long wooden table. Dressed in business attire, a
black and white suit that emphasised her figure. Under her reaper eyes, her eyes swelled and dark
circles started to form due to sleep deprivation.

'I gave up my date for this, I gave up my time that I could had spent with the gang for this!'
She drank another serving of coffee during the meeting, she just wanted to slam her head on the table and go to sleep. God! She really needed it. But she and the others had to keep up appearances as Department representatives. Not that anyone cared anymore.

There was a black American reaper named Ben who started to play tic-tac-toe with another fellow reaper from New Zealand named Matt. Another reaper from the German Branch although he was once from the Prussian Branch before it was dissolved, known as Gilbert was trying to keep himself awake as he taped his eyelids up and taking shots of scotch.

Even a demon asked for some alcohol, just to block out the loud voices. Rilliane glanced to see an angel with long pale blonde hair was drawing on the face of his fellow comrade after he just snoozed off.

Next to her was a male party of reapers, two of which had one of the most tragic stories which folded after they joined the Department. One with messy black hair was called Noct, Rilliane liked to call him Nocturnal as he often worked the night shifts and slept during the day.

Who was she kidding, he would had definitely slept through his night shifts if it wasn't for 'Iggy'. And that boy was snoozing away blissfully. The blond one was on his phone and it was probably some game app. The final male, who had light golden almond blonde hair was going through his recipe book. It was surprising for her because he was the diligent one, not that she could blame him.

Rilliane looked back and saw that the rest were doing their own things as they waited for the argument to finally end.

'This is getting ridiculous.'

She and a small team of reapers watched as a demon and an angel bicker. It has been going like this for three days now. The meeting that supposed to last for a day has extended because two idiots decided to keep interrupting the meeting.

'It was supposed to be a meeting to recount on important matters about the human world.'

One demon dressed in Victorian attire and an eye-patch watched in amusement as the black cladded demon argued with the white-cladded angel. Rilliane couldn't bother to listen in the topic of what they were arguing about. Something about dogs and cats.

Another hour had passed and Rilliane was in amazement of how they yelled non-stop.

She took in a deep breath, 'That's it, this has gone far too long.'

She raise from her seat and walked to the bickering pair. Once she was behind them, she gathered much attention from all sides; the demons, the reapers and the angels. (Apart from a certain pair.)

And she pinched and pulled their ears. "Will you two behave already?!"

"This meeting has gone far too long, we have not even gone through half of the agenda." She said in an irritated and authoritative voice she could muster, everyone knew that she was barely holding onto her sanity and it was very rare from a person like the motherly Rilliane.

The blonde reaper whistled, "I think you shouldn't had given her that 37th cup of Ebony, Ig..."

Even Noct was fully awake so he could see what happens next. "Shush, I want to watch this."

"I do not care about this dog vs cat debate, okay." And then she pulled onto their hair and slammed
both of their heads onto the table's surface.

"Ouch." The collective response of the board meeting. Demons and angels looked to her in awe that she had the courage to be able to do that.

Before the two could even cast a glare at the female reaper, she hand out two separate sheets in each of her hand. "If you behave yourself, I will give you this."

In one hand, it was a photo of a sleeping Gakushu with cat ears and he laid like a kitten on his soft pillow. While on the other hand, it was Gakushu with dog ears and also wearing a white toga. (Obviously taken after one of Lucia and Ivan's drinking games that went wrong as per usual.)

"Do we have ourselves a deal?"

"Can I have a copy too?" A distance voice called out.

"I never knew that was how she calmed them down." Wolfie said to himself as he crossed his arms.

"However she also added Noct into the deal as well." Gakushu let out a sigh, what was up with his and Noct's photos that has that much worth?

"It has been a while since you hung out with Noct and his gang." Gretel spoke, from the mirror, she could see Gakushu applying his violet coloured contacts.

"They got stuck in meetings as well, and they attend school remember? I think they were dispatched in Belgium for a spy mission." Gakushu said, he leaned away from the mirror after he wore his contacts. "I haven't got to the best part."

"Go on, don't leave us hanging."

"Now let us get back on this meeting." Rilliane stood high before she went back down to her seat once the room was quiet.

"She is learning a lot from my brother, hasn't she?" Gilbert whispered to Ben who he nodded.

"He was her main senior." Matt joined in their little conversation.

"It is about the class of assassins." Rilliane said as she went through her pages of the report.

"This again. Didn't we talk about this back in March?" An eye-patched demon whined.

"It was until a further investigation found that their fates had continuously been adverted. One time, the entire class's fate was changed simultaneously. It wouldn't unsettling as it has happened before in history until we have checked our retrieval records after some complaints in this past few months."

"They have?" Gretel interrupted the conversation.

"Karma supposed to die one time but that he never joined the Department." Gakushu explained as he washed his toothbrush.

Gretel let out an 'o' sound. "So that is why you were tempered that day." Gakushu quickly retorted that he didn't have a temper.
"It is a good thing he was saved then." Wolfie gently smiled, it was still too bright for the two in the early hours of the morning.

"I'm guessing it is because of that Korosensei thing."

"So you are guessing that it could be one of us." A demon faked his hurt as he pouted.

"We know full well what happened last time, with the blood incident and the Undertaker incident." 
"This meeting is to go through our agreements and terms to ensure no trouble on both sides, if even a third of this room are demons but this is the 21st century."

"Remember that time when you were involved in the human events because one demon got himself a part-time job at a burger joint." And there were some snickering after Rilliane's speech across the room.

When Rilliane flipped to the next page, she paused and she flipped back to the previous page before she returned back to the next page.

"Is there something wrong Rillie?" A blond male reaper asked.

Rilliane nodded and she went back to the page, and she read it slowly to make sure that the caffeine wasn't really getting to her. "Apparently, according to our mole in the Japanese government."

"The reasoning why the assassination classroom exist was to train students to assassinate an alien creature who was behind the destruction of the moon. And this alien will destroy life as we know it by the end of the school year unless he is killed off by the trained students."

"... What?" That response came from the neutral and reaper side of the meeting.

"Do we even judge aliens...?" Ben whispered but was only met with shrugs.

"I can see why you wanted to stop us from killing this alien, a quarter of our population couldn't be hibernate due to a lack of a full moon." A demon with silver hair sneered. ",And we wouldn't have fun with our human toys if they are all gone, even if we can't eat their souls anymore."

"Seriously, who is surprised by this?" A white cladded angle spoke out. "I know that you're young but you had Bizarre Dolls, and heck! We exist."

Rilliane rose up from her seat again, she quickly turned on the futuristic hologram screen and yelled. "And how do you explain this?!"

Appeared and following was Korosensei, everyone in the room had a blank and poker-like faces as they observed the yellow octopus alien creature.

"It is definitely not a demon I have seen." A demon surrounded blue flames added.

"Its colour is gaudily." A high-ranked angel simply known as Arthur commented.

"It is burning my eyes." Gilbert yelled as he covered his eyes.

"... What am I looking at?" Noct asked as he turned to his friend.

"An alien... apparently." A British voice called out.

"How is that thing involved with all of these fate changes?!"
"And that was how it went, and probably how I was dispatch into their class in the first place."
Gakushu finally finished the story.

"What a story Mark."
Gretel said, imitating Tommy Wiseau's voice.

Gakushu dressed in his gym gear, was already prepared and about to see the building until Wolfie grabbed him by the shoulder.

"I wanted to give you a gift before I go off without seeing you guys for a week."

"I heard that you have a new hobby."
"Sensei, that is so boring." One student whined and Korosensei visibly was shocked. It send the class in their own discussions while Gakushu was more focused on his books.

"What about you?" Karma asked Gakushu, the class would be surprised that the two are being very civil but... no that was surprising. Karma and Nagisa knew that Korosensei planned for this excursion so that Gakushu would learn to make friends.

That term should be changed to, teach Gakushu Asano to trust people in his class more as he could make friends just fine. Even if a lot of them had an age gap.

"Sorry, I have plans for the weekends." And Gakushu's answer threw Korosensei's plan out of the window.

"What kind of plans?" Karma asked in a cheekily tone.

"I promised a group to help them during the weekends."

'You sound like you want to get out of this.' The class's thoughts merged.

Technically Gakushu wasn't lying, he was going out of town to help one of the reaper school; La Morton Institute. He knew that they didn't really need the help but the area he was going to has reported sightings of Viktor Nikiforov.

Hot springs in a boring and dull place to stay at, or hot springs and ice-skating.

Besides, Noct was going to be there and it has been months since they directly talked to each other. He wanted to listen his stories during his time in Belgium, when Gakushu had no-one else to hang out with in his usual set of friends. Then he would confined to Noct's and his group of friends.

'Best friends must stick together.'

If Gretel could read minds, which most likely she could, she would had worded that sentence slight to;

'Cinnamon rolls must stick together.'

---

"Let the PGI meeting start!" Nagisa called out as soon Gakushu has left the class building.

"...The what now?" Maehara called out in confusion.

"The PGI meeting, the 'Protect Gakushu's Innocence' club." Nagisa answered so straightforward that he thought that there was nothing wrong with what he just said. "Gakushu has been targeted numerous of times and we receive confirmation yesterday, we must start this off somehow."

And the meeting began, with ideas circling around on how to protect Gakushu. To start off with, having Karma and Nagisa start going with Gakushu after school.

Since Itona had a habit of installing cameras around the building, it heightened further after that incident with the Department surveillance that he spotted a hooded figure in one of the monitors.

"Someone is coming." Itona commented and everyone froze. They turned their heads to the TV screen to see the person arriving inside. It was a female, she wore a black and yellow hoodie that acted like a dress with dark shorts and stockings underneath. She wore dark sunglasses and she carried a familiar presence.
When she was at the front of their classroom door, the TV screen was immediately turned off the moment the door began to slide open. The class grew silent, she looked normal enough to not be involved with the government or an assassin.

She took off her hood to reveal her short golden blonde hair, she then placed her glasses away to reveal her emerald green eyes. She peered around the class as she stepped forth, she stopped when she stood in front of Karma.

"Are you Karma Akabane?" A dainty voice called out. It was her.... it was Gretel.

"If I said yes, what are you going to do-" The red head was cut off when Gretel bear-hugged the boy.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" Gretel squealed as she hugged the life out of Karma. Almost every girl watched in amusement of the blue face Karma was making while the guys looked at him with jealousy.

First Nagisa was kissed by the idol, now and Karma was being smothered by Gretel. Sure she had some violet tendencies but she was still very gracefully. She was just protective, Karma and Nagisa understood that now, who wouldn't be for the adorable cinnamon roll?

"Can't... breathe." Karma muttered, he couldn't believe of the strength that this girl had as she jumped in the air, taking him along for the ride.

"My Strawberry is growing up!" Gretel squealed as she let go of Karma. "He had made two new friends from this town in a year."

"A time to celebrate!" And out of nowhere, confetti was being thrown into the air and it covered Karma. Where did she get the confetti in the first place?

Gretel soon stopped in her tracks when she spotted Terasaka, and she walked towards him. "Are you Terasaka?"

"Yes-" The bigger male was cut off when Gretel performed a cartwheel kick, up to his chin and pushed him off with another knee-jab to his gut, and he crashed into some desks behind.

"...."

"That was for trying to punch Gakushu-kun." Gretel exclaimed, her emerald green eyes darkened and held a dangerous glint. It was like when Korosensei ever turned to his pitch black self if he was angered to the extreme.

Karma whistled at the skill she had, he definitely now knew how Gakushu learnt his skills before he went to Class-E. He was already at the top of PE and he showed little effort, if anything he treated as a warm up for some kind of dance lesson.

"I would be breaking your ribs right now, but seeing that Nagisa-kun became Gakushu-kun's friend." Nagisa felt a shiver going on his spine when Gretel's eye took a side glance to the boy.

Gretel looked back to the fallen boy, her smile was likened to Karma's but more frightening. "I am willing to give you a second chance."

"Do you understand me?" Gretel gave the final order, Terasake furiously nodded along with the rest of the class. It was clear that the order extended to the rest of the class as well. She was even making Korosensei sweat buckets.
Gakushu once explained to Karma and Nagisa during lunch that Gretel had a brother complex or otherwise known as the Gakushu complex. Since she was the big sister and he was the little brother.

"It is terrifying." Gakushu explained in simplest terms and the two could see why.

"Now, why is everyone here?" Gretel asked the class but she received no answer. She then gasped. "Unless you are planning to hurt my Strawberry again-

"What's this?" Gretel looked to the blackboard, in chalk and in bold lettering was PGI. She walked up to the board and picked up the chalk, adding another line to the 'I' and turned it into a 'V'.

"You were missing a line." Gretel chirped. "That is what the meeting is about right?"

"… What does the V stand for?" Nagisa innocently asked to the blonde female.

"What else do you think Nagisa-kun?" Gakushu sang cheekily, Nagisa looked back and forth of the board to Gretel. And something clicked into his mind.

"…Oh." That was all the blue haired boy could respond as he blushed furiously. Gretel laughed and the much of the male body was entranced by the sound of her laughter.

She started to examine the room. "So this is his class. I could see how he liked it with nature surrounding it."

"What?" Suginio worded.

"Gakushu-kun loves nature." And he loved it so much that it was the place where he chosen to die. Soon Gretel somehow stumbled across of Korosensei's book.

"Wait!" The teacher called out but Gretel already opened the book. Karma and Nagisa prayed to the heavens that their teacher hasn't written anything about Gakushu, seeing that she was over-protective of him.

"A matchmaking book eh?" Gretel smiled to herself as she went through each page. Korosensei mentally thanked to himself that he hadn't started on Gakushu. "Who wrote this? There is no point of hiding it."

When Rio stepped forward, willing to take in the blame for the book since it would very strange for a teacher to write such a book to an outsider. Gretel closed the book, she left it on a desk and walked up to Rio. Rio tensed every time Gretel came closer and closer before she placed both of her hands on the student's shoulders.

"Honey, please leave the work to the professionals."

'… Ouch.' That class knew that it was a blow for Korosensei.

"It really shows."

'Damn.' That was every student's response and all cast a glance at Korosensei, he was obviously depressed. Beneath his disguise, his once bright yellow skin turned blue.

'So she is the matchmaking type.' Karma thought to himself.

"Don't get me wrong, it isn't bad but it is too unoriginal." The class could imagine a brick of depression smashing into the teacher to the ground. Karma and Terasaka could barely keep in his laughter. Seeing that Korosensei's pride was being trembled on by a 15 year old girl, anyone was
barely keeping in their laughter.

"Your class is quite boring, that field-trip to just the hot springs really shows." Gretel let out a sigh as she dropped her arms from Rio and crossing them.

'… We did told you Korosensei…. How did you know that?' The class's thoughts merged once again. 'Let us all assume that Gakushu told you.'

"You can just go to Hasetsu, it's far more fun there." Gretel gleefully suggested as she clapped her hands…. That wasn't a good sign. Gretel smiled, what the class didn't know was that Gretel had tapped into her Mastermind persona.

"But that's expensive." Korosensei mentioned with a slight groan in his tone. It was not until Friday that he was going to get his payday. And it would barely cover up the expenses still.

"Here." And Gretel just casually threw a neat and tied pile of money to the teacher.

"You can just convert them into yen, or do you want Euros? Currently it is a little bit stronger than US at the moment." There were 100 dollar US bank notes in the hands or tentacles of Korosensei. Everyone sworn that they saw those beady black eyes popped out, there were probably a few ten thousands in his hands. Even Karma had his jaw wide opened.

"We can't just accept this." Korosensei couldn't just take money from someone like this.

"Then it is a gift for being friends with Gakushu-kun."

"Karma-kun." Gretel turned to the red head and then she turned to the blue haired boy. "Nagisa-kun."

'Just take it, I won't have no as an answer.' That was what the expression on her face said.

Although he and Nagisa joked that Gretel could be Gakushu's long lost twin sister, as he scanned her face, he found that she resembled more of Gretel than Gakushu. It was subtle and barely noticeable but it was how her eyes were shaped, there is a slight sharpness to it.

"And it's too late, I already booked a class just about… now." Gretel exclaimed as she showed off her triumphed smile when she held out her phone. Breaking Karma away from his thoughts and back into reality.

'Damn that was fast!' The whole class was bewildered by such speed, even Itona was surprised.

'She has the speed of Allen Williams!' Itona thought to himself.

"I wasted all of this money, so you have to take the offer with no choice." Gretel guilt-tipped the teacher. "Now if you could excuse me, I need to check to see my work on that male population of Class-A for making Ren-kun scared worked."

"Good-day, it is nice seeing everyone although how quiet you all were." She gave a curtesy and walked out of the class.

"Come on, she would know where Gakushu goes." Karma harshly whispered to his blue haired friends. The two hurried to grab their belonging, dashing out of the class building and saw Gretel about to walk down the mountain steps.

"Wait!" Nagisa dove in and grabbed her arm.
"What is it Nagisa-kun?" Gretel asked, she gave out a cheery smile and Nagisa dropped his hand when he captured her attention.

"If you are going to see Gakushu-san, do you mind if we could come along? You know, to hang out?"

Gretel blinked and raised her hand and placed it under her chin. "I don't see why not."

"Okay, you two can come." Gretel agreement and a wide smile that reached to her ears appeared on her cute face. "Yes, this could work."

"See you at the bottom! I need to check a few things first, just go to the front of the school."

"….." Ren silently looked on to Karma and Nagisa.

"….." Karma quietly stared back at Ren.

"Hi Nagisa. What are you doing here?" Gakushu was the only one who broke the silences. He remained oblivious of the tension growing between Karma and Ren.

"Well Gakushu-kun, we wondered if we should hang out for a day." The blue haired boy timidly answered. "We haven't had one since we became friends."

"We haven't… have we." Gakushu said to himself.

"Wait, I needed to check some things." Gakushu said as he pulled out his smart-phone from his pockets. He was looking through his messages.

'Sorry, there are a change of plans. We are still going to see you tomorrow.

-Noct.'

"Looks like we can hang out." Gakushu said to Nagisa who smiled. Nagisa couldn't wait to see what Gakushu did in his spare time, and also to protect him.

But before he closed his phone, he just received a new message and it was from Ikeda. He saw that it was sent to his Department folder and he switched on his coding system. It was an extra safety measure when he needed to read his messages urgently and when those mundane are close around him.

'Shu, be careful. I got the report back from the Technology division. It was definite that we were being watched, luckily it was when we weren't discussing anything direct about the Department. Although you and all of us are careful on what we say out in the open, be careful still. We traced the network back to your current classroom's area.

You can later visit Viktor about this just before your shifts.'

'There must be someone watching us that is also connected with all of these attacks.' Gakushu reasoned with himself. He knew that he need to be extra careful on his actions and to further hide his connections to the Department.

What seemed like an important piece of information to Gakushu seemed like rabbling to others under his coding system.

As Gakushu was more focused on his phone, Nagisa was getting worried of how Ren was glaring at
Karma, as he and the red head were getting somewhat intimated by the hazel haired boy's glare. If that was even possible and Gakushu was only focused on the fact that Gretel was walking up to the group.

"Gasp, now if mentioned it. I haven't spent any time with our two new friends." Gretel said with glee, the boys looked behind her and saw that half of the school body was shaking in fear from the mere presence of this hooded girl.

"Took your time." Karma chirped, almost smirking of how this girl in front of him was scaring the school's population. 'We are definitely going to get along well.'

'At least she hadn't killed someone, I hope…' Gakushu hoped, he also hoped that no-one had majority of their bones or their ribs snapped from her wrath. He still didn't know how the trend started, like how the England Branch have garden-themed Death Scythes for many of its reapers. 'Gretel, you planned for this… didn't you?' Ren knew something was up, he knew the girl long enough that she set up this meeting. Not that he mind too much because Gakushu needed to spend time with his other friends as well, but he also was fighting the urge to punch Karma's face.

'I think Ren is getting jealous~' Gretel mentally sang to herself, she saw how Ren was death-glaring at Karma. 'I should do this more often, Noct should be finishing his mission in Belgium and I know how close he is to the Strawberry.'

'I wonder what I should get for Gakushu-san tomorrow, maybe I try out the strawberry mochi.' Nagisa thought to himself.

"Sadly, Arthur is at work today so we can't do our usual routine and our other group had a minor change in plans." The blonde girl let out a sigh, she shrugged her shoulders as she walked, leading the group out of school grounds. "So, let's try something a bit different today."

"How about karaoke? It has been a while." Gakushu suggested and he showed a text to the girl from Rilliane.

'Lyrics Karaoke Bar.'

Gretel nodded, she clapped her hands togethers and plastered a bright smile on her face. "Let's go to the café first, I'm having troubles of choosing our cake of the day."

Karma and Nagisa stood outside of the café where Nagisa and Gakushu went to their fake date. Gakushu, Gretel and Ren were inside of the building.

"Should we go in?" Nagisa whispered to Karma who only gave a shrug. They looked to the billboard and saw that at this time, it was only membership required.

"Why the hell do you need membership for a café?" Karma asked out loud.

"Because why not?"

"I see that you are back, weren't you the one planning to Hurt my little junior again?" A familiar voice called out, the two students slowly turned their heads back and was met with a looming figure hovering above them. His black hair was cut in a buzz-cut, his dark eyes stared deep into their souls and he was dressed in the café's uniform. A simple short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey trousers and well-tended black leather shoes. He had long black waist apron tied, in his arms were boxes that can be only assumed to be for the café.
"And especially you." His eyes casted onto Karma. Karma usually wouldn't be so affected by these types of looks but this one did. And once again, what the two didn't know that the personification of Death was staring into their wellbeing.

"Van, I stopped being your junior years ago." A female voice called out, she stepped into the conversation. She wore a similar attire to the male worker, her hair was jet black and her eyes were dark. Her hair was tied in a mid-ponytail with its ends curled which gave it its appearance of bounciness, her fringe covered her forehead and swayed to the right with curliness. She too carried a box of ingredients in her arms.

Karma and Nagisa knew these two, their appearances and their voices, it was An and Van.

"You are still one to me." Van said and An opened the door by pushing it with her foot.

"Get in." She said in an annoyed voice, Van only smiled and he made his way into the café.

An turned to the two students with a smile, the same type of smile that made Karma's heart fluttered. Similar to Rin's motherly smile. "Hello there, second friend and third friend."

"What are you doing here?"

"We are waiting for Gakushu." Nagisa answered.

"Why don't you come in then? It is going to take a while."

"But, isn't today membership only?" Nagisa asked, An shifted the box on her arms to one, going through her apron pockets and she picked out two plastic cards. "I know it is not much of an apology, it was horrible for me to hold a knife at you on Saturday."

"Actually, I think I almost did the same." Nagisa confessed, he was about to beat the worker from a convince store due to a misunderstanding. "I almost killed someone because I thought he was taking advantage of Gakushu-san."

Karma had a look of bewilderment while An chuckled. "Yeah, he has that effect on you. You know, I can see you two as his big brothers, please continue looking after him during school."

Although Nagisa on the outside give a bashful smile, on the inside he was having a party equivalent to a New Year's Eve party. 'I have been recognised as his big brother!'

'Huh, I can kind of see that. Gives me more reason to tease him though, what big brothers are for.' Karma mused to himself, he was already starting to tease Gakushu over his sweet tooth. Calling him names like 'my little Strawberry'.

"Here, can you go in now?" She said as she handed the two the membership cards. And the two students went in, there wasn't anything much different when they compared the days where membership was acquired or not. A massive difference was the atmosphere of the café, as if it were a huge gathering of long-time friends.

An already went to her work as soon she placed her box on the counter. Karma and Nagisa could see Gakushu and Gretel trying to decide on what cake to choose.

"I see you got membership." Gretel sang and she went back to looking on the selection of cake before her. "How about a Japanese cheesecake?"

"We had that yesterday." Gakushu pointed out. "What do you think we should get Nagisa?"
"Um…" And somehow, the blue haired boy joined alongside the pair on observing the cakes. "How about the black forest cake?" He was amazed by the wide selection of cakes before him, he didn't remember seeing this many choices the last time he came here. 'Maybe there is a bit of a difference.'

"I don't like that Nagaisa~" Karma let out a whine before Nagisa slapped his shoulder.

"Okay, that is off the list." Gretel said and Gakushu nodded, still focused on his wide selection of cakes. "We are sharing the cake with everyone."

Ren meanwhile was sitting at a nearby desk. He was talking with male with short chestnut brown hair.

"You should definitely tried out our pasta." That male who looked to be around the ages of 14 sang blissfully. Not once did Ren saw his eyes since he closed them for the entire of the conversation, he wasn't sure how the boy got around the place or see anything.

"I will try it when I come here next time… um."

"Feli." He sleepily spoke. He slowly turned to the Australian worker, Johnny and saw that he was already arguing with An when she talked with a male reaper from Finland. "I hope they don't fight, it has been months since they fought."

"Is it that bad?" Ren grimily looked on to the pair, he often saw them as happy-go-luckily, the image of Australian mateship, who teased and make fun of each other. They seemed to get along just fine.

Feli let out a sigh. "They always get competitive afterwards."

"Why can't you be cute? Why can't you be like Kara?" An whispered to herself as she tried to walk away from the other male. He wasn't happy when he heard that name, he knew that An in her drunken ramblings would talk about the 'k' guy and he didn't like. As much as he didn't admit it, it clearly showed.

"Says you and your lack of sex appeal." Johnny spat out, An froze in her tracks and the café almost went quiet. Ren had his jaw wide opened. Karma and Nagisa slowly turned their heads.

"Ohhhhh…." The café resonated. Some of the reaper customers had popcorn readied to watch the scene about to unfold.

Feli whispered to himself, "Here we go again."

"What did you say?" An turned slightly towards to the man with spiked dirty blonde hair with slightly tanned skin

"Lack of sex appeal, flat-chested." Johnny smirked as he made a list, he felt smug when he capture the look of annoyance from the Vietnamese female. Her eyebrows furrowed in anger, her dark brown eyes narrowed and her cheeked puffed.

"He's just jealous because An talking to Prom again." Van whispered to James that the two decided to ignore.

'Back already?' Gakushu thought to himself, 'They must be filling in their reports or stuck on paperwork duty.'

"She can talk to me just fine without getting John's knickers in a twist." Another reaper reasoned ignorantly.
"That is because you're gay." Van bluntly answered. Nagisa almost choked on his spit from how blunt he was and Karma snickered from the comedic timing.

"At least I have flexibility." She said as if she was implying something else. Johnny caught on and his cheeks slightly flushed.

Johnny quickly retorted with, "Still flat-chested to touch."

"I'm average!" An screamed. The other males from her group of Australians knew that Johnny only said that just to get to her nerves. She may not have the figure of Rilliane in terms of chest size, they would say that she had nice hips but Kim Tae-sik was in the café. And he was already death-glaring at the dirty blonde Australian for 'demeaning' his and Ikeda's main senior.

"That's what you would say." Johnny taunted.

'Time-out.' Nagisa and Karma mentally called out. 'When you compare her to Bitch-sensei, she is smaller but she is not Bitch-sensei. She is who she is.'

Karma added, 'She's motherly! Motherly!'

'So this is one of their fights.' Ren wondered, after being told by Gretel of their bickering, he wonder how two close-knitted friends would bicker, he didn't know if Gretel was rubbing on him but he guessed that it was because of romantic tension.

"Says the guy who was blushing when his face was on her breasts." James called out on him. An had a look of confusion while Johnny furiously blushed.

"Boobs are boobs, no matter the size." One café worker spoke out, he was definitely the type that didn't judge and it clearly showed with the nods of approvals from the female population. "They don't define your character."

However that didn't stop from the two from bickering and at each other's heads. Smashing their foreheads together, An looked like she wanted to claw him and Johnny held her wrists.

"Reminds me of the days where Ivan and Lucia used to fight, over if whiskey or vodka was better." A French accented voice called out.

'…. They had.' Gakushu was surprised, 'Huh, I would never guessed that.'

"Can you two just fuck already?!" Mark called out in English, almost the entire café laughed. While Nagisa blushed madly, Ren and Karma blankly stared at the scene.

'I think I am going to need that popcorn.' Karma mentally noted as he saw a bowl of popcorn being passed around.

"Shut up Mark!" The two Australians yelled back. And café filled once again with roaring laughter.

"Now John, I know you were getting touchy with my little junior." Van walked out of the bar as he was taking an order from his fellow reapers.

"I swear to god Van! He was only tending to my injuries." An glowered.

"Because you were distracted when Johnny suddenly appeared when you sewed another bear." Van answered again and he shook his head. "How many bears do you need?"

"And don't forgot the times where Johnvo was jealous when An talked about some guy whose name
started with a K." James mentioned.

Wouldn't it be hilarious, that Johnny found out that he had been jealous over an eight year boy?

"I wasn't." Johnny grumbled and he glared at his friend's smug look.

"He was so adorable and innocent, unlike you." An crossed her arms and she swiftly turned her away as she let out a 'hmph'. "He thought I was sleeping beauty one time and when I slept a bit too long, he kissed me."

The Vietnamese Australian had a look of triumph as she looked at Johnny's red and maddening look. "Or that other time that he promised that he would marry me once he grew taller than me, that I will actually be his queen."

Gakushu could barely keep in his laughter, it was funny when you have the image of present day Karasuma and placed him together with these sorts of stories. If only he could tell his class that An was talking about was actually Karasuma.

Nagisa and Karma almost died from blood lost as they saw Gakushu's face, as he bit onto his lip as he tried to keep in his laughter. Ren took a photo of it, thankfully he was already gotten used to it although it was still cute.

'Ve should definitely use this against Korosensei.' Karma playfully thought.

Gakushu glanced to Gretel, he whispered into her ear and she gasped. "No, really?"

"Looks like you have some competition there Johnny-boy." Mark laughed as he heartedly patted his back hard.

"Shut up you cunt!" John yelled as he turned swiftly turned and landed a punch to Mark's jaw. The males chanted and cheered for a fight.

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" They all roared as they started to surround the fighting.

'Well that escalated quickly…' The thoughts of Ren, Karma and Nagisa merged.

"Guys we know, you are mates." Van called out as he walked back to the counter to make people's orders.

"Looks like we are drinking tonight." James cried out, almost all of the reapers aside from Gakushu and Gretel cheered.

"It's only Tuesday." Kim Tae-sik let out a pain filled sigh.

"Aren't you supposed to be out in the country?" A young fellow reaper from Denmark asked.

"In an hour." The Korean reaper bluntly answered as he placed his fist on his cheek.

"It is a wonder why they haven't got together, they bicker as if they are an elderly couple." Gretel let out a sigh, she looked to John who was wrestling Mark and while An continued on with her job as a waitress to her fellow reapers.

"Yeah, it has been a while since they fight and it's going to get messy afterwards." Gakushu commented and nodded. "I hope you guys like passionfruit butter cake."

"Aren't you going to stop them?" Nagisa spoke as the pair led the group out of the café. Was it that
"This is nothing, you should see when alcohol gets involved." Gretel laughed and before you could blink, her face turned deadly pale. Gakushu was the same and both weakly chuckled. "I feel sick by just thinking about it."

"What happened? Ren asked, asking the same question that the other three wanted answers.

"It is a story for another day Ren-kun."

"So, shift work? Arthur?" Gretel asked. She, Gakushu, Ren, Nagisa and Karma stared at the blonde male sitting behind the counter. Arthur stared back at the group with an emotionless face.

'Silent type.' Karma came up with his own conclusion from his character study.

"Basically." Arthur responded as he neatened the paperwork.

"How does nobody found out that one of Candy Fest's member, Earl is working at a karaoke bar?" Nagisa spoke out of his mind, he was sure that he needed to slap himself to wake up from such a strange dream.

"Membership." Arthur responded. And he scanned over Karma without a word.

"I thought we talked about this yesterday." Gretel tiredly placed a hand over her hand.

"Just to be sure." Arthur spoke with an unreadable expression.

Gretel scoffed. "And your make-believe wasabi vibe."

'What is up with Gakushu's friends having heightened senses…?' No really, An was almost right when she saw Nagisa as Hana, and Gretel has her Gakushu complex.

"It's room 8." Arthur politely said and the group gave him their thanks.

As they walked through the hallway, they finally arrived at the front of the door of room 8. There was noise emitting behind the room. Three certain students thought that it was strange that they were given an already occupied room.

Gakushu knew what was happening behind the door, he took in a deep breath and mentally prepared himself of what he was going to be subject.

"We've got to hold on to what we've got. Cause it doesn't make a difference if we make it or not. We've got each other and that's a lot for love~" Gakushu knew that it was Ivan's terrible and deliberated singing.

"We'll give it a shot." That line was definitely sung by Lucia. He could hear the sounds of the tambourine being bang crazily.

He opened the door and two persons rushed to him, shoving the microphone to his face.

"Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

Gakushu had a smiled on his face and he sang the next line. "We're halfway there, living on a prayer~" And Nagisa cursed himself for not recording this moment, not knowing that he already heard of Gakushu's singing voice several times.
"There it is!" Lucia cheered and she spotted some new faces behind him. "Are these your friends? Come in, come in."

The female German ushered the group inside. As they came, Ivan went and sat at one of the black leathered sofas and the singing came to a halt.

"Guys, this is Ivan." Gakushu gestured to the curly haired Russian who waved back. "And this is Lucia." The blonde German smiled at the group. It was no surprise to Karma and Nagisa that these two had a huge age gap.

Karma saw these people before, last Friday after Gakushu picked him out and he stayed at his current place. When Gakushu in a sleepy daze snuggled himself between the two people he saw in front of him.

"It is a pleasure to meet you." Ivan smiled. "I am the fun uncle of the group."

"Occupation is bodyguard. Lucia's a teacher." Ivan added, it did helped to explain why Ivan was able to stop a letter bomb. He looked to be the calm person of the group and Lucia having a similar personality to Gretel's, but they were all assumptions. You could make the same agreement that Lucia would be similar to Irina.

"Hello." Nagisa bowed to the man. "I'm Nagisa, this is Karma and Ren."

"I hope you don't mind if we used your first names, it is a habit after growing up in the western world." Lucia shyly smiled.

"No-no, its fine." Nagisa waved his hands around frantically.

"Where's Rin, she was the one who sent the text?" Gakushu asked and already making himself comfort as he sank into the couch. He had a menu folder in his hands and started to flip through the pages. It was good to see that Gakushu was being more opened and relaxed, especially around Nagisa and Karma.

"She went to the lounge to get some coffee." Lucia innocently answered.

"...." Gakushu dropped the menu booklet and Gretel's jaw opened.


"She just came back from a meeting." Gretel hastily explained, and then Ivan and Lucia's eyes widened. It was then they knew, they fucked up.

"Shit! Why did I let her go?!" Lucia yelled, as she stood and covered her eyes with her hands as she leaned back a bit.

"Why? Is there something wrong?" Karma asked, somewhat worried for the pink haired female he already grown attached to.

"We may just gave her 25th coffee of the day." Ivan grimly answered.

The sound of the door creaked as it opened echoed across the room. Then suddenly it quickly spread opened as a figure fell to the ground face-first.

"..."

At the door and on the floor was female whose body is around the ages of a university student, she
had long pink, she wore a white dress and in her hand was an un-spilled coffee cup.

"Rin!" Gakushu cried out as he dashed to his main senior. Karma also followed to help this person, she did helped him after all, so he might as well return the favour.

"Hi Gakushu-chan." Rilliane muttered out tiredly as she could barely muster the strength to lift her face up. Already Ren felt a connection with her, he knew how it felt whenever he practiced with Gretel.

"Why aren't you resting?" Gakushu asked, he hoped that she didn't tapped into her caffeine addiction again.

Rin let out a whine. "But it had been so long since we did this Gakushu-chan." She then blinked as she looked up to Karma, not that everyone would know that as her eyes were hidden behind her pink bangs. "And Ivan and Lucia promised me that they won't drag me in their games for a month."

'Good move.' Gakushu and Gretel thought in unison.

Rin then turned to look up and see amber golden eyes. "Oh hi Karma-chan."

"Hi Rin, thank you for the ointment" Karma greeted the woman, he and Gakushu helped Rin up.

"No problem, I see that you became friends with Gakushu-chan." Rin gently smiled back and Karma couldn't help but smile on his warming face. "And I finally met Ren-chan and Nagisa-chan in person too."

Ren too felt his face was warming up, but it also made him feel sad as well strangely enough. 'So this is the person who occasionally write songs for the band.'

Gretel's giggles turned everyone's attention on her. "Oh yes, I remember now. It took you three months to find out that Ren became his friend."

Gretel had a smug look and Rilliane had a calm face although internally she was cursing. Everyone could had sworn that they saw sparks radiating as they eyed at each other.

'That was for stealing the motherly role.'

'I was already like one by the time Allen was born.'

The atmosphere was intense and it was difficult to breath. Ivan hoped to hide himself in the background so that he couldn't get involved, and receive backlash that could land him a ban from his vodka supply for a period of time. Lucia was looking off to the sidelines and was whistling.

Nagisa was unsure what to do, Ren didn't want to face the wrath of Gretel and Karma wanted to see if there was popcorn around. He knew that he should had grabbed a handful of it back in the café. And Gakushu for some reason knew that they were fighting over him.

Lucia shakily and bravely walked up to the pair. Taking one for the team. "Let us not fight, Gakushu's friends are here."

"So let's get this day started already!"

"Let me get this straight, the reason why you did what you did on that fake date was because you wanted to protect Nagisa-kun." Gretel recounted everything of what Karma and Nagisa just earlier explained.
Rin, Ren, Ivan and Lucia listened in closely. All the while as Gakushu was busily and happily munching on his Banana Split Bombe. He already knew it but he knew that it was Nagisa's business, so he didn't tell his friends. But Gretel will often or not, she will get her way and she checked Gakushu's notes of the class's character study in his report. Something didn't add up.

"Basically." Karma nodded.

Gretel let out a groan. "Couldn't you say that it was just for a drama production? We could had avoided the whole mess."

"I panicked." Karma bluntly answered. Karma didn't know how Gretel managed to rat him out on the true reasoning of the fake date five songs in, but man she was skilful! But it made Ren's glare on Karma ten times worse.

"Gakushu-kun wouldn't judge you for it." Gretel placed a hand over her face and pinched the bridge of her nose, giving the message of 'are you serious.'

And it was a part of the Department's nature, although they have a Judging Divison, it was only reserved for the souls who passed on. Unlike reapers who are struck in their duties, almost like in a limbo. How could you judge each other for your past, for your race, if you were a horrible person and your sexuality when that was the littlest of their problems?

Did it really matter in the eyes of the Department? Beings who were supposed to be neutral in nature as they went to work? If anything, you only had extra time added, if you were a murderer or a rapist, if being homosexual was even considered as a crime.

The ultimate sin was suicide and nothing else in the eyes of nature, that was why everyone in the Department in the first place and nothing else. The Department, as fate was cruel would be considered a perfect utopia. No-one is discriminated, no racism or homophobia, no-one gets turned away from help and etc.

As one of the teachings of the Department goes, if it didn't hurt you or others then you do you.

Karma gave back a look that said, 'well we know that now.'

"We only knew Gakushu-san, well from his mask." Nagisa nervously chuckled. "But we know his true cinnamon self now."

"Gakushu." Ivan turned to the strawberry blonde boy.

"I'm working on it and don't you start, Antonio bugged me about it." Gakushu huffed as he helped himself to another serving of strawberry compote. "All of you were annoying about it as well."

"Why can't Gakushu be more open in class?" Nagisa mentally sighed.

"Gakushu-san, aren't you eating too much?" Nagisa asked, amazed of how much Gakushu was eating and how he maintained his size. 'He is eating more than Kayano.' Gakushu started eating his fifth serving.

"Nope. Aren't you guys going to sing?"

'Maybe I should monitor his sugar intake.' Nagisa pondered, but he really want to see those sparkling and glittering violet eyes. He needed to devise other ways to see Gakushu's cutest sides.

"I have to go now." Rilliane checked for the time on her phone, she stood from her seat and
Gakushu did the same.

"Hey Rin, do you mind if we talk privately?" Gakushu asked. "I have to go as well, errands."

Rin paused and she gently smiled. "Of course, I leave you guys to learn about each other."

"Hai hai hai." Ivan and Lucia sang in unison.

"I'll see you at school tomorrow." Gakushu said his farewells.

"Wait-" Nagisa called out but it was too late, the door closed and the two already left. What should he do, should he tell but it would only bring suspicion to his class?

"I have to go now as well, my aunt is visiting." Ren also stood up and left the room. And now, it was down to five.

"Bye Ren, the usual routine will resume tomorrow." Gretel said before he shut the door closed. When she casted her eyes on Nagisa and Karma, she noticed their worried glances.

"If you're worried about the Strawberry, Rin is with them and Gakushu-kun can look after himself." Gretel reassured the boys as she casually sips her drink.

*After all, everything that was targeting Gakushu was only human and Gretel was helping the search. Oh yeah, she knows.*

Next time on Until the day I'm forgiven.

"Gakushu, where is that kit!?"

"He's having another episode!"

"I apologise Korosensei, I was just thinking."

"What school is visiting us?"

Chapter: La Morton

QUESTION: Who is having an episode?
A look into a boy's happiest of memories. This memory revolves around flowers.
We need more ideas for these two, if you got them, please suggest them to me!

Love me, love me not.
"Loves me."
"Loves me not."
"Loves me."

A boy about age eight with short black hair, he was plucking off the petals one by one as he blankly watched. He sat with his knees close to his body at the park. He plucked the final petal and received the final verdict.

"Loves me not."

Meanwhile, a girl around the age of 18 was walking in that same park, in both of her hands were two cans of soft drinks. And it was icy cold, perfect for the hot and sunny weather of an Australian summer. She had long jet black hair that reached down to her waist and was tied in a ponytail. Her bangs covered her forehead and it curled to the right and her eyes shined the colours of chocolate brown.

She wore a long summer dress with sleeves only half way to her arm. Beneath that were white bandages that wrapped around her arms.

She noticed that the small boy wasn't paying attention at all. She hoped as she tread carefully and quiet, she could surprise the boy with a cold can contacting his cheek. Maybe a 'yelp' or a 'kya' sound from the boy. As she slowly approached to the small boy, she noticed of the discarded flowers around him and their petals plucked.

'What is he doing now?' That girl thought to herself, she slightly bent over and closely saw a daisy in his hands. He was plucking its petals off one by one while he chanted 'Loves me, loves me not.'

She had to hold in her laughter, 'So cute!' She thought that this boy couldn't get any more adorable than he already was. 'Does he have that crush with the girl next stuff?'

'I should store this in for later to tease him.' She playfully thought as she continued to watch the little hands pluck the petals off. 'What will it end up with?'

Then boy said 'Loves me' and one petal was left on the stud. He hovered his fingers about the white petal and she could tell that he was pouting.

'Oh, is it a love me not? Aw, how disappointing.' She smiled to herself cheekily. She prepared to have the can touch his chubby cheeks.
"Anna…” He softly whispered and his body shook a bit.

‘… Did he knew that I was here?!’ She internally panicky and froze on her spot, but the little boy still had his back faced her.

"She doesn't hate me, she doesn't?" The little boy whimpered, he let out a sniffle and the girl could tell that he was crying. As one hand still had the flower, he used his free arm and rubbed it to his eyes. Her smiled quickly wavered and her face held a small frown, but she quickly gained back that smile.

'Ah, you're so silly…” She softly smiled, she noticed how many flowers had their petals pulled out and she placed the drinks down on the grass.

The boy looks down at his plucked flower, soon he noticed of the petals rained in front of him. 'Eh…? How was that possible?'

"Anna loves Kara very much." A voice called out from behind and the little boy saw that the small white petals sprinkled all over him. He tilted his hand up and there she was, in her fluttering white dress.

"A-Anna!” He jolted and almost fell back. The tears continued to fall down his redden cheeks.

Kara looked in surprised, the tears continued to fall down his soft chubby cheeks. She bent down to meet at eye level, she ruffled his short hair. "You're were always such a cry-baby." She teased as she went to pinch his tear-stained cheeks. She rubbed the tears away with her thumb.

"Now where is my smile, my little king?” She pinched it enough that it won't hurt the child, she moulded it upwards to turn that frown into a smile.

"I told you, my names is Karasuma!” The younger Karasuma yelled as he tried to pull away from her grip.

"… Ka-ra?"

"Ka-ra-su-ma!"

And that memory faded when the morning came into the world of dreams.

And Karasuma was back in the world of the present. It was early, too early for most people but never for Karasuma.

He stretched out his arms as he rose out of bed, he prepared himself for the day, wearing his suit and neatening his dark hair.

He went to the florist and brought those same flowers he remembered with all his heart from his cherished memories.

"Gift for a girlfriend?" A florist sang.

"Gift for a first love." Karasuma answered as he handed in the money. The florist smiled at him.

"How romantic.” The worker sang but it wasn't what she was thinking.

"How adorable of you my little king." That voice echoed in his mind and it brought a small smile on his face. He left the store and made his way back to his home. Along the way, down the shopping
district, the teacher who happened to be a government agent passed by a certain café.

"Mate, our customer rate is going to be low." A man with ice blue hair commented as he set out the tables and chairs outside of the store. "They only came here for the girls and An."

"Be thankful that Van wasn't here to hear that." A male with light blonde hair and skin as white as snow whispered back harshly. "Do you really think that they will stop coming because An had another transfer."

"Ahhhh, yeah. She has earned the title of 'Girl of grace' around these parts. She has a smile of an angel and those hips too." After placing down another chair, he used his hands to form the lower part of the hourglass in the air.

"Mark." The blonde haired man face-palmed and he let out a groan.

"Hey, just because you're gay James. Doesn't stop me on saying the truth, and Kim Tae-sik isn't around."

James let out a sigh and rolled his hazel coloured eyes. "Can't you just say that Prom and Johnny is going with her as well?"

"Shit! I stocked on the popcorn for those moments!"

But that didn't matter to Karasuma, he just overheard the conversation as he waited for his order to arrive. Black coffee, he remembered the time when he was that same eight year old year, he had tried coffee for the first time.

Karasuma couldn't stop tearing up from how bitter it was, it was even more bitter because Anna didn't took hers with sugar. She gave him chocolate milk to mask the aftertaste.

He started to drink it at the more suitable age without sugar, because he wanted to be like his role model in every possible way. He even trained in the arts of gymnastics and acrobatics, even though his body could never contort the same way as Anna did.

He came back to his home as he sipped his coffee. It was good timing as that the mail came in time as well and there was a package left on his door step.

He opened the door, he leaned over to pick up the package and went inside. He closed the door behind him, not bothered to lock it because he was going out in just a few more minutes for his usual work.

He placed the wrapped box onto the simple and plain wooden table, he unwrapped it and revealed was an elegant and beautiful flower vase.

It was sky blue, it wouldn't definitely suit Karasuma, a man considered by his students as a stick in the mud and who often wore dark clothing. But it would had suited Anna, he always imagine Anna in her summer white dress that danced in the wind, behind the sky blue sky and under the hot Australian sun.

For him, she would almost be set on the 'dazzling' mood in his brain. Even after he learnt of the truth of her death, it never tarnished the image he would always picture her. Her smile, the way her silky long black hair shined, her touch when she hugged him in her warmth.

If anything, his feelings for her only intensified, it was a tragic as he condemned himself to not be able to be with another but he didn't mind. He hoped that he would have another chance in the next
life, that next time he would be the one to protect her and extra points if he was reborn around the age as Anna.

His love was pure after all. He was even hoping that he could marry her once he turned 18, he even came back to Australia for that and prepared flowers in hand. To only have the flowers be used for her grave.

He set the vase one side of the table, he carefully placed the now water-filled vase with his brought flowers. In his opinion though, Anna was more beautiful than any flower, she wasn't like Irina or the other females he worked with.

Sadly it was a bad habit of her to side her problems, he wished that she could had told him of her problems. But the past is the past now, all he could do was to preserved all the happy memories the two had.

He then placed a framed photo of her, slightly in front of the cute vase. So now, whenever he ate, about to leave for work or go to sleep, he would greet Anna or say goodnight. He preferred his home-made teddy bear, the last gift given by Anna be in his bedroom and by his desk, it was like his guardian angel.

Like Anna was watching over him.

"Morning Anna."
A school of reapers visited Gakushu's school... oh boy.

"Oh~ Shu!" Ikeda sang out as he wrapped his arm around Gakushu's shoulders.

"I told you Ikeda, it's Gakushu! Ga-ku-shu!" Gakushu yelled, he pulled away from man's hold with annoyance as the other roared in laughyer.

He turned to Gakushu and gave him a cheeky look that reminded Gakushu of Karma. "So, I saw you talking with Rilliane." He chirped and his expression wavered when he saw Gakushu dropped his head a bit.

"We talked about Allen." Gakushu answered, he attempted to quicken his pace but Ikeda swiftly followed his action.

"Her little brother? I heard from Viktor." Ikeda kept to his happy tone, he spoke while rolling his tongue. "Anything else?"

"... I don't know if I should tell you this..."

"About what?" Gakushu paused, he bit his lips and continued on with his speech.

"We mainly started about... breakdowns." And Ikeda caught on.

"Oh, it's fine if you don't want to explain about it."

"Thanks." Gakushu softly smiled and they resumed walking down the halls of the Technology Division. Sometime later, Ikeda intended to break the silent and lightened up the mood.

"Can you call me big brother now, because of it?" Ikeda cheekily asked, he dug his gloved hand into Gakushu's strawberry blonde hair and ruffled it madly.

"Hell no!" Gakushu tried to slap away the hand, after a good minute or so, he was successful although his hair resembled of Ivan's.

"Noct influencing you? Or is it Prom? No, it is definitely Johnny." Ikeda spoke as he smirked, smiling at Gakushu neating his hair. "You are now Shu Ivanov."

"Awww, why didn't you keep the hair?"

Gakushu rolled his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. Before the two knew it, and a 'thank god' from the Strawberry, they were at the rooms where Viktor worked.

The automatic doors slide wide opened, allowing the pair to waltz right me. Gakushu greeted first. "Hello Viktor."
"Hey Viktor!" Ikeda called out with a toothy grin, as the two looked ahead to see Viktor with his back turned to them and at his work desk.

No response.

"Viktor?" Gakushu asked again.

Viktor only mumbled, Gakushu couldn't make out of what he was saying and so the boy slowly approached. He and Ikeda thought that the man was too focused on his work as he often did, and Gakushu gently tapped on his shoulder but he noticed now that the man's body was shaking.

"Viktor…? Are you okay?" Gakushu asked again, as he was concerned as he heard his ramblings of broken Bulgarian. Then Viktor twitched his head.

"Hey man, what's up? Got a stomach ache?" Ikeda asked, worried for his friend.

"Urgh." Viktor groaned.

"What is it Viktor?" Gakushu moved closer and the man fidgety turned to meet his face. Gakushu almost stumbled back and fell when he saw what kind of expression he saw.

Viktor gripped his teeth, his eyes resembled almost like a crazed animal behind his circular glasses. All of a sudden, he stabbed his hand with a pen he was holding, growling as he attempted to control himself. Gakushu winced from the sound.

"Viktor!" Gakushu rushed to take away the pen, grabbing onto the hand that carried the pen in attempts to remove the object. "Let-

Gakushu froze when Viktor turned his head to face Gakushu once more, his crazed and angry-like eyes pierced into the strawberry blonde. Gakushu knew that Viktor would quickly follow with an attack as he felt that strong push from the scientist.

"Ahhhhhh!" Viktor screamed as he held out his weapon and aimed it to Gakushu, too fast for Gakushu to block so he went into a protective stance instead. He covered his face with his arms, arms crossed over his face and he felt a sting to his right hand.

Gakushu moved his arms out a bit, slowly opening his eyes he shut out of fear, he saw that his hand was gashed after a light slice from Viktor's pen. Some blood, both his and Viktor's stained the tip of the choice of weapon, and blood slowly formed to rain down from Gakushu's hand.

"Shu!" Ikeda pulled Gakushu behind him, "Get behind me."

Gakushu instinctively held his injured hand, he hated himself for cowering behind Ikeda but what other choice did he had. Unlike a human to which he could so easily disarmed and defeat, this person in front was a Grim Reaper, someone whose speed was on similar grounds.

Someone with the strength and abilities of a reaper, and with an unstable mind. Viktor held up his pen dangerously, his head twitching side to side like a madman, he looked like he was attempting to control his urges but in the end, he lost that battle.

"Shu, find the kit. It's in the emergency box. I'll go and hold him." Ikeda ordered. Gakushu couldn't even retort back as their usual banter would go.

Gakushu nodded, he whispered in the lowest voice he could muster. "Right, be careful." He quickly dove for the first aid station, rushing to find kit as Ikeda went to restrain the other.
"Gakushu, where is that kit!?!" Ikeda yelled, he was barely able to turn his head around to see how the strawberry blonde was doing.

"I'm looking! I'm looking!" Gakushu panicky screamed, down on his knees as he searched through the cupboard, he felt a wash of relief when he found the needed kit. He quickly unzipped the bag, grabbing out a container that was definitely the syringe kit and a bottle of sedatives.

A moment of realisation came into head, as he blankly stared down on what both of the shaken hands held.

'I have to reject it, I have to reject it into Viktor.' He was the one who restrains the other, not the one who injects.

He breathed out short shallow breathes, he felt his head becoming light and the voices outside was slowly being drowned out. The world seemly disappeared around him as he focused on the syringe kit and its contents. He felt like he was choking, looking down with widening eyes.

"What the hell is going on?!” A reaper dashed into the room and was shocked of what he saw. Thankfully for Gakushu, it snapped him back to reality and that reality was currently screaming.

"It's Viktor! He's having another episode!" Ikeda yelled over, he struggled to keep his Bulgarian friend under hold as he thrashed around and let out a pain-filled scream. "Need a bit of help here!"

Luckily for Ikeda and Gakushu, that scientist reaper known as Roman from the Italian Branch was with a group of his scientist comrades. All rushed in to restrain the Bulgarian scientist.

"Viktor!" A reaper with an Iranian accent yelled, the other man continued to thrash around as more people began to surround him and Ikeda.

"Please calm down." Another reaper called out. All the meanwhile Gakushu was preparing the kit, he stabbed the soft cap the small glass bottle, pulling the plunger and watch as it filled up with the sleeping agent.

'Just think later, right now is not the best time!' Gakushu mentally snapped himself.

"Hold him down." Somehow, the group managed to position the scientist face down to the floor. Gakushu rushed back to the scene, and with the syringe carefully in his gloved hands. Everyone who came and helped, glanced at both Viktor and Gakushu as the younger boy slowly leaned over to stab the needle into his neck.

He took in a deep breath, he kneed down to the cold floor and ejected the needle into his friend's neck. Viktor froze all of a sudden and all yelling ceased. Gakushu injected the sedative, pushing it down into the man's system. All the needed requirement was coursing in the man, Viktor slowly drifted away into unconsciousness and his eyes finally closed.

Gakushu stood up, as did the rest and Ikeda soon carried the man off in his arms, to the Mental Ward. His legs felt like jelly and his arms slowly numbed, he glanced up and was met with worried eyes.

Ritsu looked deep into Gakushu's reaper and neon-like eyes.

"Viktor…" Ritsu worded and Gakushu dropped the syringe, that was once tightly gripped in his hands slipped and it tumbled down.
'Thud!' It echoed on in Gakushu's mind as he recounted the events the night before.

As he walked, he looked down to his bandaged hand and he could feel the syringe in his grip. Holding onto it, filling in the sedative and soon pressing it down. Although he gotten used to seeing such a scene, although it became the norm for him to see, he hated the sounds of their screams and cries.

To see An crying, hiding herself like a scared child or Lucia crying out for a child that never exist. To see Rilliane lost in her little word as she desperately asked a question that she could never found the answer to.

'What about the others?'

The boy from the same branch as he, he remembered seeing from that one time he caught one of the flu strains. He heard the whispers of how the boy, named as Riku cried out for his mother's praise and how he was a good child.

Even his friend, who came back from Belgium suffered from the same fate. Noct only told him, through vague memory gaps and Iggy's recount that he yelled for nobody to look at him. Gakushu didn't press for further details, and he continued to teach Noct on how to iced flowers.

It seemed like the simplest request could cause an episode and Gakushu feared that he would be next. He wished that he was the same as Gretel, whose love for her brother would had pushed her over the edge long ago but she managed to convert that love as her end goal. He hoped that he too was the same as her.

His hand still trembled, he didn't want to think that he has that same kit in his school bag for such an occasion. Sure he had taken a course on how to deal with a breakdown, seeing that from just his personal group of friends, two are affected but it didn't do the real thing justice. To see their anguish was always different than what he learnt in classes.

Although he wasn't affected as much if then a regular normal human would witness. It was the norm for the Department after all but it always pained Gakushu that he could do nothing more to help them. He could only comfort or sedate them.

Viktor... It was like Rilliane's, it comes out of nowhere and rare as well but Gakushu knew what triggers it for his main senior. In fact, it was Gakushu's first time of seeing the scientist's breakdown, he had heard the whispers and he only partly heard of his story from Ikeda.

All Gakushu could theorised that he was consumed by guilt and that guilt was the reason why he committed his unforgivable act, but that was a stretch. He hadn't taken account of other possibilities.

Among those in the Department, they categorised informally of the reason of their suicides. A simple explanation or for those not wanting to release the full details of why they did the act. For those who locked their stories away or for those with lost memories, there are three simple reason of why they committed their act.

Even if Ikeda didn't want to know the full details of his human life, he would still had been told that he came to the Department because he wanted to escape. And that would be enough for him and for the curious.

Whether it was to escape, of guilt or for a cause. Although escape and guilt were connected in some ways, one or the other plays a major role. For Ivan, guilt riddened for his role as a KGB officer that he decided to pay back his crimes in blood. For Wolfie, it was to escape the future where he could no
longer act or express himself freely.

He himself did it to escape, as the same for Rilliane, An, Johnny, Mark, James, Van and even Noct. Either way, all of them were stuck in their roles-

"Asano-kun." A voice called out, Gakushu looked up as he was snapped from his thoughts and he was suddenly in his classroom. With Korosensei looking at the strawberry blonde with worry.

'Wait…' Gakushu then looked around. 'Where am I again?'

'… That's right.' Gakushu was at his desk and he didn't even realised it. He couldn't remember of entering his class or the walk the way to school.

"I apologise Korosensei, I was just thinking." Gakushu subconsciously rubbed his temples with his hands.

"You're looking a bit pale."

"… I haven't ate breakfast yet." Gakushu gave a half-lie, he only didn't have sweets for breakfast as he usually did. But he only had toast, he really didn't have much of an appetite after his nightly shift. After he was done collecting his last soul of the night, he handed in the booklet to front desk at the central building and stayed in his room at the Department.

Ikeda texted him that he needed his rest for school, even though Gakushu was fine when he visited An that time. But then again, he was the one who had to administer the drug this time and Ikeda took account of that. Ikeda knew Gakushu too well.

Nobody questioned this, because A; from his father, he left home and stayed at Gretel's house to wade off suspicion. And B; now that the drama died off, he could easily stay at either places now. He mainly preferred to stay at Gretel's place for easily access to Kunugigoako town's reaper run places. Everyone knew that he ran away from his father's home, Karma knew that he stayed at Gretel's place and presumably told the others.

"That's no good Asano-kun. A growing boy must eat breakfast and to help focus in their schooling." Korosensei clicked his tongue as Gakushu only nodded. 'He looks like it again, his eyes looked so old.'

"What are we talking about again?" Gakushu tiredly asked, it was like that day where the class watched the German documentary. Nagisa and Karma knew that Gakushu retracted back into his mask. Nagisa made the mental not to ask him later what was wrong, after he was done patching up his heart.

"We have a school visiting today and everyone one must attend, that also includes us and we must be in our PE gear." Korosensei re-explained

"Here, some energy for the day." The bright sunny yellow teacher leave a small carton of flavoured milk at his desk. It was not strawberry flavoured, Gakushu eyed down at the banana flavoured drink but it would had to do. He needed his sugar.

"Thank you." Gakushu grabbed the carton, quickly yet somehow quietly as he unwrapped the packeting for his straw and stabbed it into the box.

"What school is visiting us?" He asked as he sipped.

"La Morton Institute." Korosensei answered and Gakushu immediately spat out his drink, it was a
miracle that it didn't spray all over the teacher. And then he went into a coughing fit.

"...." The class watched in fascination.

"I need to hear that again." Gakushu managed to spoke out through his coughing. "What school was it again?" His mind didn't even registered that he slipped out of his act again.

"La Morton Institute..." Korosensei said it this time slowly, going back to look worried for his newest student.

And Gakushu resisted the urge to slam his head down his desk, saving the desk from being split into two. Why the hell a reaper school is visiting a human school!? And why the hell wasn't he informed by this by Gretel?

'.... Oh yeah, I slept in my room at the Department yesterday. Out of all days…'

'But no-one texted me about it, I would surely get a text from Rilliane or Gretel… so it isn't that important, right?'

La Morton Institute, a famous international school that was filled with rumours. It was a school whose requirement was unknown, apparently it was funded by a party with no connections with any government bodies.

One theory for example suggested that they are raising children for the New World Order.

It's location was in Hasetsu, its attendant was 500 students. It was said that a reincarnated of a noble of the lost country of Prussia attends to the school, the prince of the night.

'Yeap, more like Sleeping Beauty.' Gakushu mentally corrected. Technically Noct would have been a part of the German Branch, but he was born in England, so he was in the English Branch. So although Rilliane lived in America for majority of her life as a human, she was born in Japan and therefore was placed in the Japanese Branch.

Class-E dressed in their PE gear was stunned by the appearances.

'Are these models or students!?" Class-E's thoughts but Gakushu's merged. Even Irina was impressed.

"They even brought their senior students along too." Karasuma commented as he peered around.

"Look, the night prince is here too." Rio pointed out. Many heads turned and saw a boy around Gakushu's height, he had black hair and a halo of hair at the back, his eyes were like the night sky and it fitted his title of the nightly prince. Next to him was an older man around the age of 18, his
body was easily seen as tone, his hair was light golden almond blonde hair and it was slinked back.

"He looks like a servant, I mean the way he stands next to the prince." Rio whispered to her fellow female classmates.

'Looks like Noct and Ignis are here.' Gakushu thought to himself. 'I wonder if there was any good fishes he caught while in Belgium… I hope he got me some of their famous waffles.'

Meanwhile, Gakushu was naming each student he saw while subtlety hiding behind Karma and Nagisa. 'There Noct, Ignis from the English Branch. Oh and Vella and North from the Swedish Branch. That there is Chang from the Chinese Branch.'

'Juan's here too… doing the neighbour's front yard.' Gakushu squint his eyes hard enough as he looked outside of the school's gate. And Ronald was there too, with his Death Scythe, the lawnmower. Juan from the Mexican Branch was carrying his Death Scythe too which were hedge trimmers and were used to tend a neighbour's gardens.

'Not that I could complain though, An's is an oriental hairpin, Gretel's is a parasol and mine is a fucking key.'

"Asano-san, can you please make a speech? Seeing that you are Asano-san's son." Another voice snapped out from his thoughts. It was the main building's PE instructor. Oh how Gakushu resisted the urge to punch a tree when he saw the instructor and the main building's students (apart from Ren obviously) smug little faces.

'Just laugh, just laugh of how they are being like cartoonish villains right now.'

"Are you okay there Strawberry?" Karma asked, as Gakushu stepped forward and no longer hiding behind him.

"If you define okay, by me resisting to hide under your shirt then I'm fine." Gakushu moaned, he rubbed his temples to ease the frustration.

"Ha..?" Karma felt his face going warm but Gakushu went on ahead, unknowing of the effect he was having on Karma and Nagisa.

Gakushu stood next to the PE instructor, he clapped his hands and captured everyone's attention.

"Welcome La Morton Institute, we are grateful for your visit-"

"Gakushu!" A female squealed as she ran towards Gakushu, one boldly jumped in and hugged him, burying his face into her chest. Gakushu only mentally sighed, he knew that he would get this reaction. What he didn't expect her pushing the instructor and him colliding with some Class-A students at the back.

But then again, he was being rude.

"…." The collective response from the school of Kunugigoako.

"It is good to see you again Nina." Gakushu muttered. "I can't breathe."

The guys from both the main building and Class-E looked at the scene with jealously and as well as drooling. They wanted to be a part of them 'harem'.

"I'm good! I'm good!" Nina squealed, Gakushu started to flail his arms around. Karma and Nagisa resisted the urge to stomp in and pull Gakushu away protectively.
"Cutie pie!" Another voice called out and dove in to hug the strawberry blonde boy.

"Hi Hoshino." Gakushu greeted, he held a blank expression on his cute face.

"No he's mine!" Nina yelled as she pulled him back in her arms.

Before anyone could know it, the rest of the girls from the visiting school started to fight over Gakushu. Chanting 'he's mine' over and over again. The guys were almost glaring at Gakushu for being so popular with the ladies and he made it so effortlessly.

"Innocents wins everything, don't they." Nagisa said, amazed of what he was witnessing. He could already see himself fighting over the small cinnamon roll. 'No, I'm his big brother!'

"Yeah." Karma nodded. He watched this in amusement until he spotted a group of males walking up to Gakushu and the on-going cat fight. 'Wait are they jealous?'

Ren thought the same as Karma, he slowly stepped into the situation and was about to free Gakushu. Apparently the other males thought so and thought to themselves that justice will be served until….

"Gakushu!" One male pulled the strawberry away from the girls, lifted him in the air and started to spin. A male with the greyish blonde hair, his eyes was a red as Karma's hair.

"Gilbert, put me down." Gakushu ordered but he received laughter as his answer.

"Hahahahahahahaa!" Gilbert only laughed, he even had a hint of his German accent ingrained in his laughter. "But it has been so long!"

"We saw each other just a month ago."

"See what I mean?"

"Agck!" Gilbert was head butted by a smaller boy, with chestnut hair and Gakushu was thrown into the air. He was caught bridal style by that same boy with a sleepy yet cheery expression.

"Gakushu~ I have a new pasta recipe, do you want to try it?"

"Feli!?" Ren called out in surprised. Karma and Nagisa just remembered that the boy was the same boy from the café. Before anyone could blink, Gakushu was currently being used for tug-o-war between the males and the females.

'Of course.' Karma moaned, he should had known why Gakushu reacted the way he did when he was told who was visiting. All of these students, they were Gakushu's friends and all knew of his cinnamon side.

"He's ours!" The females cried out, pulling Gakushu by the arm towards them.

"No, ours!" The males yelled back, pulling Gakushu back to them.

Gakushu had a face that he was used to dealing with this, this all felt so surreal for the rest of the class and school though. It wasn't like Gakushu could do anything in the first place, he was up against a school of reapers and all protective of Gakushu.

"Gakushu-san?" Nagisa called out. He and Ren had the facial expression of unsureness.

"Don't worry, they will stop eventually." Gakushu calmly stated, although internally he was panicking and screaming, he was coming up with excuses of why they were acting like this. The
usual banter when Gakushu was out of his mask.

"So, Gakushu… you know them?" Ren asked.

"Basically, I know every single one of them." Gakushu shrugged. "That there is Gilbert."

"Guten Morgen."

"That there is Chang."

"Nihao."

"Feli although I'm sure you know him Ren."

"Ciao~" And Ren fought the pang of negatively when he saw how Feli was wrapping himself on Gakushu's arm. He mentally thanked the heavens that Gretel wasn't here to see through him, he swore that she could read minds.

"Ben is here at the back."

"Sup. And I'm from L.A." A head popped out, he stood out the most because he was the only black American person visiting.

"And-"

"How?" Nagisa asked again.

"Gretel went to La Morton." Technically she didn't, but in some ways La Morton was still the Department, it just provides the regular schooling experience so technically he was telling the truth.

'Hold up, you're telling me that at 15, Gretel graduated from a school who nobody knows how to get in the first place!?' And so many things clicked in Ren's head. Even he didn't know the requirement, even with Jones connections, they came up with nothing and had to scrape up their search.

"Oh." And it also clicked with Nagisa.

Another familiar voice called out, she giggled and all struggles creased. "Now, now. Please behave yourself, we are visiting a school after all."

"Hai." The students chanted and they went their separate ways. Gakushu rubbed his arms from the soreness.

"Rin…" Violet glanced through her rosy pink hair.

"Sorry Gakushu-chan, we wanted it to be a surprise." The disguised Rilliane giggled. "Gakushu-chan, we need one more person since Arthur had business. Could you please join a group?"

Gakushu turned to Karasuma who nodded. It was a bad move in some ways because the La Morton students looked back to Gakushu with puppy dog eyes. Gakushu promptly ignored them and manurer he way through the crowd and he stopped in front of the prince of the night.

'Don't tell me he's doing it."

"Hey Noct." Gakushu casually greeted the boy would had an 'emo' air around him. The bad-boy look as well as the girls would wanted to add. "I'm joining your group now."
'He did it.'

"Sure." Noct welcomed Gakushu into his group, just him, Ignis and Gakushu. It had been months since they were all together like this.

'And they just let that!' 

'Of course he would be friends with him!' Class-E thought, if he was friends with Gretel AKA Hazel then this shouldn't be a surprised. Then he was also be friends with the singer of the night. Nagisa was happy that Gakushu wasn't alone and had many friends, even if Gakushu was hiding this important fact.

'Now to get him to trust us.' Nagisa noted.

"Good morning Gakushu, I heard you are staying at Rin's place now." Ignis spoke with a hint of a British accent, his pushed back his glasses with his middle glasses. He was the type of man who was uncomfortable of wearing contacts, Gakushu and Noct knew that.

'Rin…? Oh yeah, it makes more sense of Rilliane to own the place than a 15 year old looking Gretel.' Gakushu thought.

"Yeah, I thought that I should go before things go awkward." Gakushu shrugged as he walked off with his new group.

Class-E noticed, Gakushu hasn't participate in any of the soccer games since the couple of periods. He just sat at the bench, with Ignis and Noct, watching La Morton kicking the shit out of his father's school.

A student named West, with blonde hair that shone brightly in the sun kicked another goal for La Morton.

Gakushu was more than happy to not play, even though he loved soccer, he often had difficulties on controlling his own strength. It was not good when he had human-made equipment, he had to stop when he broke the ball 95 times, well at least out in the open like this. He could at least play with his fellow reapers back in the Department without the fear of breaking all of their bones.

His strength also resulted in the deaths of many trees, even though they were killed due to his temper. He mainly spent the time catching up with Iggy and Noct, Noct was more than happy to walk about his catches from Ourthe and Lhomme rivers in the Ardennes.

It was a good thing that La Morton AKA the Department noticed this. And Gakushu was still a bit down from yesterday's incident. News travelled fast in the Department.

Even the visiting school beat Class-E, the class being taught the arts of assassination and with ease as well. But, Class-E was only human if you exclude the strawberry blonde boy. Gakushu was currently conversing with Noct, speaking in perfect English.

"Rio, what are they saying?" Okuda asked in a whisper. She tried to ignore the looks from Nagisa who had his phones readied and taking numerous of photos. 'He has a problem.'

"Um… Hey Noct, have you been noticing the people in black lately?" Rio translated the conversation hastily. Many students from their class sweated buckets.

"I have, but I also saw Avery Jona-Zwiers dining at a café nearby." Rio translated Noct's words.
"Who's Avery?" Kayano whispered and Rio shrugged. Thankfully, the answer was given to the group quickly afterwards.

"The Avery? Daughter of a CEO from an American software company and engaged with the son of a high ranked general from America." Gakushu almost gasped and Nagisa sighed in relief. It wasn't what he was thinking of. But it was going to make it difficult on the long run.

'Damn…' That was the collective pool of thoughts from Class-E. 'What is a person like that doing here in this town?'

"Yeah, I'm guessing that the guy is paranoid." Noct shrugged and the two returned their attentions to the game.

"Goal!" Gilbert cheered from the top of his lungs, he roared wildly as he kicked another goal and started to run around the field like a headless chicken. Everyone wouldn't be surprised if he took off his shirt and started to swing it around.

Not that the girls would mind though, it was obviously to everyone that he was well toned underneath.

The next goal came from Feli, he kicked a goal all the while performing a backflip. Gakushu wondered if the WWII veteran could access him on his acrobatic skills. He wanted to be just as good as Noct and An.

Ren was down for the count, passed out from exhaustion, not that anyone could blame him, it was like they were up against gods. Although his position was quite interesting, he laid there in the middle of the field and with his face down, drenched in sweat as he laid close to death.

"Are you okay?" Feli worryingly asked, he crouched down and poked him.

"I'm fine. I just need a moment to breathe again." And suddenly everything became dark for Ren. When he woke up next time, he was at the bench and was leaning against Gakushu's shoulder.

'God damn it! Must you play with my feelings!?'

"Here." Gakushu handed him a bottle of water and Ren gave his thanks, and also thanking the skies above that he could excuse his reddening face from exhaustion. Now the three were watching the game with La Morton against Class-E.

Even one Class-A student commented it about their godlike strength. Ben coughed under his breathe, "Gods of death" and it sparked laughter and giggles from the visiting school.

"What do you expect? You're up against a German, a Brazilian, an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, and an Italian in their soccer game." Karma commented, noting all of the nationalities as he stopped for a breather. "Even though they would call it football."

'Is it me, or Karma is too behaved…?' Korosensei thought to himself, he wondered why his most mischievous student was acting this way.

"You're doing fine Karma-chan!" Rin called out, strange for a student teacher to be cheering for the opposing team. "Don't push yourself too hard!"

At the end score, the visiting school had won every single game by a landslide. But it wasn't that surprising to begin with.
'Oh come on!' Gakushu internally screamed and the day had been going so well as it could be. His father wasn't around to watch over the school grounds, he was having such a nice conversation with Noct about fishing and ice-skating. Even though he didn't noticed of Ren's envious looks.

**So what happened this time?**

Gakushu was finally selected to do join in the final soccer match, Korosensei asked for Rin to have him joined and Gakushu mentally cursed his teacher. Rin agreed and asked Gakushu if he wanted the goalie position.

'Thank you Rilliane!' Gakushu really wanted to give a big hug to his main senior but didn't due to reason, although it didn't stop Rilliane or Rin from smiling when she looked at Gakushu who was trying his best not to shred happy tears and hug her.

Since La Morton was leading, Gakushu happily accepted it, extra points that Noct finally joined in the match. Although the two were planning to continue their conversation, with Noct standing around the goalie area and Gakushu no having to do anything.

That was the plan, until the two were held at gun-point, in front of the entire school. This time, it was with two kidnappers. And this time, the two were disguised and their face hidden by ski masks.

"Put your arms outs." One of the kidnappers ordered. Gakushu would sneer over this, "Or else your friend gets it." He held his gun at Noct's forehead and started to wave it around the surrounding students. The main building's students screamed when the gun waved in direction of them.

'Oh, this guy is smart for once.' Gakushu thought. 'Using fear of us and others to get what they want.' Gakushu held out his arms and the other kidnapper slapped on the cuffs. It was the same for Noct.

"Okay, start walking." The man ordered, pressing the gun to Gakushu's back. The strawberry blonde mentally sighed and gave the look to his friend that said, 'Sorry for getting you involved in this.'

'What to do?' Gakushu hummed to himself, he can't show both his assassin and reaper skills in the open like this. La Morton could do little to help them, they need to keep to their slightly normal appearances. It would be hard to explain why Gilbert or West have the skills of an experience soldier like Karasuma.

If anything, it would give ideas to the world governments that the institution was attempting another 511 Kinderheim.

Then the other kidnapper came behind the two as they walked side by side, he then wrapped their necks with his arms, further restraining the two. 'And I can't break these weak cuffs without gaining suspicion.'

'Should I used the excuse that I was taught by Ikeda? Who so happens to be a policeman, and had some experience in Special Forces?' Because at this point, nobody would question Gakushu's connections to this point. The American exchange students, Candy Fest, Midnight Alpha's staff, or maybe he should explain that Ivan thought it was important to learn self-defence. The guy did introduced to Gakushu's three human friends occupation as a bodyguard.

The best course of action for now was to stall. "You know, this day was going so nicely as well." Gakushu sighed, he felt a tight grip around his neck and he glanced to his blue eyed reaper friend. He too had an arm wrapped around his neck.

"Quiet." A deep voice whispered. Gakushu wanted to scoff, these two were up against the Department.
The rest of the school watched in horror of a scene performed a 180 turn. Korosensei paled, if he could as he realised that he didn't even noticed the man. The two kidnappers did looked a bit plexed that they were caught.

'Strange.' Noct thought to himself, taking notes of their body language.

'However, if Korosensei wasn't able to notice until now. Then surely, something is different about the two,' Gakushu noted the scene. 'But what is it?'

'His speed.' Gakushu started to analyse what was happening to a closer detail, he realised that the man's speed was almost fitting of a reaper's. He violet eyes shifted to Noct's, he nodded as if telling him to be careful.

Gakushu only sneered as if to tell him, 'Please, can't we just play a little?'

'And besides, Ikeda interrupted with the last one.'

Noct smirked back, 'Okay~ Either way, he just signed his death bed.' And it was true, members of the Department surrounded the two, doing a good job on calming the Kunugigoako students while throwing daggers at the man.

The air was thick with death and dread. Everyone tensely waited for what the next move was and Gakushu opened his mouth.

"Nice weather we are having, right Noct?" Gakushu bluntly stated, he slightly tilted his head with a bored look.

'What the hell? He is going to get himself hurt!' Class-E looked like they aged a bit.

"Quite pleasant." Noct yawned, attempted to imitate Ignis's British accent.

"Looks like your voice isn't as good as Gretel's." Gakushu teased and Noct shrugged.

"I tried at least."

"Shut up you brats." Their kidnappers yelled, tightening his grip but it only made the two to want to further annoy him.

The student teachers slowly approach. "Step back! Or the brats get it!" Pointing the gun to Gakushu's bored expression.

"What do you need? I could just gave you the money if you just asked." Gakushu taunted with a cruel smile. 'This is too much fun, what should I do next? Break his ribs?'

'… I probably shouldn't do that, I am trying to hide my strength.' Gakushu mentally slapped himself but he needed to end this as the two's attentions started wavering. And Gakushu didn't like how Ren was worrying, it broke his heart to see Ren's hurt and helpless expression.

He was about to head-butt the man and kick his groin when he and Noct froze. Their eyes widening, as if something like reality hits them.

"Noct, Gakushu… is he hurting you!" Ignis yelled out, giving the man the most venomous glare as he held a pen dangerously like it was a dagger.

"Gretel…” Noct stuttered as he shakely pointed, Ignis froze and took a side glance. And there she was, standing there with a smile that says 'I'm not fucking happy'. Ignis slowly moved aside swiftly
and Gretel gave her thanks, giving the other a slight bow.

'Shit.' Class-E's thoughts merged, they won't know who they should worry for. Gretel or for the two kidnappers.

She was wearing non-reaper version of her usual uniform, seeing that Gakushu could tell that everyone in the school grounds peered they eyes upon the blonde haired reaper. A simple black and white in a horizontal strips Sailor-Lolita dress where it reaches to her knees. A belt that is the same material as the dress but white is wrapped around and tied in a ribbon on her right to highlight her waist. High dark navy socks possibly strapped by sock garters matching with her polished black low-heel shoes.

"Thank you Ignis-kun." She said in a dainty voice. It was obvious to everyone that her presence screamed 'demand'. Karma could see that half of the school body was shaking in their boots but at the same time admiring the female. Now that she fully revealed herself to be the idol of Candy Fest, Hazel.

"Is it me, or her wrath is twice than what it usually was?" A reaper in disguised known as Riku asked.

"Didn't you know, Gretel was Noct's main senior." Gilbert whispered back.

"….. Holy shit! No way!" Riku gasped, he almost chocked on some air after hearing such a revelation.

"Yes way." Gilbert reaffirmed with a nod. He looked to the ones jokingly considered to be *juniors* amongst the seniors, maybe handful under ten years of experience. It looked like their eyes were going to be popped out of their sockets.

"You are fucking with me, if she was then she would be all over him like Gakushu." Riku retorted.

"Are your glasses broken? Of course she still dopes on him like Gakushu! He just so happened to stay in Belgium for months for business this year. Last year, he went to Italy for six months." Another reaper joined in the conversation, this time from the Thai Branch.

"Why do you think Ignis was always around him?" A reaper from China joined in the conversation.

"Boys, duck!" She yelled over and the two followed her orders. Quickly Gakushu and Noct slipped under from their attempted kidnapper's arms, suddenly from the back the kidnapper felt something struck on the side of his head.

"And we hit a home run!" Gakushu knew from the sound of that voice that it was Ikeda's. He thought it was genius, because he could just explain to everyone that he was a police officer.

And then Gretel landed a kick to the other kidnapper's face. The two knew that a nose was broken from impact and they also knew that it was just the start. The two were just glad that Gretel wore shorts underneath her dress from how they sat and looked up.

The kidnapper was thrown back and he landed on his face. Noct couldn't help but to hold up a 10 score card, the school wondered why he even have the cards in first place. Gretel went over and started to kick the downed man. Ikeda meanwhile was restraining the one he would out, with the man's own handcuffs.

'This is Araki all over again.' Gakushu sighed to himself, he wondered if he should let Gretel continue torture the man, set him up as an example… 'Man, I am really morbid.'
The school swore that they heard a rib being cracked. "Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!" Okay, several ribs were being cracked they corrected themselves.

The reaper were thinking in the likes of, 'What is up with our tendency to break ribs?'

"You bitch-" And Gretel cut him off when she land a stomp his face and grinded her foot on his battered face. That man let out a pain filled groan, even Class-E felt uncomfortable watching.

'Get in there!' Nagisa mentally cheered. 'That is what you get you kidnapper!' Okay, maybe not all of Class-E.

'Note to self, never get on Gretel's bad side.'

Even Korosensei made the mental note, it looked like the blonde British girl could so easily rip his tentacles with only her teeth.

'Man, this is like what Gakushu did when Grell smashed his cake.' Ikeda watched in amusement as Gretel lifted her foot up, the man was definitely down for the count and turned to the visiting La Morton students. The staff, with luck on their side was spending their time and effort on calming the Kunugigoako students.

He tossed the key to Gakushu, to which he released his and Noct's cuffs.

"Why the hell didn't you do anything!??" Gretel yelled to the student body of La Morton, where many of them and if not all were hiding behind of Noct and Gakushu.

'Oh yeah, she was a graduate student.' Ren remembered, for a moment he thought it was strange that she yelled as if she knew the students.

'She is losing her cool.' Noct and Gakushu thought in unison.

"Save us Shu!" Gilbert hid underneath the boy's shirt and shaking. Why must Gilbert be using one of Gakushu's habits, oh yeah, Gretel has a Gakushu complex.

The entire school was looking at the scene in a blankly stare. That pale haired male had the confidences to hide under the son of Asano. Nagisa thought that wouldn't it be adorable if it was the other way around. Ren saw that the same boy he talked to at the café yesterday was waving around a white flag.

'Why does he have that flag in the first place?' Ren attempted to place some sense of what he was saw. That and a high-schooler was hiding underneath his Gakushu's shirt.... 'Did I really thought of that...?'

Karma remembered that time when Candy Fest idol, Ichigo hid under his shirt that one time. He wondered how the blonde idol was doing after the concert. Maybe he could ask Gakushu?

"It's Gakushu." Gakushu corrected, he wouldn't normally unless it was Ikeda or the fact he was surrounded by his father's school. Noct was unconsciously tugged at Ignis' sleeves. It was a good thing that the atmosphere was hectic or else Noct would asked if his friend wasn't resting if he was having a fever.

"I don't think it would be wise for kids our age to fight against kidnappers." Ignis explained, his British accent came out as he spoke and Gretel mentally slapped herself. Of course they couldn't reveal their true abilities, Gakushu already has a hard time holding back his strength and they are all surrounded by humans.
"At least you have the excuse of being taught by Ikeda who happens to be a police officer. And who also has spent time in Special Forces. Although it was dangerous of you to fight." Gakushu further reasoned, knowing that the school will buy into his explanation and give reason to Class-E why he was well-versed in physical education.

'Huh… when that explains a lot of things, although how unorthodox it was.' Class-E's thoughts merged. 'The gun, he could had taught Gakushu that.' They tried to reason with themselves.

"You called?" Ikeda sang out, he swung his baseball bat and placed it on his shoulders.

'Calm down Gakushu, you have that strawberry shortcake that is waiting to be eaten.' Gakushu resisted the urge to rub his temples, he swore to the heavens that he wouldn't get a headache. 'Wait, we would be eating in the main building area. God damn it!'

As Gakushu thought himself a plan to be able to eat his sweets. "Ah yes, you must be the girl who attacked one of my students." A voice called out, a familiar and deep voice. This day has gone from bad to shit has gone down the drain.

'…. Fuck.' Gakushu thought.

'Why must you come at the wrong time?' Gakushu wanted to groan and cover his face with his hand, he really wanted to face-palm at his father's arrival but he wanted to keep to his mask. And he wouldn't be able to keep his act if he wanted to restrain the blonde British lady.

'Why couldn't you just stay inside in your office?' And even then, he couldn't stop her without the help of Arthur.

'Why must he be transferred with An, Prom and Johnny to Haestu at the same time?' Gakushu mentally sighed. He has been doing a lot of sighing lately. He has been doing a lot since he joined Class-E for that mission. The silver lining of this was that An, Prom and Johnny was going to be in Haestu when he goes on Friday, or maybe Thursday.

"…. You!" Gretel cried out and pointed her finger to Gakuhou, she has lost her cool as soon she stepped out her lady persona. Before she could touch a strand of his dark chestnut hair or leap for his heart. Gakushu quickly grabbed her hand, many boys from the main building glared at him for holding the hands of an idol. "Hey Gretel, do you want to check the school?"

"I already have, a dozen of times." Gretel stated while she was still death glaring at his father. "I can even draw out the layout of the building from just my head."

"How about Class-E?" Gakushu asked and before many of the main building's student would protest…

Gretel answered. "Did it, yesterday too."

If one cinnamon roll couldn't do the job, then hopefully two will. "But I'm sure Noct hasn't seen it, right Noct?" Violet eyes glanced to the side to be met with night blue eyes.

Noct nodded and went along with Gakushu. "Yeah, I really want to find a place to sleep at." He let out a yawn to prove his point.

Ignis too nodded, "I always wondered if Kunugigaoka schools are that good as said."

Before Gakuhou could mutter another word, he stopped when he glanced over the students from the visiting school would doing.
They even hold large cards in the air that say, 'Don't do it man!' or 'She will rip your innards out!'

'Even if we hate you, we don't want you be buried alive or whatever she does to torture!'

'Dude! What she did to one of your students was tame!'

'Save yourself!'

'Just let them save your ass!'

'What they say!' Feli's card said.

Gretel looked back and they quickly hid the cards out of sight, going back to talking with each other as if nothing happened. When the blonde haired girl glared back to Gakushu's father, the group went back to doing what they were doing earlier.

Was this really the famous school? The best way to describe them was the younger versions of the Backers from Candy Fest. But their athletic skills were top notched and then the school bell rang.

"Well you look at the time, it is now lunch." West laughed stiffly, he checked over his watch as the school bell rang to signal break time.

"Pasta~" Feli sang as he skipped.

"Lets see if I could use their home economics classrooms."

"Ignis, can I have snacks?" Noct asked with hope.

"After you eat your vegetables."

"Why must you put vegetables in our mess."

"I will make star-shaped carrots then."

"That is slightly better."

"Sorry that I haven't been texting you Noct." Gakushu placed his hand on Noct's shoulder, Ren really should stop being irked by these gestures.

"Don't sweat it, you know that needed my sleep, I'm barely surviving on eight hours and time-zones remember?"

"You have improved kitten." Gretel chirped, going back to her cheery self.

"I have to physically drag him out of bed." Ignis sighed and Noct let out a 'hey' that went ignored by the older student.

"Why didn't you say anything nice when I came back from Dubai?" Ikeda called out and was promptly ignored by the strawberry blonde boy.

*Crisis avoided by the bell. 'That was too close, way too fucking close.' Every reaper at that school, apart from Gretel wanted to collapse and let out a moan. It was far too close for comfort. It was a good thing that Ivan wasn't here because Wolfie was long gone.

'And I still retained to my act.' Gakushu mentally smiled in triumph.
Soon, a police van came along and parked at school grounds. What everyone else that was mundane didn't know that, it was the Department. Operating a small section in Kunugigoako police station since Gakushu's assignment in Class-E.

"Ah nice, I didn't want to carry the man alone. Didn't want to get my coat dirty." Ikeda chirped as he swung his bat onto his shoulders.

'I think that should be the last of your problems.' Class-E's thoughts merged for god knows how many times. They and the other students watched as the kidnapper being tossed into the back of the van and the doors slammed shut.

"I recommend getting security, your kid is being targeted a lot lately." Ikeda suddenly appeared behind of Gakuhou, wrapping his arms around the man's shoulder. When things couldn't get any weirder, this light haired male had the balls to stand next to Gakushu's father without a care in a world.

Gakuhou almost flinched when he caught a glimpse of the man. Ikeda merely side-glanced at the man with a bored expression. Gakushu could easily see how behind those glasses, those chartreuse phosphorescent darkened a bit. Even Ikeda lost his usual fun cheekiness.

"Here is my card." Ikeda slide a business card into the man's suit pocket, he kept to his nonchalant face although he wanted to sneer. He patted his hand over the pocket. "Need to look after my little brother after all."

"I don't recall policeman being babysitters." Gakuhou coldly remarked, he was returned with an unreadable expression.

"And it's pleasure doing business with you." Ikeda unwrapped his arm and proceeded to walked off, "Oh and I recommend changing your education system a bit. I don't want any more dead kids being filed in."

'Burn.' Gilbert was snickering, along with half of the visiting school. It was the best inside joke they had heard. Gakushu meanly blankly stared at the two and he shrugged, he accepted his death the day he woke up in the Department's medical wards. He might as well let them taunt his father, it was better than having them trying to break his ribs, not that his father could ever think that his 'strong' son overdosed.

Gretel smiled as she looked over at the older male, her finger curled and placed over her lips, her shoulders slightly up and gave her that posh yet elegant appearance. 'What a shame.'

Noct stayed so he could watch the drama with a faint smile, it was worth seeing how Ikeda pushed the man's buttons. Even Ignis stayed, he would be the one to drag Noct away but he was interested. 'Noct is influencing me too much.'

 Heck! Even Feli, Feli was nodding at Ikeda's statement. Feli, the pasta loving reaper who barely has a hate bone in his body.

"Does any have popcorn left over from yesterday?" A reaper whispered.

Class-E however paled greatly, although with its teachers, they worried for the man's wellbeing.

As the others chuckled and giggle, thinking that Ikeda was talking about Gakushu. What they didn't know that Gakuhou was instead thinking of his old student, how dare that man who happens to look like that same boy told him that.
'Cousin.' Gakushu corrected as he text,Ikeda only smiled as he got into the car.

'So it is no longer very distant cousin?' Ikeda texted back.

'Shut up!' Gakushu quickly texted and ended the conversation from there. He could already imagine Ikeda's laughter echoing in the air and he tried to supressed a headache.

Gakushu angrily dug his smartphone back into his pockets and he then saw a glance of black in the corner of his violet eyes. Gakushu didn't know if he need to get his contacts check, but he swore that he saw Lucia and Ivan passed by and behind the main building's window.

And in uniform as well.

They didn't know how they were here, but they were. Ren, Nagisa and Karma were sitting in the bushes, where Gakushu was with a group of students from the visiting school.

He was talking to a boy with oak brown hair who shared the bubbly expression as Feli and the habit of always closing his eyes, and a girl with the bangs that goes outward and curly. Something about a script, something like that…

Gakushu silently sat there, eating his sandwiches with grace and it reminded the three of the persona he used back when he was in Class-A.

Gakushu hasn't once touched his container of cake, Nagisa was worried until he realised that they were on the main building's grounds and not in the isolated Class-E area. That explained why Gakushu only spoke when the visiting students asked.

"I tried something new, please try some." The girl named Vella offered some her Pfeffernüsse. Gakushu gave her the thumbs up of her traditional German iced gingerbread cookies.

They noticed that the oak haired boy, dubbed as North snatched Gakushu's container and offered it as if it was his.

'That was a good move.' Ren saw the good intentions. And with Gakushu being a nice boy, he agreed to 'taste-test' the food. It was sad that Gakushu didn't radiate his sparkles, but it was cute to see how hard he was trying not to sparkle. He could see some spark in his beautiful violet eyes.

"What do you think of the school?" Gakushu asked as he munched on the strawberry shortcake.

"It's so and so." Vella answered as she waved her hand. "You're making the experience ten times better than it should though."

Karma wished Gakuhou was here to hear this. Noct some came from behind, comfortably placing his head over Gakushu's shoulder and with a free hand grabbed his hand closer. And then he munched on the treat. They feared for Noct's safety.

"Hmmm, its pretty good." Noct hummed, he still rested on Gakushu shoulders with his arms draped over him. Ignis followed closely behind, in his hand was a plate of Feli's pasta.

"One day.' Nagisa thought to himself, he and Karma thought the same way. Ren was a little irked by the closeness the two had.

"You could had just asked you know." Gakushu let out a sigh, but he had a smile on his face. Two more persons joined in the group.
"Can I have some more then?" Noct cheekily sang, he somewhat started to shake Gakushu back and forth.

"Noct." His British friend called out in a firm voice.

Noct let out a soft whine. "Can I have some more please?"

"Ahhhhhh~" Gakushu offered, offered up his fork with some of its cake and Noct happily took the offer. Ren choked on his lunch. Karma and Nagisa now had blood dripping down from their nose.

Noct took a bite off the fork. "Iggy is down because apparently they don't let the class to be use when it is not lesson time."

"It was a shame, I even came up with a new recipe." Ignis let out a sigh, as he took a seat down beside Gakushu. "I wanted to find the secret to Feli's pasta."

"I'm sure Van would love you to use his kitchen at Midnight Alpha…"

"Awww, how cute of you two." Gretel sang, she took a snapshot of the moment.

"What is it?" Gakushu asked innocently, he and Noct carried a look of oblivious to it. The banter continued on, Nagisa and Ren with a bit of jealously. When Nagisa turned to his red haired friend, he was gone and so was Korosensei in the general area.

He sighed for the day.

Karma followed his teacher closely behind like a true assassin, he was studying his every move, he wanted to see how the visiting school would affect his teacher's performance.

Although he should correct himself, how the visiting school should be affecting him.

"Karma-kun~ What are you doing here?" A dainty voice called out, and Karma turned around to see Gretel in the flash. This time, she wore a faux hoodie pea coat, it almost acted like a dress for her and a white belt was wrapped around her waist. Its' buttons were in shaped of roses, don in silver and a chain attached to her collar went to her chest pocket.

"What do you think, I tailored it myself." Gretel asked, she caught the younger boy's amber eyes scanning over her coat. Karma whistled at her skill, she was like a female Gakushu.

"You think if you could make me one?" Karma playfully asked, he dug his hands into his pant pockets, secretly putting away the green pocket knife.

"Possibly, I'm guessing that your measurements are similar to Gakushu's."

"Why do people think we look alike?" Karma sighed, as he dipped his head to the side.

"Well, if you look like Gakushu then you look like me as well." Gretel playfully suggested.

"Is that supposed to be a compliment?"

Gretel shrugged. "Take it as you wish."

"Ah Karma-kun. Showing our visitor the area?" His teacher suddenly appeared, what he didn't like was how his teacher was wiggling his eyebrows. How the hell could Gakushu disappear and reappear like Korosensei?
Gretel raised an eyebrow over Korosensei's intrusion.

Gretel bowed slightly. "I hoped that I wasn't disturbing anything."

"No no, it's fine." Korosensei reply with his happily tone and soon walked off, leaving the two alone.

"So~ you coming up to Class-E?" Karma asked, he dug his hands into his pant pockets.

Gretel explained. "To show off how great our school is, since nobody outside knows how to get in. We can only go to the main building's area, shame really."

"I'm pretty sure that the guys are happy enough to have Hazel breathing the same air as them."

"Even if I scared half of them?"

"Masochists they are."

"How kinky of them."

And the two laughed as they walked back to the main building's area.

"Man, they are close already." Noct whispered to his friend. The two were finding in the bushes because La Morton got all 'protective' again, currently Ignis and Rin were fighting against the hoards. The black haired boy held out a branch, as if he was trying to become one with the bushes.

"I fear for the future." Gakushu felt a shiver going down his spy, he prayed to the heavens that she wasn't training Karma to become the next Gretel. He already had to deal with someone with a Gakushu complex, he didn't need two.

"You think she would develop a Noct complex in him." Noct asked, and then texted Ignis to observe the red haired boy. 'I think Gretel is creating a male version of her, hide me when the time comes.'

'I'm sure the boy is human.' Ignis logically answered back. 'And you won't see him very often in the first place, but I will still protect you.' It mostly helped.

"Do what I do, pray to the heavens."

"Hey Gakushu, I got some more of Feli's leftover pasta. Turns out that he made enough to feed 30 reapers."

EXTRA

Ren, with a bag of grocery in hand and in his arm his school bag, he wanted in the night through the streets to his apartment complex. He managed to land his hands on Feli's pasta recipe.

"Ren~ would you like you try out my pasta?" The bubbly yet sleepy Feli sang as he offered a paper plate of his homemade pasta to the hazel haired boy.

"Uh… sure." Ren remembered the requested from the café yesterday. With a forkful of pasta, he took a bite of it and landed himself a party in his mouth. It was so good that he cried tears of happiness.

That memory flashed by pretty quicken as he hummed himself the duet song he and Gakushu sang for their new and his first series. He stood in front of his apartment door, his hand hovered above the
hair, he lightly placed his hand on the metal piece and it swiftly moved down.

The door was unlocked, Ren knew for sure that he locked the door the moment he walked out for school in the morning. He blankly stared down and opened the door.

If it was who he thought it was, he was sure that he would give that person living hell and he walked into his apartment.

"Hey poet, I got your man." A man with lavender purple hair slinked back with gel, he wore a dark suit set and he was making himself comfortable in Ren’s couches. He rest his legs on the coffee table.

And Ren threw his school bag, aiming for the male’s face. Ren felt a smirking coming along when he saw that the bag slammed to older man's face. "Owwwwwwwwww." Jones whined, the bag landed on his lap and he rubbed his nose to soothe the pain. There were some tears forming in the corner of his sea-blue eyes. Ren was disappointed a bit to see that there was no blood dripping though.

"Give it to me." Ren demanded as he closed and locked the door behind him, he kicked his shoes off and quickly took his house slippers.

"Kid, I have other things to do you know? Hello~ I have to protect my fiancée. " Jones knew what Ren was angry about, "And you could at least say sorry."

"Another incident came up. I thought that your stalker skills were top notch." The hazel haired boy sneered, he made his way to the kitchen and Jones watched. Cooking would calm him down and if not, there were other good uses for the kitchen knife.

"I heard, I took another attempted kidnapper in the backgrounds and did some reverse-psychology." Jones took out a bag of chips, talking as he ate his salty snack. "And blah blah, I got the man."

"There are others?" Ren almost gasped in surprised as he placed the plastic bag onto the kitchen counter.

"Yeah, it surprised me that someone has some kind of thing against Gakushu Asano." Jone spoke after swallowing a mouthful. He got up and made his way to the kitchen counter. "Can you make me dinner?"

"A; you're rich so go to a gourmet restaurant. And B; I'm sure that you're satisfied with that bag of chips." The other scoffed and muttered something rude about the boy, to which Ren ignored and mentally sighed, too bad that his 'aunt' wasn't around to kick Lance A. Jones' knees this time.

"And finally C; take it as punishment for failing to do what I requested for you to do." Ren smirked as he brandished his kitchen knife, he then used it to dice the onions and tomatoes.

"Why didn't you do anything if you knew?" Ren asked, he placed the knife far away from arms reached, just in case so he didn't had to stab the government agent. Although he knew that the man had good training in the art of self-defence.

"Because I wanted to see La Morton, I wanted to see what they would do." The purple haired man answered, his back leaned against the marble counter.

"And was it worth to see two kids being held." Ren spatted out, it was a good call that he didn't have the sharp knife in his hand.

"I don't know, it looked like they have the situation under control." Jones shrugged his shoulders, he added more with his American gesture. "If you saw it, the duck-fluff with that halo of black hair
already disarmed the man. He had several knives stolen."

"Your boyfriend was deliberately making the man angry and it worked, that man lost all of his judgement. It brought time and it resulted a kick to the face. Good thing that she was wearing shorts underneath."

"He is just a friend." Ren corrected the older man, although he wasn't doing a very good job when Jones glanced back and saw him having a flushed face. Before Jones would call out of his reddened face, Ren turned the conversation back to the main subject.

"So, who is the man?"

"A guy who calls himself Shiro which is fucking original you know." Jones sneered and he placed the files down the counter. Ren started too looked through the files. "I got some photos of the guy, shit quality they were though but that is all I had on what he looks like."

The photos were very blurrily but Ren has an idea of it. 'And really? Calling yourself Shiro because you wear all white?'

"But why would he target Gakushu?" Ren asked, he analysed through the files.

"I don't know, the kid is a prodigy." Jones shrugged again. "Should I have muffin top as his nickname?" He whispered to himself in English that Ren choose to ignore.

"So am I." Ren affirmed, Jones didn't shot it down because he knew it to be truth.

Although Jones quickly found another reason. "But Gakushu is like a display doll for Gakuhou, so everyone knows of his smarts. Unlike for you who is living as a normal student."

"Maybe he is looking for a mini Shiro but that is my best guess." Jones also placed a laptop on the counter, turning it to have it properly face the student.

"You're being helpful for a change." Ren taunted and Jones only smirked.

"Well?" Jones chirped as he watched Ren doing his work.

"I'm looking into the kidnapper's bank records. You see there." Ren turned the laptop back to Jones, facing its screen into the eyes of the sea.

Jones whistled. "Yeap, large sums of money appears and disappeared just like that."

"As this was a failed attempted." Ren then turned the laptop back to him. "I can trace the trail and in the best case scenario, I will find the mastermind's banking assets and freeze them."

"Thank god that I haven't told you about the Assassination Classroom project." The older male sighed in relief, he leaned over the counter with his arms crossed.

"You still haven't told me the details." Ren asked, his eyes through were only focused on the screen as he typed away.

"Even I have to cross the line, if you knew, then you would had definitely joined." Jones blunt stated and Ren scoffed

"You don't know that." Ren sneered, when he looked back to Jones, he also had to take a step back from the intensity of his blue-sea eyes staring into his hazel brown eyes.
"I knew you since the day you were born." Jones harshly back. "Trust me, you would had definitely joined and enter mad scientist mood."

Ren was quiet for a moment, as Jones continued his speech. "Even if you would say that you know yourself, my job is to read people remember?"

When Ren still remained unresponsive, Jones let out a sigh as he straightened his back. "Avery is leaving tomorrow, so I will the only one here to look after you for some time."

"I have to go now." He checked for the time on his expensive watch, he uttered that he had to go for work.

"I'm going to Haestu with my friends on Thursday." Ren finally said, his eyes left the laptop screen and wandered to the purple haired male who stood at the coat rack.

"Skipping school?" Jones asked as he wore his navy winter coat, slipping his toned arms into the sleeves, neatening it and making himself look presentable. The cuffs, the tie, the collar were all straightened to perfection.

"Do you think I really need it?"

"So you're really staying for Gakushu?"

"Stop it, at least Gretel makes it endearing." Ren muttered, he really wanted to throw his laptop to the man's face but he needed it for the moment as Jones laughed.

"Hahahahahaha! You just admitted at you have feeling for the muffin top!" Jones was laughing, with tears starting to form at the corner of his eyes.

"Shut up and get out!" Ren angrily roared, his face at this point was glowing red. From embarrassment or anger, Ren didn't know. And Jones slowly calmed down his laughter.

"Don't stay up too late now." The purple haired male walked his way out of the apartment, he didn't completely closed the door as he stepped out.

"And poet… Remember to take your pills."

And the door closed.

Since I don't have lines/no lines to use for the next preview, I could give you an insight for the next main chapter.

Gakushu skips school and goes to Hasetsu, basically is a bigger version of 'A day out with friends' and featuring more jealous Ren. Gakushu and Noct are very close after all.

Chapter: His happiness
Short Story: Back in the day (I)

Chapter Summary

Back in the day long before many reapers came to the Department, before Lucia, Wolfie and Ivan or their experiences of the Cold War. Even before people like Feli or Gilbert joined the ranks. Long before Rilliane and Gakushu were born. Before Prussia dissolved and Australia became an independent nation.

Gretel had a junior under her wing, and he would always be one, even though he already had around 30 years of experience.

Back then

"Arthur decided to become a main senior?!!" Noct exclaimed in surprised. He resided in a body of a teenager, just like Gretel.

"Yes." Gretel nodded, smiling to the sight of Noct's mouth gaped a bit from the shock and at the corner of his lips were a bit of sugar powder. The two at one of the Department's many food court, for this afternoon the two decided to eat at a café.

Gretel was dining into her poached salmon with mint salad, the tea she drank today is Ceylon tea. "Arthur thought he was better suited for his new junior, due to their past roles." She said as she gracefully sipped her tea.

"Of a servant?" Noct worded, his black spikey hair bobbled, at the back his hair went upwards to which Gretel had kindly nicknamed it to be 'duck fluff'.

"Right again my Kitten." Gretel clapped her hands as she praised her junior. She let out a sigh to reminisce the days of the past. "I remembered when you were under my wing, you were always wanting hugs and pats on the head. You were so cute."

"But you are still cute now, if not even more." Gretel cooed.

"Sure, sure." Noct waved her off, munching deep into his lunch. As he munched into milk risotto and for dessert is an apple compote draped with yoghurt. It only made Gretel awed him even more, saying something about the boy's shyness. And of one of his habits, his pickiness as she glanced down as see him pushing and avoiding the mushrooms of his risotto.

"I miss those times when I was with you, collecting souls together."

"We do it occasionally. Arthur was a bit erked by it though."

"Only for a couple of days at first, he found out the relationship dynamic was of a brother and sister so he wasn't bother by it anymore." Gretel let out a sigh, she placed her elbow on the table and rested her cheek with her hand. "He worries too much."

"Yeah…" Noct muttered, internally awkwardly laughing.
As much as Gretel was the best matchmaker in her field, she remained oblivious to a certain male's feelings. Although that man preferred it to stay that way.

"I have shift in 30 minutes." Noct said as he check for the time on his watch, as he pushed his black sleeves a bit. He had already finished his lunch and snacks.

"Be on task Noct, you can sleep afterwards." Gretel teased the black haired boy of another of his traits, his want for sleep.

"Yes, yes." Noct nodded off, he rose up from his seat, already dressed in his reaper uniform that Gretel designed. A loose black trench coat with a hood and high collar. Gretel watched as Noct went into the distance, heading towards for the Department's main building so he could collect his list of souls waiting to be reaped.

At the moment she divert her chartreuse phosphorescent eyes away from Noct's figure, a new reaper joined the table.

"Hello William, how has my main senior been lately?" Gretel greeted the taller and older male. He was dressed in all black suite, with a matching tie and polished shoes which were the typical uniform and colours associated with the Department. In his arms were files, the blonde girl could only assume that it both contain recent and old papers.

It was a wonder of how Gretel managed to enter William's heart and spot of 'daughter'. If it were any other person, like Grell then they would had received a glare and extra paperwork duties. But since this was Gretel, it was completely fine. Although she was faced to deal with a jealous Grell too many times that she lost count.

But she had fun messing around with the red cladded reaper. She would say to him, "Sorry Grell but William need to see me right now. He wants to get fitted for his new clothes~" And she then would proceed to ignore the humorous curses sent upon her from him.

She had already she prepared an order for coffee for the tired and currently agitated reaper of the Dispatch Management Division. "What is it this time?" She asked as she tore up her scones in half

"Demons, we had a batch of souls stolen." William spoke in his deadbeat tone. "Awful and disgusting creatures, they used any chances to create chaos for the sake of their boredom. Before proceeding to leech whatever comes out of it as a mean of survival."

He began ranting. Gretel knew why he was angry, since this would force him to do extra paperwork even he didn't have any direct involvement. She nodded to his words as he led the conversation.

Not that she minded though, she would always be there to help her senior.

"I see. All the more better for the Scientific Divisions to hurry and create substitutes for human souls." Gretel mused, spreading jam and cream onto her scones. "And since demons don't have a digestive systems, maybe we have a chance to save those souls."

And a reaper waitress came back with a tray in her arms, placing down a cup of coffee on the table and Gretel gave her thanks to the waitress. "Coffee?" She turned to William.

William smiled back. "Thank you." It was a wonder of how Gretel can make the emotionless and aloof reaper smile.

And Grell attempted to burn a hole through her head from his hiding spot.
As Gretel would worked in the fields of England for her shifts, she had collected the last of her soul and decided to spent the rest of her time in her room. Currently the time for her, through the British clock was late into the night. She worked hard on design William’s new suit.

It was proven to be a mighty challenge for the great tailor and matchmaker reaper. He wanted no flashy appearances, it was basically his way of saying 'I want the same look.' So all she did was it make the suit easier to move around in but it still retained its original look which didn't satisfied her. Although from a clear distance away, she could hear screams.

"…" She rose from her seat, she stayed quiet as she stared at her door. She then froze as she stretched when she heard some noise at her door.

"Knock, knock." A bang or two on the door came from outside.

Gretel knew who it was, she got up from her seat, dressed in her night gown and walked over to the door. She slowly opened it, to reveal Noct in his black pyjamas, clutching his pillow tightly, behind his glasses were red-shot eyes. Gretel noticed a very faint tear trail marked down his soft cheeks.

"Hi Gretel…" he smiled weakly, his hair seen better days but then again he barely flattened his bed hair in the first place.

"Nightmare?" Gretel softly asked, it was something she knew too well then she would like. She welcomed Noct into her room and closed the door behind when he walked in.

"Sorry for bothering you…" Noct whispered under his breath, but it was loud and clear for the blonde haired reaper.

Gretel shook her head, "Nonsense." And she knew the perfect thing to distant Noct. "Just in time, I need some insight."

"Insight?" The tone in Noct's voice improved a bit, replacing the sadness and fear with curiosity. Noct's head perked at that, that along with his bed-hair bouncing upwards which was difficult to resist from patting it down.

"Yes, sadly for William's request is for simpler yet formal clothes. But this mean that it would look just like any other boring suit set." Gretel let out a sigh, "I feel that my creativity is slipping away."

"Tea?" Gretel asked as she wandered to her kitchen area, holding up her Wedgwood blue-white teacup in the air delicately and observing it.

"No thank-you." Noct pushed down the offer and yet Gretel smiled.

"Good, I can't make good tea as Arthur's." Gretel chirped, putting her tea-set back into the cupboard carefully, her smile widened further when she glanced back to see Noct smiling and chuckling to himself.

"How about, you give him a second gift?" Noct suggest, he hovered above the table and looked over the design plans. "You give him what he asked and something extra."

"…" Gretel didn't response back to his suggestion and the black haired teen feared that he said something wrong.

"Oh my innocent Kitten, you are a genius!" Gretel cheered, she rushed over to Noct to hug him tightly and then giving him quick kisses on both of his cheeks.
She then dashed over to her design, "And I know just the colour too."

"Is it going to bright?" Noct wiped the kissed off from his cheeks.

"Of course." Gretel sang as she scribed down her notes

"That tie is so going to be red and polka dotted." Noct smirked to himself.

That night, all thoughts of nightmares were erased from the two minds and they slept a dreamless night in each other arms. It was clear that the relationship was mutual but not one of romanticism, Noct saw Gretel as a paternal figure and elder sister while Gretel saw Noct resembling of a little brother. His attempts on cooking reminded her too much of her other half.

When Arthur walked into her room, as he would like to prepare her breakfast and as Gretel liked how the blonde hair brewed her tea. He walked back at the dining table and saw a gift-wrapped box that covered half of the table.

He saw Noct cuddling in her arms, he would be irked as it went against all social rules they once lived by but they lived in the Department. These rules they once lived in won't matter in a couple more decades anyway. And Noct wasn't doing it to take advantage of his lady.

Another tear rained down Noct's pale cheeks, Arthur leaned down and gently wiped the tear away, unconsciously it made Noct smiled.

Gretel was right, Noct was 'touch-starved'. Noct was one a sickly child, bed-ridden and guilt-ridden as well in his human life. It was cruel that in this new second of his, that he has a body that those humans would consider to be god-like.

Free from social expectations, from his sickly body and yet the boy retained to his nightmares. Nightmare he won't explain to the pair but Gretel never had a second thought but to comfort him. Like how Arthur did whenever Gretel had her nightmares. And eventually, six years into his time as a reaper that he had a mental breakdown and more to come.

Gretel stirred a bit, as she rose up from her bed while Noct soundly asleep. She turned to Arthur although all she saw was a blurred mess of greens, yellows and blacks meshed together. She knew that it was Arthur due to the shape of his jawline. It retained its shape, even though a reaper's near-sighted eyes.

She clumsily grabbed her rectangular glasses where its arms were white from the night still. "Arthur? Is that you?"

"Arthur? Oh! Good morning." Gretel fumbled though her words, as leaned to the side and slipped down the bed. Luckily, Arthur rushed to her side and wrapped around her torso, keeping her from making contact with the floor.

"Thank-you Arthur." She said, she wanted to whine from the loss of warmth as Arthur unwrapped his arms as she propped herself properly.

"How did it go?" She asked as she stretched out her arms, Noct still slept with no problems and didn't stir one bit.

"Very well." He answered, he started the blend for this morning would be a Jackson earl grey.

"Can I have a name?" Gretel chirped, already casting away the tiredness of the morning down the drain with her bright yet cheekily smile.
"He chose to keep his first name." Arthur answered, building up the anticipation, knowing that Gretel would beg for more.

"Which is? You can't keep me waiting."

"Ignis." Arthur finally said, he placed the tea set on the tray and along with its side dishes of scones, croissants and toast.

"Ummmmm." Gretel hummed to herself, she clapped her hands and pressed it on her lips.

"And no, you can't match him off right now. You haven't even met the boy yet."

"You can't stop me now or once I see him with my two eyes."

Arthur let out the first sigh in the morning.

What Arthur didn't know before Gretel went asleep as Noct always went first, he whispered out a name.

"Breakfast for two?" Arthur asked, holding up the tray to display the selections.

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**EXTRA**

_After years_

Grell launched himself to a dark haired reaper whose hair was slinked back. "Oh William! You are looking as smashing as ever-" William took a step to the slip and let Grell crash to the floor.

William didn't even took a glance at the red cladded reaper and proceeded to walk off, intending to get ready for his dispatch mission in London. Sadly another obstacle came his way, albeit it wasn't annoying as Grell Sutcliffe.

And he already had to deal with cleaning up the reaper's mess, he was happy enough that Grell was undergoing punishment for the Ripper incident.

"I never thought you would own such flashy clothes." Ronald mused to himself, as colourful as it were, it suited the cold reaper of the Dispatch Management division. The yellow and sparkly texture of his jacket, the pale tea green and his red polka dotted tie. Another thing that strangely fits is the pink slacks.

"I thought it was fitting to help me gather attention." William reasoned, fitting his glasses back his with middle finger.

"I never thought that you would ever wear it!" Another voice cried out, but this time William considered it to be endearing. After all, it did came from his _daughter_. Gretel rushed to his side and gasped on his glove hands.

He thanked Gretel again for helping him in his soon mission, and it was an extra gift that Gretel and Noct made. "I thought it was fitting for my new dispatch, I will be investigating-" And Gretel quickly cut her main senior off.

"A circus, Noct told me. As much as it pains me that you would wear this to get into a circus." Gretel said, she let out a fake tear and a pouty face. William gently rubbed her tear off with his thumb.

"I'm just happy that you even wore it." Gretel let out a wide smile.
"Of course Gretel designed it." Ronald said to himself as he watched the conversation between a father and daughter. He glanced to his red cladded senior. "And she be the one that captures his rare smiles."

And also, adding more fuel to Grell's jealously.

Next time on Until the Day I'm Forgiven.

"It was happy spell of course."

"And we are out of Kunugigoako town!"

"Hey Noct! Come in, we haven't started yet."

"It gives you more reason to confess."
Short Story: Relevation

Chapter Summary

Ikeda being Ikeda as Gakushu eats his dinner.

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Revelation

"Hey, Shu I just realised something…” Ikeda spoke as he popped his head out from a newspaper where it titled at front page, 'Another woman found strangled!' And there was a small list of confined victims, from where Gakushu could see were Kitoaji Kin and Nakadan Kanjoro.

He sat in front of Gakushu at one of the Department's many busy food courts as the boy eat his dinner. Today's meal is a slow-cooker Coq Au Vin, and for dessert is Andes chocolate cake. He decided to eat there because it had been a while since he eat at a reaper's food court.
He had just completed a retrieval shift earlier and Ikeda was sticking around because he had nothing else to do. But Gakushu was on better terms for the time being because Ikeda gave him a sighed Yuri Plisetsky jersey. So nobody had to worry about Ikeda's having his ribs being fractured, yet…

"It's Gakushu, what is it now Ikeda?" Gakushu muttered with a hint of annoyance, he already did this in the afternoon and he certainly didn't want to repeat it again. Instead of wearing his black reaper uniform, he changed out of it and decided to wear something both casual yet classy suit as he was about to go to France soon.

Another reason why Gakushu was being civil with the light haired man was because he was munching on his cake, after finishing his dinner and Ikeda had promised to take him to eat Cédric Grolet's desserts later on for a quick snack. Thank god for time-zones as Japan was 8 hours ahead of Paris, and he need his fix of sweets. Again.

"You been in the Department for four years." Ikeda casually explained, as he folded up his newspaper and setting it on his front of the table. And Gakushu rolled his reaper eyes.

'What a stupid question.' The strawberry blonde thought to himself. He held onto his tongue from saying, 'And you have ten years of experience, yet you have a mentality of a 5 year old who always wants to have An's full attention if you are not focused on stealing my fucking sweets.'

Ikeda has an odd obsession over his main senior that stemmed back to his beginning years, which still continued to this day. Although Gakushu would admitted that this side of Ikeda was pleasant and adorable, if only that this side of Ikeda was more common than the title of 'pudding thief' or 'goddamn it Ikeda!'

Ikeda would say as he rushed to hug his main senior, lifting her up in the air in his arms "Praise me! Praise me!" Or a "Pat me! Pat me!" And he would be like this more often if Johnny was around, ten points if Johnny was jealous and grumpy for the rest of the day at the end of it.

That and because Ikeda has many ways of hugging her, his favourite is when he was at the side of her, his body crouched and lowered as he wrapped his arms around her torso. Pressing his face at the side of her breast. An never seemed to be troubled or even bothered by this, she would smiled back and started to pat him like a puppy. And he relished this.

Gakushu pushed his black framed glasses back, tying to focus on the now than the adorable relationship. "Tell me something I don't already know." Gakushu spoke, prying his eyes chartreuse phosphorescent downwards and attention to his cake.

Ikeda scoffed, but he continued to explain. "So when we cast away our human bodies after we committed our unforgiveable sin, we are reborn as Grim Reapers."

Why Ikeda was explaining this was beyond Gakushu, this was common sense in the world of Grim Reapers. He learned this on day one, he had no idea where Ikeda was following at with his train of thought. Unless he wanted to take about the process of it, the transfer of the soul from a body of a human to a body of a reaper in a tube-like setting that came straight out from a sci-fi movie.

An once recounted that she vaguely remembered being immersed by a numbing feeling, the bubbles floating up and reapers cladded in white lab coats did their usual work to make sure the process went as smoothly as possible.

"Shush, go back to sleep." A voice called out, and the blurry vision slowly closed and the next time the Australia girl woke up. She was in a room of white, everything was white, the bed, the ceiling, the wall, and even her hospital gown.
But knowing Ikeda, it was a 10 out of 10 chance that the light haired man wouldn't talk about something that deep.

Gakushu lifted his eyes up and adverted his attention back on Ikeda, with a smug look. "Your point?"

That and cursing Ikeda for looking so fine in his tailored and fitted dark European suit set, along with the dark trench-coat. Gakushu long came into terms with his preferences but it didn't help that he was finding Ikeda, goddamn fucking Ikeda attractive!

"So, wouldn't that technically you would be four years old?"

"…"

Gakushu found that his words were stolen, ripped out from his mouth and stuffed with silence.

"…."

The strawberry blonde dropped his fork, his jaw gaped opened as he stared back at Ikeda's reaper eyes with bewilderment.

'Oh my god…'

"I know right! I would mean I'm ten!"

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A sneak peak

Ren couldn't believe that Noct actually slept through the entire train ride and he was still sleeping soundly, he knew that the male liked to sleep after learning bits and pieces of the character from the school visit. 'But this is ridiculous…'

'How many hours does he need?'

He watched at the older and taller male, carrying the boy on his back walked off to the side and to where a gathering of La Morton students huddle together. Ren could see that everyone was getting checked off, as soon presumably the two were signed off, they walked back to Gretel, Gakushu and Ren.

"Okay, I'm assuming that I have no choice of the matter." The taller male sighed and Gretel pouted.

"Iggy-kun, it has been months since we are all like this together. And Gakushu wants to catch up with Noct." Although they already did that with last night's shift but that was beside the point. "Right my Strawberry?"

"Yes." Gakushu nodded as they all walked out of the station.

"I prefer you calling me in my actual name. You have done it before."

"Stop being like the Strawberry when Ikeda calls him Shu, he was just being selective."

"Hey." Gakushu called out however Gretel walked off.

"Okay, let's have that Korean BBQ." Noct mumbled, his eyes still closed, "I'm going to skip the kimchi."
Ignis sighed and yet he held a soft smile, "You can walk there, you have been sleeping for almost the entirely of the train ride."

"But it smells nice here…" Noct sleepily muttered.

'What…?' Ren blankly stared at the pair, how on Earth was he supposed to react to that? He turned to Gakushu and hoped to mimic his expression, however Gakushu offered a smile and a pat on Iggy's shoulders.

"I'm sorry but the ship has sailed, if anything it left the port decades ago." Gakushu spoke with a cheek, smiling of how pink the male's pink was becoming.

"Quiet, you are going to make Gretel more serious."

"This is Gretel we are talking about."

"I will go down with this ship!" Gretel yelled over from a distance.
Short Story: Gift

Chapter Summary

Ikeda buys Gakushu another gift, but he decide to give it away.

Chapter: Seen - Gifts

‘... Goddamn it Ikeda.’ Gakushu Asano thought to himself, in his hand was a rectangular gift box wrapped in black paper. Classic Department colours.

He was just started to pack up his school work when he finally spotted the alien object tucked away nicely in his school bag. He knew that it was the cheeky bastard because of his handwriting on the piece of note.

That and the crudely drawn chibi version of his face, with a wink and a tongue stuck out in the corner. The urge to eat cake surfaced was strong, even before he started to read the note and it was a good thing that school was almost done.

'I am definitely eating cake tonight.' Gakushu craved and he almost drooled from the mere thought. 'What should it be? Orange Blossom Bundt, Toffe Crunch, A Victorian Sponge cake, German Chocolate cake or Deep Dark Chocolate cake... what to choose?'

He felt his violet coloured eye started to twitch as he read the note stuck on the box. 'Hey Shu, guess who found something off from Reinast for my cute baby brother.'

'From your awesome big brother-' And then Gakushu ripped that note into shreds. He glared down at the box he left on his table, looking as if he was trying to burn a hole through it.

'I'm not even going to bother to open it.' Knowing Ikeda's character, he probably brought something that was both expensive and embarrassing. So much so that the moment he would tear off the wrapping paper, he could hear the cheeky bastard's laughter from a distance.

"Hahahahahahahahaha!"

Even more so when Gakushu received the latest phone in the markets, with it diamond encrusted and white gold for the case was embarrassing. He liked his smile black and silver phone customised phone thank you very much. That and he ran off before he could see Isogai's face when he re-gifted said gift.

'That was so embarrassing.' The cinnamon roll felt his cheeks were going a bit pink, he wanted to hide his face from the embarrassment and it was a good thing that Isogai didn't press on like a saint.

Ikeda's spending habits, it was a double edge sword of the strawberry blonde. If the man took him out to eat at Bottega Louie in Los Angeles, then that same man would buy him a camel.

The school bell rang, finally signalling that the day had ended. Gakushu might as well give it to Isogai again, he still need to reinforce school rules concerning part-time jobs. Maybe these gifts would help that, nothing he was doing was against the Department's rules.
He stood up from his seat and walked his way over the Isogai's desk.

"Hey, the pudding thief gave something that I have no use for. Do you want it?" Gakushu asked, he placed the gift on the student's table.

Before Isogai could mutter a single word, because apparently Gakushu wouldn't take no for an answer. As soon he left the parcel on the desk, he turned around and walked for the exit.

"You think it's another phone?" Isogai's friend, Maehara popped out. The entire class was at awed when Gakushu's secret gift was revealed to be a phone that would have been obsolete in two years. Korosensei helped the boy to cash in the phone that would help with the rent for 6 months.

"I hope not, I feel bad taking these." Isogai meekly whispered.

"Come one, open it!" Karma chirped, sipping on a carton of strawberry milk. He was excited of what the 'Pudding thief' decided to give Gakushu next.

Isogai opened it.

"He gave you… A toothbrush." Maehara was gobsmacked. As he and Isogai blankly stared at Gakushu's gift. Karma was doing his best not to choke on his drink as he snickered.

Although Isogai sighed in relief, it was only a normal and regular toothbrush. Strange yes, but these sort of things are generally not pricey. And in the corner of the eye, he spotted a small tag. As the other boys were laughing and distracted by the gift, Isogai went to pick it up.

"…."

"…. Guys." Isogai blanched, whoever send this to Gakushu forgot to take off the price tag.

"Why does this toothbrush cost $4200 US dollars…?"

Gakushu was preparing for his nightly shift, as he was reading through his list in his head. A certain light haired man wrapped his arm over Gakushu's shoulders.

"Hey Shu~ how did you like my $4200 dollar toothbrush? I just had to buy it as soon I laid my eyes on it."

'…'

'… Goddamn it Ikeda.'
Chapter Summary

A story of a Canary before he flew into the halls of the Department.

NOTE; I'm doing a review reply over on fanfiction.net

The Caged Canary

Back in the day before many reapers woke up from a sleep they never thought they would again in the halls of the Department. Before the Great Wars or the colonies gaining their independence. Long before Gakushu committed his unforgivable sin or was even born, one had done so as well.

And this one joined the ranks of the Department at ten years old. He whose hair is dark as night and eyes once shone the colour of the deep ocean blue.

Noct was a sickly child, bed-ridden and guilt-ridden in his human life. He was one of four sons and the youngest of six in the family of highest nobility. His voice seemed to be blessed by the angels, it was the same of his gentle beauty. Black hair soft as silk, his pale white skin like porcelain made him look like he was out of this world and lost. Almost angelic in a way.

His only friend was a servant that tended to his every needs, a boy with almond blonde hair and eyes of the forest. Someone who was only three years older of Noct.

Noct would like to describe himself to be a canary, small and fragile, a gentle voice with the need to sing. He was a caged canary, his home and room was a cage, he needed to be watched over of his every move as if he would hurt himself with a small toy block.

Like a caged canary, through his selfishness and his clouded mind, he thought that his servant and friend Ignis would be freed with his death.

But how to do it was the question. He was stuck in his room, so he couldn't go into the kitchen and grab a knife or some poison. And if he tried, he'd just be caught and sent back to his room if he could walk at all with his leg braces before collapsing. A noose also was out of the question, as dear Noct could barely even walk or properly stand. The muscles in his legs had shrunken due to no exercise, and he could only take two steps before falling.

Then one day, his prayers were answered when his mansion was broken into. The robbers were paid by a jealous nobleman, who envied his parents' wealth. One such robber came to his bedroom, thinking that the boy was asleep, but clearly he wasn't.

"What is it that you want?" The 10 year old boy spoke of the person in shadow. Obviously, he surprised the robber as he jumped, he sharply turned around and was held at gunpoint.

But Noct had no fear, he knew what he wanted. He glanced over the person with his deep blue eyes with an unreadable expression.

"You didn't see anything." The robber growled, holding his gun tight. "This is only a dream kid, you are only dreaming."
"Then what am I looking at? Because I'm seeing an old looking man clad in dark clothing with a weapon aimed at me, in the middle of my bedroom." Noct slyly spoke back, and the masked man bit his lip, bested by a child. Not exactly the greatest thing to boast about.

"It's not like I could do anything anyway with these legs of mine. So tell me, what is it that you want?" He asked once more.

"You nobles." The robber darkly muttered with annoyance, he lowered his gun and ran his free hand back through his dark red-purplish hair. Noct observed his robber and found an empty dirty sack in his other hand.

'Oh, I know now.' Noct being a bright boy, he quickly connected the dots.

"Ah, you want money? Take what you want, and shall we make a trade to be fair?" The boy proposed, and the robber looked at him, confused.

'What on God's name?' That was the thought that immediately came to the robber's head. "For what?" The robber asked with confusion. 'What a strange boy...'

"Your gun." Noct bluntly answered, he watched as the robber visibly paled and was surprised by his request.

And before the robber would obviously say no, he continued. "It is not for you. It is I who want to die. And don't worry for your hands to be stained in red, I will do the deed myself."

"Why? Why die when you have everything you need? Clothes, food, a roof over your head, and anything that can be bought with money." The robber asked, frustration and confusion mixed in his voice.

"How old are you kid?" The older male asked, he retightened his grip on his weapon.

Noct showed and ten fingers on both of his hands to the robber. "Ten."

If this were any other situation, say that the man wasn't robbing Noct's rich home and if his life wasn't in the dumps. The robber would had awed from the cuteness leaking from Noct.

"Damn it kid." The robber uttered.

"Language." Noct said with a bit of cheek and the older male ignored this response.

"You barely lived out your life." The dark red-purplish hair said.

"But I'm sick. This house is my only world, or better yet this room is, as I can't set off outside of my home before my legs starts to bruise." Noct explained solemnly, and the robber's grip loosened slightly, showing pity.

"It won't be long before my throats bleeds and I lose my last purpose to this earth." Noct said with sadness in his tone before he started to cough. The robber looks around and saw the many instruments that only the rich could afford and play.

'... I see.' The robber knew what he was talking about.

"I am the canary in a golden cage, what is it to a bird who can't fly free into the blue sky?" Noct asked of the robber, in a dream-like dance as he looked up to the ceiling. "A canary who leeches on his family and friend."
"So please, give me the gun. Get anything valuable in this room, I also have a box of jewels by the bedside, there is a secret passage at that trap door that will lead to the outside." Said trapdoor was one that Noct used when he was a bit younger and slightly healthier to sneak outside with help of his leg braces. No one knew of it except for him, but as his condition got worst, it was left to collect dust.

"Are you sure? Do you really want this?" the robber asked, his voice wavering slightly. The 10 year olds he encountered were bratty and rude, like any other typical child, hell this robber was once like that but this one… This was different. A maturity that was embedded into him, with a hint of suffering, regret, and happiness.

He was an adult in a child's body, and that broke the robber's heart. The boy with deep blue eyes and a halo of black hair grew up too fast.

"Truly?" The man almost choked.

"Yes, I have for a long time. With my death, my father, my brothers and sister, and my friend Ignis will be freed from the burden that is my useless body." Noct strongly reaffirmed, never once did his voice waivered.

Noct felt saddened when he saw by the corners of those eyes where tears starting to form. Seeing as the robber was very uncomfortable and would probably not give him the gun, with shaky hands, he pulled the covers of his bed away and placed his feet on the floor. They were just bones and skin with barely any muscle, but he hefted himself off the bed.

"Kid..." the robber whispered, he knew by the boy's word that he could no longer walked and he saw it with his eyes by the state of the boy’s legs. Small, thin and donned with purple. The boy tiredly and shakily pointed at the piano. The robber knew what he must do, so he carried the boy with great care and gentleness over to the ebony piano and carefully seated him at the posh leather stool.

They reached the piano that was close by and sat on the bench, sighing in relief as he didn't have to walk.

"Thank-you so much." The boy smiled at the man.

"Don't mention it kid." The robber said, already trusting the boy that he won't cause a loud noise of disturbance. But both also knew that no-one will come here in the dead of night, down the long and far hall where his bedroom was the only room.

Noct shuffled himself so that he sat at the near end of the bench, he patted the free spot of seat, non-verbally asking him to take a seat. And so the robber did, he sat next to the small boy but he sat in the opposite direction. Where his back faced the instrument.

Positioning his hands properly, Noct looked to the man and gave him a smile.

"To ease your mind... will you listen to my song?"

"-Noct, Noct wake up." A familiar voice called out, groggily Noct woke up, and he was resting over one the cafeteria's long table at one of the countless food courts of the Department.

"... Iggy? Is that you?" He asked as he turned his head in direction of the voice to the side. He wondered why his visual was so blurred, after his mind started to clear from the nap he just had, he realised that he wasn't wearing his glasses.
"Yes." His friend replied, he hovered above the boy and gently placed his glasses back on. The world became clear once again, no longer did he saw a messy blend of blacks and whites, and he instead saw the crisp and clean lines of his friend. Who wore a tight-fitting European style suit, with a dark purple dress shirt underneath with no tie and his collar unbuttoned.

Noct would blush at the sight of his friend's defining collarbone, but he couldn't in fear of a certain Gretel would be nearby and how his friend would react. Before he could focus on staring his friend any longer, he asked "What's for lunch?"

"A chicken Caesar salad." Ignis quickly answered, as he pushed back his glasses and make his way to his seat to face opposite to Noct.

"Oh come on!" Noct pouted, he looked to Ignis with puppy-dog eyes, he was so adorable looking that anyone else who fall to his whim. He hoped that Ignis this time around would fall as well as he begged.

"Noct." Ignis looked back with a serious look, looking as if he wasn't going to be affect by the power of cuteness. They stared at each other for a few minutes, the atmosphere was getting uncomfortable.

"I'm going to get my own lunch." Noct said as he rose from his seat. The almond haired boy would had been glad that he was no longer having a staring contest with his long-time friend, although strangely he felt his chest tightened a bit the moment eye contact broke.

That or because Noct didn't want to eat what he brought for him.

"I promise you that I will treat you at Bottega Louie, all the macaroons and cake you want."

"I have the money you know." Noct retorted back but Ignis had a trump card up his sleeve.

"… Together." For some reason, Noct loves to eat with other people, extra points if it was Gretel of himself. Although Ignis logically pinned it to a childhood habit and he wasn't complaining about it one bit.

Now to stop that fluttering sensation in his heart whenever he was around the young boy. God forbid Gretel commenting on this.

"Fine." Noct finally gave in and he sat back down, he glared at his salad as if it will burst into flames. He stabbed a leaf of lettuce, after a moment of hesitation he shoved it into his mouth.

"That's the spirit." Ignis chuckled before he dug into his own lunch as well. "What did you dreamed? It seems that you were in a deeper sleep."

"Just about Mr Robber." Noct grumbled as he nibbled on the spinach with an endearing and adorable face. There was some silence and he looked up, his friend had a dark glint in his eyes and the lens flashed dangerously.

He looked down and saw that the fork was horribly deformed as Ignis released his fist. "Iggy?"

"If I ever find his reincarnated form, I swear that I will give a beating for giving you that gun." Ignis declared and he went on to calmly eat his lunch with a new fork.

"Iggy..."Noct whispered, he didn't like how Ignis blamed on the robber that night, he only complied with his selfish wish and it was Noct's choice to take his own life.
Ignis felt his heart shattered by the change of tone in Noct's voice and he quickly changed the subject. "Have you heard, Rilliane decided to become a main senior?" And he felt a wash of relief when the look of Noct's eyes changed.

"She does have a similar motherly feel as to An, I kind of expected it to be honest." The dark haired boy answered, he wasn't that surprised giving her character, he just hoped that her junior didn't end up with a possessive trait as seen with Ikeda and An.

Although An never noticed a thing and found Ikeda to be merely adorable. Johnny has some tough competition in hand.

"So, who is it?"

"Don't know, he just arrived today and he hasn't woke up yet."
Chapter Summary

Gakushu and friends goes out to Hasetsu. Now where is Viktor?

Before that day

Nagisa impatiently taps on his wooden desk, tensely waiting for Gakushu to arrive at class. 'He does this too much.' He was hoping that the strawberry blonde boy wouldn't do this habit again, after he came to class early yesterday but it looks like he went back to it.

"Gakushu-san is late…" Nagisa whispered to himself. It was made worse when Karasuma walked into the room, with no Gakushu to suddenly appear in sight and then the school bell rang. Nagisa's worries just shot up to the roof.

And then, a phone rang and it was coming from Karasuma's pockets. The air became cold, tense that a knife could cut through it. Everyone had one thought and they all prayed that it wasn't actually what they were thinking.

Karasuma took out his phone and accepted the call. "Um… Karasuma-sensei?" A familiar voice called out.

"Asano-kun?" Karasuma voiced, with a hint of surprised. Everyone's attention was on the male teacher.

"Ah Sensei, do you mind giving my missed out work on Monday? I know that shouldn't be doing this, as I am the Chairman's son but I'm asking here." Gakushu asked. "And don't worry if I don't understand the work, I'm sure I could go through it with no problem."

"… Gakushu-san, where are you?" Karasuma questioned and thankfully he was given a full answer then the one Gakushu would usually give out.

"Some plans have been changed, I'm supposed to go on the same day to help out a group when you go for your excursion but it was changed for today." Gakushu explained in the most apologetic tone he could give while retaining to his mask. "I'm sorry for being an inconvenience but I'm sure that you be fine without me in killing Korosensei."

The whole class sighed in relief, it wasn't what they were thinking, Gakushu wasn't kidnapped but one person had tapped into his 'onii-chan' self too far.

"So, does my explanation satisfied you?" Gakushu asked and Karasuma nodded, knowing that the strawberry blonde boy wouldn't be able to see the gesture.

"Yes, have a good trip-" Before Karasuma could finish his sentence, Nagisa snatched his teacher's phone.

"Gakushu! Where are you right now!?" Nagisa demanded.

"Oh Nagisa, I'm at the café but I should leave for the train in ten more minutes…. Damn it." And the
call ended. Nagisa quickly handed back Karasuma his phone before hastily giving his thanks, he rushed for the windows and swiftly slide it opened.

"Big brother Nagisa is coming!" Nagisa screamed as he dove out of the window, quickly following behind was his red-head friend. Aren't they outing their assassination skills to good use?

"And awesome big brother Karma is coming!" Karma followed behind him.

"…." The collective response of the rest of the class and teacher.

"Gakushu!" Their voices echoed as they ran down the mountain in top speed.

Lesson started without Nagisa and Karma, today's first lesson was on History and they were looking into near ending of the Cold war. The door slide opened, walking in the room was Nagisa and Karma with no Gakushu in sight.

"We're back." Nagisa spoke out dejectedly, he walked back into the room with a small rolled up tissue shoved up his nose. It was the same for Karma as they went back to their seats. If this happened a few months ago, the rest of Class-E would had rallied against Gakushu for hurting their friends.

But they couldn't now, because Gakushu had the same effect on them without even raising a finger.

"So, what did Gakushu do now?" Rio asked, almost dreading of their answer. Knowing to some extent of how adorable Gakushu could effortless be, back when Gakushu just received his new haircut. Even looking back at the old Gakushu, her mind was forever set on sparkle filter. All she could see the memories of Gakushu scowling at Class-E, was the thought that him pouting was instead.

"He was so cute! Everything, the clothes, that doggie hat, his backpack!" Nagisa yelled, he leaned his back a bit as he covered his face with his hands. "Why didn't I take a photo of it!? I swore that I saw angel wings behind him!"

"So, Karma… What did Gakushu do?" Rio asked again seeing that Nagisa began to ramble of how cute his 'little brother' was. 'I want a clear answer damn it!'

"He said fuso…" Karma answered, there was a hint of uncertainly in his tone.

"Fuso…?" Rio muttered back with her eyes slightly widened.

"Yeah, fuso." Karma nodded.

"Fuso?" Isogai titled his head.

"Fuso." Karma answered again

"….Fuso?" Kayano pondered.

"Fuso."

"Fu-so." Itona broke it down.

"Fuso." Karasuma even joined in the conversation because of how odd it was.

"Fus-"
"What the hell is that!?!" Terasake demanded. Karma glared back at him that says 'How the hell am I supposed to know!? But it is fucking cute okay!'

Nagisa already knew what it was and he was happy to relieve the class's questions. "It is a happy spell of course." Many students had the looked of 'the fuck' and it was directed at Nagisa who was looking quite proud of himself.

"What?" Okuda said, she didn't want to do a check on her ears, she already was wearing glasses and she didn't want hearing aids.

"Pff, you are pulling my leg here!" Okajima called out, rolling in laughter.

"Why would I?!" Nagisa quickly responded back, that laughter quickly died out.

'Oh my god, he is speaking the truth.' The thoughts of the entire class merged.

"How does it go?" Kayano curiously asked.

Nagisa stood up and went to the front of the class, he took in a deep breathe, he extended his arms out and in for each peek-a-boo. "Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~"

"Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~ Fusosososososo~"

"…" They tried to have that image and replace it with Gakushu, it was failing.

"Okay, now you are pulling my leg." Okajima reaffirmed.

"You're just jealous that I saw it first." Nagisa lashed back.

As Karasuma tried to calm down the class and get back to work, his creative imagination was using that newfound information. With his beautiful Anna performing the same spell. 'I can definitely see that.'

Irina sneezed and some dread filled her chest, although she didn't knew why she felt that way in the first place.

'Safe.' Gakushu sighed in relief, he was caught off guard when Nagisa and Karma suddenly rushed themselves to the train station. They yelled that they need to protect him from future kidnappers, but again he could take them on since he was a Grim Reaper. He only wanted to play around for a bit that day.

He was forced to use one of Antonio's teachings, the happy spell to knock them out. 'That was so embarrassing.' He wanted to bury his face in his hands.

Like he explained earlier, there was some plans changed and he was going to Hasetsu with the group of La Morton students today. Currently he, Gretel and Ren were sitting at one of the train carriages with the separate rooms. He was sitting next to Ren while Gretel sat opposite of the pair.

"It is a bit strange to not see Arthur sitting next to her." Ren added, glancing up and down from his notebook of poetry. He was devising a way to show a way to confess Gakushu without him or Gretel even realising.

'Maybe this one….' Ren internally groan. 'Why am I even thinking of this!?" He really wanted to rip his book into shreds. He looked back to the blonde girl and realised something, he needed to better conceal the pills in his bag.
He internally groaned, 'I just hoped that she doesn't go through my luggage.'

Everyone was waiting for the train to finally move. Ren was doing his best to not have his face turn into a tomato when Gakushu shuffled closer to him. Their shoulders came into contact as Gakushu leaned over.

"How long again?" Gakushu asked no-one in particular, as he watched the station outside doing its usual daily routine. Gakushu quickly leaned back into his seat and shuffled back, no longer their shoulders touch.

Ren wanted to both sigh in relief and disappointment. He already missed the warmth of Gakushu.

Gakushu meanwhile was in his own turmoil. 'I hope that he didn't thought I was weird.' When he realised that he was in physical contact with Ren, he snapped away in the most graceful fashion he could muster. He prayed to the heavens that Gretel didn't noticed that action of his.

'Please don't notice my feelings for Ren, please don't notice my feelings for Ren.' Gakushu chanted again and again. The compartment was filled with an awkward silence, it was made more uncomfortable with Gretel's cheeky look and her devilish smile.

Suddenly, the train shook. Ren and Gakushu mentally praised to the heavens.

"The train is moving." Gretel whispered to herself, she peeked out of the window with anticipation as the train started to bludge. "It's moving, moving~"

"Moving~" The train started to move and before long, they were out of the border of the town.

"And we are out of Kunugigoako town!" Gretel cheered and she lifted her arms into the hand.

"Free from Gakuhou's watch! You're free my strawberry! Free!" Gretel celebrated by throwing confetti into the air. How she got the confetti in the first place was still a mystery. And then came the party poppers.

"Free! I say, free!"

"Now be your cinnamon self!" She ordered the strawberry blonde boy, as he was rained in confetti, glitter and streamers.

"Okay, okay." Gakushu chuckled back, his cheeks glowed rosy pink and his face was plastered with a wide smile as he waved the confetti away.

"Cards against humanity anyone?" Gakushu chirped as he shuffled the cards in his hands like a professional. He mentally thanked Mark for teaching him this.

"Hey guys." A voice called out and the door slide opened, a halo of black soft hair popped out. It was Noct, dressed in a black sweater and black denim jeans. Ren felt a twitch in his eye and Gretel caught this, Ren looked away from the face Gretel was making.

He just remembered that La Morton Institute was in Hasetsu, meaning that the visiting class was also on the same train.

"Hey Noct! Come in, we haven't started yet." Gakushu beamed and Noct made himself comfortable, who decided to sit next to the strawberry blonde boy. The other boy let and an 'o' sound when he discover that it was cards against humanity.
"I hope you don't mind if I hide out here." Noct weakly giggled, shifting his eyes downwards a bit to avoid Gretel's bright forest green eyes peering at him. Ren knew that look, or at least the feel of it, Gretel was in touch in her matchmaking persona.

Ren cursed himself to letting Gretel found out his feelings for Gakushu once more for the week.

"He's making me eat vegetables again." Noct gave out a feeble excuse.

Gretel let out a sigh, she had her hands on her forehead. "Kitten, you need to stop all of this pinning. You're making him jealous again, not that I'm complaining."

"Just give me more time." Noct whined.

'This is all too familiar.' Ren sympathized with the black haired boy. He mentally patted on Noct's shoulder with condolences. Although he too wanted to know who the boy was crushing on, he prayed for the sake of his sanity that it wasn't Gakushu.

'… This is going to be a long trip.' Ren mentally sighed to himself, he hated himself for his feelings to only intensify the passing days.

"I have been waiting for decades." Gretel sharply retorted and it was true. Gretel has 200 years of experience in the Department with her junior Noct having only 180 years. And she managed make it sound exaggerated to a certain hazel haired boy.

"Gretel just give him more him, you are giving more time with An and Johnny then you usually would." Gakushu reassured the blonde haired girl as he gave each player their cards before placing the remaining white cards by the window still.

"Because An had some problems, remember?" Gretel solemnly answered back, for a split second a flash of sadness washed over Noct's blue eyes and Gakushu's violet eyes. They knew what Gretel was talking about.

"And there is that Kara problem, if things go south then I have to plan a threesome for them." She joked but it gathered an interesting reaction from the three boys. Noct covered his face with his hands, Gakushu's cheeks tinged pink that he was doing his best to mask while Ren was as red as a tomato.

"Nah, it wouldn't definitely be a foursome with Ikeda-"

"Hey Ren, do you know how to play the game?!" Gakushu beamed to his hazel haired friend, quickly to change the atmosphere of the room as he set up the compartment tray table.

"Um, vaguely." Ren shyly answered back. It was a good answer since he received the prize of hearing more of Gakushu's voice as he explained the game.

'Note to self again, get feelings check.'

"Rock paper scissors on who gets to be Card Czar first!" Gretel cheered and everyone else joined along as they readied for their move. They glanced at each other, green met with purple, purple met with brown and brown met with blue.

"Rock paper scissors!"

The three males of compartment only had rock while Gretel had paper. "Brilliant! I knew that I have the power of the cards!" Gretel cheered as she clapped her hands in delight.
'Oh yeah, she did say that.' Ren received a small flashback to his first practice as a Candy Fest member.

Gakushu made a brooding pose, with his hand over his forehead which only made him cuter than he already is. However it only made Ren's dislike for Gakuhou Asano grow a bit more. Meanwhile Noct slumped over in defeat and pouted which made Ren grit his teeth as he was leaned on Gakushu's shoulder.

"Okay everyone, get ready." Gretel chirped as she picked up the black card from the stack.

"In the new Disney Channel original movie, Hannah Montana struggles with *blank for the first time." She read from her card, she then closed her eyes before covering her face with her hands.

Ren side glanced at the two other occupants, Gakushu already placed his card down the table facedown, Noct slowly picked his choice and did the same then hiding his cards to his chest. Ren finally placed his card down after some thinking.

"Okay, we're ready." Noct said and Gretel revealed her face, she picked one card.

"In the new Disney Channel original movie, Hannah Montana struggles with white privilege for the first time." Snickers and giggles filled the compartment.

Gretel picked up the next card, "In the new Disney Channel original movie, Hannah Montana struggles with tentacle porn for the first time." Noct was clutching his stomach as he laughed away, laughing so much that it hurts. Even Gretel wanted to burst into laughter. Gakushu was barely holding onto dear life and Ren was only managing to keep under control of his laughter.

Although Ren knew that his cheeks would be sore for the rest of the day.

Finally, the female picked up the final card, chuckling between breathes. "In the new Disney Channel original movie, Hannah Montana struggles with a bitch slap for the first time."

"They're all so good but I think I have to go… Tentacle porn."

"Woohoo! That is a point for me." Noct cheered, he happily take in the black card.

"I thought I had a good one." Gakushu pouted as he went to reread his handful of cards.

'Man, we are morbid as fuck.' Ren thought to himself as he read his hand of cards, and the game haven't really started yet.

"Okay next one! What never fails to liven up the party?"

After three hours of card games, talks and other things. Gakushu and Noct ended up sleeping, Gakushu was leaning on Ren and Noct leaned on Gakushu. Therefore shifting all of their weight onto the hazel haired boy.

Gretel was giggling to herself of the red face Ren was making. Before she could say a word, Ren looked to her to say 'Don't even think about it.' But knowing Gretel, she was going to mention it whether the hazel haired boy likes it or not.

"But Ren-kun~ you two look so cute together." Gretel teased, she leaned over from her seat for the cabinets and grabbed out a blanket. She went over and covered the two in the soft material.

"Ah, I remember the day I first met Gakushu-kun. His story shocked me, he did more work than
more adults at age 10. I think it is good that he has you as a friend, I just need to evaluation on your lady-killer habits and we are good set to go."

Ren needed to quickly change the conversation, he didn't want to talk about his feelings for the Strawberry, especially when that someone was leaning on his shoulder. "Hey Gretel, what high-school is Gakushu thinking of going?"

"Weston College." Gretel answered, Gakushu in the past had said of how he wanted to enrol in the school. He was interested for many reasons, the incident that the Undertaker was for a temporary time was a principle of the school and who was perfecting his methods on Bizarre Dolls.

Gretel felt nostalgia about the school, it was where all of her brothers went. All of her brothers were in the Green Lion house. And all but one was a perfect. "He believes that he is well suited for the home of Sapphire Owls. The blue really brings out his eyes."

"Isn't that in England?" Ren heard of the school. He thought to himself that it was so Gakushu, going to a world renowned school. Although he thought that he would go to a school in Russia, a country dominating in ice-skating.

"Yes, it is." Gretel nodded. "It gives you more reason to confess." This topic conversation backfired as she directed back on Gakushu.

"Sshhss!" Ren ushered but Gretel only smiled back daintily.

"Don't worry, Noct-kun and Gakushu-kun are heavy sleepers anyway." And she was right, the two which Ren could see their dog and cat ears for some reason were still sleeping soundly. What was wrong with his brain, he thought.

"But I'm sure that Gakushu-kun wouldn't mind following after you." Gretel added, although she knew the fate of his friend. It was painful to talk about futures of the fated ones. "You are his first friend after all."

'In fact, I was there on that day.' Gretel smiled to herself, donned in her reaper uniform that gave her extra protection as she hid out of Gakushu's sight. She and Arthur took that photo the start of Ren and Gakushu's friendship. The one where she hid from Rilliane for three months."

"No, he should go whatever school he wants. Without outside influences." Ren strongly affirmed, whether it was Gakushu's father or him. Gakushu deserved to go to a school where he wanted to go.

Gretel smiled, that side of Ren was admirable. Although it would be charming to see the experienced and flirty Ren courting the inexperience cinnamon roll or otherwise known Gakushu. Sadly, it was becoming a distant wish as each day passed. Exactly like Gakuhou.

The compartment became silent, with the only sounds being the train moving down the tracks, until someone decided to break that silences one more.

A male with almond blonde hair and eyes like Gretel stood outside of the door, he knocked of the door and he received a 'come in' from the blonde girl. "Of course Noct would be here." He whispered as he let out a sigh. Ren could hear a tint of his British accent slipping into the male's Japanese.

"Hi Iggy-kun, come sit with us." Gretel said as she patted the spot next to her.

"I preferred that you dropped that nickname." He spoke in a similar manner like Thomas Freeman or William T. Spear, as he fixed his glasses.
"Preferred that Noct-kun called you Iggy instead, hmmm?" Gretel teased back.

"Stop it." The older male quickly responded back.

"As the senior of the group, I think it is my duty." The blonde girl huffed and puffed her cheeks.

"Arthur was my main senior."

"And Arthur listens to me."

'He's fucked.' Ren thought, he knew that this new occupant was also in Gretel's matchmaking game. And after seeing the interactions of the two English blondes, there was some truth in her statement. So much that Ren could describe the relationship to be of a master and pet. Gretel being the master and Arthur being the pet.

Gretel looked to the side of the window, with its scenery passing by quick. "What to do?" She eyed at them and then to the sleeping pair.

'Please don't get me involve in this.' Ren mentally added as he looked to the girl.

"I'm going to take a nap now, I stayed up late last night." Ren said as he managed to stretch his arms out, he spent the entire night hacking into various backs to freeze and shut off 'Shiro's' many bank accounts and leaving behind no traces to follow back to him. However this small action made Gakushu's head dropped down to his chest.

"Don't think that I'm going to drop this conversation Ren-kun." Gretel huffed, she crossed her arms over her chest but Ren already shut his eyes closed after he moved Gakushu back to rest on his shoulder instead.

Gretel continued with her conversation, but this time in English. She side glanced at her British male friend, deep into his emerald green eyes. It was like hers, only that it had more of a yellow tint.

"Ignis-kun, you knew Noct-kun for years. You reconciled, you learn when Noct was under my wing." Gretel said firmly, Ren only shrugged this information off, he didn't know how the system worked in La Morton. As this talk of seniors or whatever they called, main seniors, he might ask her later after this train ride was over.

Ren started to drift between the realm of consciousness and sleep, only hearing snippets of their conversations.

"His fears, his reasons, almost everything that I could think of from the top of my head." Gretel's voice started to blur out from Ren's ears. "You were there when he needed you, his breakdowns and his nightmares. Anyone is obtuse if they don't saw that your feelings became passionate. I would even say that it was there before you came to our doors."

"I rather not have lust be mixed in with.-." Ignis answered back, Ren's mind couldn't register the full sentence.

"We have long passed that relationship you two once had."

"I remembered when he went to my room, crying to me. I thought he had another nightmare, to only found out you were indirectly connected to his tears."

"It wasn't my best moments."
"You didn't know, how could you?"

Ren's mind blanked out again. He felt bad of listening into their conversation, but he was curious and definitely of Gakushu old time friends. And he wanted to see or hear how 'Iggy' reacts to Gretel's personality.

"And I rather call it being possessive, you were jealous when you found out that we joined in Lucia and Ivan's games."

"I was not jealous." The male grumbled.

"Please, it was funny to see you being jealous over a coconut." Gretel teased and Ren couldn't help but have his mouth curved into a smile.

"I don't know why he even."

"Haven't you heard of reincarnation?"

"But really, Mr Coconut?"

"Who knows~ Maybe in his first life, he was a lonely boy who eventually made a friend with a coconut. Like Wilson from Cast Away." Gretel teased, Ren half-expected to do her voice impressions of Tom Hanks right there.

"Why are we talking about this? In front of him."

"Simple, because this is not work related."

And Ren finally fallen asleep.

"Finally, we're here!" Gretel yelled, as she walked out from the train and following behind her was the boys. Noct was still sleeping, so he was riding on Iggy's back.

Gakushu still in a daze followed along, behind him was Ren and all of their luggage. "I knew I should had brought a neck pillow, my neck is killing me." Gakushu muttered to himself as he rubbed the back of his sore neck. He woke up two hours earlier and spent the rest of the time talking about music and sweets.

Ren couldn't believe that Noct actually slept through the entire train ride and he was still sleeping soundly, he knew that the male liked to sleep after learning bits and pieces of the character from the school visit. 'But this is ridiculous…'

'How many hours does he need?' Ren thought.

He watched at the older and taller male, carrying the boy on his back walked off to the side and to where a gathering of La Morton students huddle together. Ren could see that everyone was getting checked off, as soon presumably the two were signed off, they walked back to Gretel, Gakushu and Ren.

"I'm assuming that I have no choice of the matter." The taller male sighed and Gretel pouted.

"Iggy-kun, it has been months since we are all like this together. And Gakushu wants to catch up with Noct." Although they already did that with last night's shift but that was beside the point. "Right my Strawberry?"
"Yes." Gakushu nodded as they all walked out of the station.

"I prefer you calling me in my actual name. You have done it before."

"Stop being like the Strawberry when Ikeda calls him Shu, he was just being selective."

"Hey." Gakushu called out however Gretel walked off.

"Okay, let's have that Korean BBQ." Noct mumbled, his eyes still closed, "I'm going to skip the kimchi."

Ignis sighed and yet he held a soft smile, "You can walk there, you have been sleeping for almost the entire of the train ride."

"But it smells nice here…" Noct sleepily muttered.

"What…?" Ren blankly stared at the pair, how on Earth was he supposed to react to that? He turned to Gakushu and hoped to mimic his expression, however Gakushu offered a smile and a pat on Iggy's shoulders.

"I'm sorry but the ship has sailed, if anything it left the port decades ago." Gakushu spoke with a cheek, smiling of how pink the male's pink was becoming.

"Quiet, you are going to make Gretel more serious."

"This is Gretel we are talking about."

"I will go down with this ship!" Gretel yelled over from a distance.

"See." Gakushu worded with a smug smirked. 'It was good because it gets to distract her from finding out my feelings for Ren.' And Ren realised something as he watched the strange yet carefree interactions of Gakushu and his friends.

"What about our luggage?" Ren asked the blonde girl, she was currently speaking with the driver. He was wearing a camouflage opened hoodie white jeans, because of the hood Ren couldn't see the man's face. And Ren took note of the model of the blue car, it was a Jaguar XKR-S.

"Remember, it's the Hasetsu ryokan." And the car drove off, with all of their luggage, it was definitely not a taxi, so Ren assumed that it was a friend to Gretel.

"What luggage?" Gretel chirped as she turned back to Ren. He wanted to face-palm, somehow Gretel always gets her way and he knew that she would continue her game of matchmaking. She would get her way.

'That car looked familiar…' Gakushu thought as he watched the blue sports car going farer and farer. 'But I see a lot of sport cars, especially if they belong to Ikeda.'

"I'm quite famished, let's get some dinner."

It was a shocker for Ren to see that Johnny was working at said restaurant. Johnny merely explained that the company he was working for, the same one controlling the management of the café back in Kungigaoko town said that staff was running low in the Hasetsu area. And then he finally met the infamous Prom, and by infamous he met the mentions of names and how he made Johnny jealous.

The male had wild sunny blonde hair and with the biggest smile etched on his face. "Welcome, hi.
Shu– It had been months” He waved to the group.

"Shu, you got yourself a new haircut!” He stood close and in front of the strawberry blonde boy and cupped his face with his hands. He closer looked at Gakushu's face, while the Gretel and Ren were jealous that the man could touch Gakushu’s soft pudding-like cheeks. "You look freer than the last time I saw you. Keep that look!"

Gakushu widely smiled as he tried to pull away from his grip, however it only shifted the hands to that strawberry mop and it soon being ruffled. "Hey come on! Stop it!" Although his actions contradict his words, or in this case his carefree laughter.

Finally after a solid minute, he was free from Prom's hand and the man took a step back to observe his work. "Ikeda was right, are you sure that Ivan isn't related to you?” And he was right, his hair was like the Russian's curly and bouncy hair. "I'm more likely to believe that you're Gakushu Ivanov than Gakushu Asano, unless you want to be Gakushu Freeman then you have to have your hair slinked back."

Gakushu frowned as he started to neaten and flatten his hair, "I know that you two are friends but we do not speak of his name."

"Right, right.” The worker gave him a toothy grin. Gakushu turned around and saw that Gretel already chosen the table with the rest of the males seated. Gretel already did the orders, the meats came to the table fairly quickly and the cooking commenced.

Some sides came to the table, the usual however one wasn't digging into his meal.

"You got to eat your vegetables.” Ignis noted. Noct looked to him and pulled the most adorable puppy dog eyes his blue eyes could muster, some might consider to be on league with Gakushu's.

Ignis looked back with a serious look, looking as if he wasn't going to be affect by the power of cuteness. Noct finally give up, as he stabbed a cherry tomato and harshly popped it into his mouth. Ren could even see a tiny tear forming around his blue eye.

"There, happy?"

Gretel and Gakushu clapped and smiled. Like he was five. Ren spotted at the corner, the two blonde males were chanting and taking photos. Ren wasn't even bothered by this anymore, and the antics were obviously light-hearted so it was difficult not to smile along.

"Not until you finished the entire salad.” The British man added.

The look of dread on Noct's face was humorous and endearingly adorable as he nibbled his lettuce. Ren could see why Gakushu would spoon-feed him, although it didn't helped his heart. But still, Ren was going to miss these types of antics once he goes home when all of this is all over.

"I promise that I will take you out for dessert.” Ignis said.

"Take me too.” Gakushu joined in, of course. He could barely hold in his sparkles.

"Gakushu-kun, Noct-kun. Did you remember of how you two met?” Gretel mentioned with a smile.

"I could never forget the smell of burnt caramel.” Gakushu mused. Ignis rose a brow.

"Hey!” Noct puffed his checks that started to turn red.
"What a story that I have to tell?" Gakushu spoke to no-one in particular with a smile, clearly teasing the black haired boy.

"I was going to one of the kitchens in the facility." Ren assumed that Gakushu was talking about La Morton. "I was going to bake a cake, and then I was met with a flour-covered boy and a pot of fire."

"Okay, we got the picture. Sorry that I don't have the skills of a great cook." Noct lashed out, his face furiously burns from embarrassment.

"Gakushu's first friend!" Noct yelled, immediately catching Ren's full attention snappily.

Ren pointed a finger to himself. "Yes you, who else could it be? Tell me that you too have bad cooking skills." Noct was getting desperate here, almost like how Rilliane felt for being mediocre in math and science.

"I live alone so I cook my meals as well, I think they are decent." Ren tried to answer nicely, knowing the feeling of not being good enough in some areas but it didn't stop from Noct drooping his head.

It was clear as day that there was a cloud of gloom hovering above him.

"Don't worry, it wasn't as bad as Karma's. I could still count yours as edible and you make great camp food." Gakushu joked before he turned whitely pale instantly as he turned his head around. "It was so bad, so bad that I cried in class. I thought that he had the blood of a true Englishman who was just learning how to cook. It was so foul."

"I take insult on that." Gretel puffed her cheeks.

'Oh yeah, she was from Britain.' Ren mused to himself.

"But you and Arthur lived in French in your younger years." Gakushu counted back as he eat more of his meat and rice.

Gretel still had a pout on her face. "You two are always close, such a shame that you were busy. With Belgium this year and the other year was Italy." She placed down her bowl on the table, resting her cheek with her hand as her arm was supported by the table.

"Of course, seeing that the two once dated."

Ren choked on his rice. Ignis' chopsticks snapped in his hands. The area around them was quiet and all of the boys stared blankly at her.

"What? I know that Ren-kun didn't know for oblivious reasons, but really Iggy-kun?"

"When was this?" Ignis almost stuttered as he pushed back his glasses. Gakushu shrink into his seat and Noct looked to the side, whistling.

"Last year, just before Christmas." Noct simply answered.

And Ren was out of the country for America that time, and the other times of school holidays. If he could even recall, the time he remembered spending time for his school's exam won trip was when Gakushu brought back a huge bag of candy to their room. Regret filled his stomach, knowing that he missed the best events to spend time with Gakushu Asano.

"It was an experiment, so we didn't have an actual boyfriend and boyfriend relationship." Noct
nervously chuckled, "We just went to Disneyland and cafes together." The look on Ignis' face was humorous for a certain blonde haired girl.

All the boys knew what exactly she was thinking. "So we have conclude that they were gay." Gretel sang.

"You don't have to put it that way." Gakushu sharply retorted, and Gretel raised her eyebrows in question.

"You agreed to it, the both of you did at the end conclusion."

"But." Gakushu subtlety gestured to a certain human.

'Oh…'

Ren caught this fairly easily and knew what the boy's fear were currently. And he knew what to say to ease those fears. 'But I wish he could trust me a bit more…'

"Gakushu, remember what I said…" Ren asked the boy, when the boy gave out an unsure expression, Ren faintly smiled. "You are still you, no matter what."

'This is all too familiar, when my sister was afraid for who she was.' And Ren hated this feeling.

Gakushu gave a hopeful look to the brunet. "It doesn't matter if you are in Class-E, A or C. If you're homosexual or not. It doesn't matter because Gakushu is still Gakushu." Ren continued his speech.

'Why when you smile, you look just like her.' His hazel brown eyes hover around Gakushu mouth that was slowly forming a smile. He wasn't talking about Gretel.

Gakushu sighed in relief and resumed back to shyly eat his meat, and the rest resumed eating.

"Thanks Ren." Gakushu whispered and Ren's heart skipped a bit, as he almost dropped his chopsticks.

"You are my friend."

"I know." Gakushu giggled and the atmosphere became 10 times lighter and happier.

'You're good Gretel, you're good.' Ren was holding onto the urge to grit his teeth as Gretel cheekily smiled his way. She was already setting the platform, and she just added the final bolt.

It was clear to them that Ren and Gakushu were compatible, in a sexuality sense at least.

"Today's dessert is a lemon Myrtle soufflé glace, with milk tea made with uva tea leaves." A familiar female voice spoke as she placed down the order on the table. The table where Ren decided to sit alone at and ordering the surprise dessert of the week.

Ren knew this voice, he heard it whenever he went to Gakushu's favourite café and he turned to the waitress.

She wore a standard café uniform, a black waist apron above her short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey pencil-skirt that highlighted her hips and well-tended black low-level heels. Her hair was jet black and her eyes were dark. Her hair was tied in a mid-ponytail with its ends curled which gave it its appearance of bounciness, her fringe covered her forehead and swayed to the right with curliness.
"… Why are you here?" Ren asked shyly, she flashed back to him a gentle smile and a nod. Of course, An was here, the girl of grace as her informal nickname goes. "I got the short end of the stick, so I had to fill in temporary spots until the others are well-trained."

Ren assumed that the café An and Gakushu's other friends are in the same company as this café. He has been doing a lot of assuming lately…

"You didn't want to go ice-skating?" An asked, she placed her tray underneath one arm.

"…" Ren did, in fact he was well-prepared for it until he saw Noct skate alongside with Gakushu effortlessly. Noct asked about the routine and Gakushu simply told him the steps, then the two danced on the ice. Everything that he had been practicing, Noct did it on his first try while Ren was still perfecting even when Gakushu long after perfected it.

And then came the unsureness in Ren, kicked into full gear. 'So this how that person felt…'

And when the two decided to go through a new routine devised by Vella and North's story. Ren suddenly remembered of yesterday's conversation that he eavesdropped, about a script. Ren felt his heart was stolen as he watched Gakushu Asano danced.

Ignis and Gretel took turns as they read. "Long before the land is what it was, two gods walked hand and hand in the empty lands.

As lonely as they were as they only had each other, so lonely that one's tears formed the sea while the other's stomps shaped the mountains.

The wind they blew created the birds, the waters they splashed created the fishes.

The earth they played formed the creatures of land, and the fires they burned gifted the world with creatures of the flame. As they gave birth to pain, they also gave the world its warmth.

They were the ones who gave the land its life, the flowers, the trees, the lakes and so on.

Then the two gods formed another creation, to rid them of their loneliness and so they created beings now known as humans. In the gods' image, they moulded the body with earth and water.

And soon came their final masterpiece, a body to live long side and amongst their creations.

And so the two gods were reborn, into the bodies of ordinary humans. In hopes of living a life, not one with loneliness.

In their first life, they create a role that will pass on to the next, the messenger of the gods, the Oracle. Chosen by the stars as they said. The one who will speak with the gods, to carry out the words of the gods and cleanse the world."

The footwork the two had was breathtaking, as it glided and slide on the ground, as Gakushu and Noct danced in perfect unison. The way Gakushu lifted his arms up gracefully, his head titled down as if he was holding an offering. Alongside him, Noct was mirroring his movement to the point. "And so the Oracle created a set of weapons, gifted them to the gods."

And the music that played fitted perfectly to their movement, the stings, the wind and the percussions clashed in harmony.

Gakushu looked even more beautiful as he closed his eyes. He was clearly enjoying himself, even though he wasn't smiling, his face felt more relaxed.
"The now human gods were amazed by the beauty of their weapons." Ignis soothingly spoke. Gakushu and Noct did the same movements as the last line, but this time with one arm. "And so the two gods gifted the young messenger, giving the one companions of power."

"Of ice and fire, of wind and thunder, who shou the three bless the powers to?"

"Then one day, the Oracle died, their role will be passed onto the one fittest and needed most, passed onto the perfect vessel." Gakushu shifted into the third position, Noct followed a suit.

"As the gods' body rotted away, they will be born a number of times. And soon the Oracle will come in aid when called for."

"What kind of life would that person lead?"

Gakushu kneeled the ground, where Noct stood as their backs faced each other.

North and Vella clapped happily and furiously, thanking the group as they helped on finalising and polishing their routine. As Gakushu gave the Swedish pair some pointers, Gretel commented of the pair just mainly improvised and danced on instinct on the spot.

North thanked the pair for coming up the routine. Ren decided to leave the place.

Basically, he felt inferior like Rilliane's inferior complex when exams on the subjects not to be named came around. He was never that great in physically education, he was barely living after each practice session as Chocolat.

Sure he was great in other academic skills, like science and math, but he was also in the idol band Candy Fest.

"I don't want to talk about it." Ren solemnly answered, his head slightly drooped down. An propped the tray back onto the table and took a seat in front of the hazel haired boy. This trip barely started and he was starting to learn more about himself that he hates to admit about himself.

And he wasn't even sure that it was supposed to be doing that, he knew that jealously would come because of Gretel wanting to be master matchmaker, she was doing a great job, but he was sure that she didn't want to implant unsureness in him.

"Shouldn't you be working?" Ren didn't mean to come off as rude but An knew this.

"Café is not that busy, and half the time we work as a psychologist. The manager was thinking of getting a chaise longue for the lounge area." An teased, something about her makes Ren wanted to let out his feelings. She reminded the boy too much of a person he knew long ago. "And I studied a bachelor of psychology, in Melbourne."

'I completed it after I became a full-fledge reaper.'

"And yet you're here, as a waitress." Ren looked to her with confusion.

"Barista." The Australia female corrected, she waved her finger to emphasize her point. "I went to HG Coffee School Barista Course in homeland Adelaide. I can make a killer coffee, I decided I need to explore my worldview so here I am."

"I'm thinking of living in Japan and land myself a job as a psychologist, but if not then I can make coffee. Win-win, although I have to avoid tapping into Rin's caffeine addiction." An pondered to herself as she crossed her arms.
Now that Ren looked more closely at An, he noticed some resemblance from a photo, from a report he read one time he travelled to Australia. It was on an anniversary on something, he merely shrugged it as a coincidence.

"So, what's up with you?" An asked.

"… I'm sure that it just dumb for you." Ren meekly said.

An unwrapped her arms, she placed her elbows on the table and with that rested her chin with both of her hands. "… It's relationship problems, isn't it?"

'Bullseyes!' His eyes widened slightly and An knew she was on target. What was up with Gakushu's friends having heightened senses?!

"You got me there." Ren let out a defeated sigh, it reminded him of Avery's sixth sense. Actually a lot of female figures in his life… actually probably two only have that motherly vibe. Someone who knew what was happening with no problems.

"So, any lady problems? It could be guy problems too, I don't judge. James is gay." An quickly reassured.

"It's nothing romantic." Ren tried to convinced himself, he prayed that An wasn't informed of Gretel's plans in matching him and Gakushu up. But knowing of her personality, there wasn't that much hope for him, but hey he could dream.

"So, friendship problems?"

Ren's eyes wandered to the side on the right. "Not really, I just felt… inferior." It didn't help that Noct went to La Morton, although Ren was considered to be a prodigy, he couldn't never forgot the face of Gakushu as he and Noct danced. "I know that I'm good at other things but… dancing or anything with PE was never my forte."

'I freaking was face-down in front of the entire school building!'

Ren explained what happened, when he watched Gakushu and Noct danced on the ice. "And I got into the group because, because I was Gakushu's friend." He admitted, now that he looked back to the restaurant scene. "And then you got Noct, the singer, the prince of the night. Who has a voice for an angel and could dance with no problems."

"And then there is me. Good at everything else but dancing and it is the most important thing right now." He let out another pain filled sigh, and he stabbed his dessert with his fork with a frown.

Silence filled the area around them, and when Ren couldn't stand the silence longer, he finally looked up to mete with her dark eyes. When Ren looked up see An again, he was surprised by a faint smile she had. "You're a bit similar to Rin."

'…Really?' He looked back in his mind to the pink haired woman.

"She isn't the best on math or science, the exams were a time to be feared. It didn't help that in Gakushu's main circle of friends that everyone has some scientific background." An explained. "For example, Lucia's husband Wolfgang is a scientist in forensics."

'Of course.' Ren long stopped being surprised of Gakushu's friends' occupations.

"Gretel is good at everything, Arthur likes to follow after her, Gakushu is well versed in science."
One way or another, she would end up banging her head on a table or wall, and sob in her room for days. But she tries her best, and you do too." She chuckled fondly.

'That sounds like someone I knew, just less comical with the head banging…' Ren mentally noted.

"I remembered when Gakushu came to talk of how your first performance on Saturday was amazing." She mused to herself.

"W-When was this?" Ren stuttered, he couldn't help but having his face warm.

"In his sleep on Tuesday night." An chirped. What she didn't tell was that she was visiting Gretel's house to talk with Ivan about a new mission and once again, almost the entire gang fell asleep on the living room couch.

"…" It was a reasonable response from the younger boy whose jaw was wide opened. She had to resist to use her hand to close that mouth.

"Let me tell you a simple story." An chuckled, as she flashed a gentle smile.

"I remember the day she and Gakushu met, Gakushu was very quiet then and not as expressive in his feelings when compared to now. And I remembered the moment when Gakushu saw me training in the gym, to say that he was entranced would had been an understatement."

"Soon, he started to follow me to see me perform like a duckling. A trait that will be sorrily messed." The mental thought of a younger Gakushu Asano following a young adult like An was adorable, Ren was just glad that he had no blood escaping from his nose. "And he overcame his father when you became his friend."

Ren never knew how big of an impact he was to the strawberry blonde boy, never to this extent and being told by a person Gakushu knew for four years was a strange feeling for him.

"He was a bright boy but, something felt off about him. So many concepts were so alien to him, many that we accept as normal. Hugs, tears, laughter, and even smiles."

"What happened then?" Ren curiously asked, asked of how they managed to change Gakushu. It wouldn't surprise him that his mask would had been fully integrated if not for the intervention of his friends. The mere thought made him a bit sad.

An had a graceful yet seriously vibe surrounding her, it gives her a sense of authority yet having a face of a kind angel. "We overwrote on his father's teachings, it took us four years though but we did the majors."

'Of course.' The sadness Ren felt earlier was quickly replaced with anger. A father who was as useless as his own, that was how he saw it.

Ren remembered the words that he once yelled at the man, "Why did you taught him that he shouldn't cry?" He never thought that the mere thought of his appearance would disgust him, but it did.

'Actually it wouldn't surprise me." He inwardly sneered.

"Why… why can't he act like an actual father?" Ren choked, from anger or sadness, he didn't know. He couldn't help but asked as he dropped his head. Sadly An didn't have a clear answer, nothing to calm his wrath.
"I know, we are all angry at Gakuhou Asano but nothing could have been done. He did nothing that
step out of the lines of legality." An solemnly spoke, there was a double meaning in her words. She
had lost hope that Gakuhou would act as a father and in a few decades or so, that notion would be
locked away for eternity. And he was the reason why Gakushu decided to walk the path of escape.

She thought that it would be a cruel joke that Gakuhou would live blissfully without knowing of the
damage he had done. An inside joke that she would have no problem taunting about to the man. Just
like how Ikeda taunted that his education system. Reapers love to be morbid as much as they love to
be vague, especially to those mundane.

"Isn't there any way to mend the bridge?" Ren hopefully asked, An sadly smiled back and shook her
head, shooting that idea down into pieces.

"Frankly, I think that bridge was forever close on the day the moment when Gakushu came to our
doors four years ago." And then what, giving Gakushu a sense of relief for a few decades? Although
it would have been nice if Gakuhou became the father he was meant to be, he was still only human.

"Gakuhou Asano had done too much damage that it would impossible to fix."

And Ren knew this, the moment Gakushu was transferred to Class-E, even he knew that the damage
had been done. He was sure that Gakushu felt like trash that was just thrown away.

Even if it was Gakushu's desire, to have his father act just like one, it was growing more distant by
the day and by the year. Everything he had done to please his father had no effect, he accepted that
as soon he completed the first part of his assignment in Class-E. He accepted his death after all, at
that moment he woke up when he never expected to again.

Gakushu left his father's home, not only for assignment reasons, he was slowly accepting this reality.
That maybe his father would never be a father, and forever instead as the Chairman. "So, it is best to
focus on the present instead. If you asked Gakushu about this, he would say that he dropped the
notion." As much his heart would disagree.

Ren felt dread from her words. 'No matter how many times he tries to please him, to do things that
how parents would praise him for so easily, Gakuhou didn't view his son as such.' Ren gritted his
teeth, returning his eyes to his lap. He told himself that something like this won't happen again in his
lifetime, as he already knew the pain.

"He has us instead, we became his family." And An was right, Gakushu's group of colourful friend
were his family, they were the ones Gakushu would turned to, he and the others for comfort. Gretel
was the older sister, Arthur was the older brother, and others would be aunts and uncles or cousins.
"And he has you."

Ren gripped his leg tight, it didn't matter if it came to the point where he would draw blood.

"Ren?"

"… Ren?" An's voice called Ren back and away from his thoughts.

He quickly snapped from his thoughts as he jolted his head upwards. "Oh! Sorry, I was just
thinking."

"Worrying for your friend?" An playfully teased, and the red shade returned to Ren's cheeks.

"Ren, have faith in yourself, Gakushu loves you." An continued her speech with her graceful smile
as she rose from her seat. "He loves you for who you are."
Ren felt that his face became warm again. 'She meant that in a friend way.' He tried to convinced himself. Soon An went back to do her shift, it left Ren to finish off his dessert and swimming in his thoughts.

"Ren, there you are." A voice called out from behind. The hazel haired boy pale, knowing whose voice it belonged too. He glanced back behind his shoulder and stood was Gakushu. "You left…"

"Sorry, I got excited and I wanted to try out the desserts." Ren lied as he shakenly scratched the back of his head and chuckled, that was definitely not why he left the ice-rink. Gakushu looked that he didn't brought into the story, but if he did then he didn't say anything about it.

Ren hoped that Gakushu didn't help the conversation. Instead, he prompted to that the seat in front of him and looked through the small menu booklet. "What should I get?"

"… Aren't you an expert in this?" Ren asked with a blank look and Gakushu returned an annoyed expression.

"What? Because I'm a prodigy in everything." Gakushu spatted out and Ren kicked himself for a wrong answer.

"Because of your obsessions with sweets." A new voice called out, a new waitress came into play.

"I do not." Gakushu sharply replied back.

"It is true." Ren agreed with the new waitress. Gakushu knew her to be a girl who looked 14 from the Australian Branch named Theo who only had two years of experience. She had long black hair was kept in a bun. Before the cinnamon roll could utter another word, Theo set a plate of strawberry shortcake with extra strawberries.

"The bill will be added to your account."

"You win this round." Gakushu muttered, drooping his head down to hide his reddening face as he munched onto his dessert. Ren felt a smile etching on his face with no problem.

"And here is a strawberry crazy shake." Theo added, adding one more to the table.

"Stop it!" And Ren started to laugh.

"Ren! Stop laughing!" Gakushu yelled to his friend who just couldn't stop.

"I'm sorry, you're just being adorable right now!" Ren was clutching onto his stomach, he rested his face on the table surface as he crouched over. Theo went back and took over counter duty meanwhile. Gakushu glared down at his friend as he waited for the laughter to die down, sadly that look couldn't never have an effect on Ren anymore.

"Okay, okay I'm sorry." Ren gave him a toothy grin as he offered his hands up as a sign of surrender.

"Hey Ren." Gakushu suddenly whispered out of nowhere, Ren was taken back but he pressed on.

"What is it Gakushu?" He asked.

"You know, you're a bit like Rin." Gakushu spoke and that sentence sent Ren's mind into haywire.

'Oh no, please tell me you didn't listened…'
"So please, have faith in yourself." Gakushu said, he had a bit of a blush in his cheeks.

'Yeap, he definitely knew.' Ren internally groaned, he felt his face going hot and bright red. "Sorry… I couldn't help it."

"It is as you said Ren, you are you, no matter what." Gakushu said, Ren looked back and he loved how those violet eyes looked to him strongly. He swore that Gretel somehow planned for this.

Ren chuckled. "I did say that."

"Ikeda." Gakushu bitterly spatted out while still maintaining a level of professionalism. He was walking back to the inn with the group when he encountered someone he was not happy to see.

"Hi Shu~." Ikeda waved his arms wildly, Gakushu want to look away from the embarrassment he felt, it was like Ikeda took over the role of over-protective and excited dad.

"Why are you here? And it's Gakushu for you." Gakushu was getting tired to correctly the light haired man, especially after four goddamn years.

"As your big brother." Ikeda playfully sang, it was a good thing that Gretel and Ren had some strawberry flavoured candy in their pockets, in case of the worse-case scenario.

"Cousin." Gakushu corrected again.

However Ikeda only shrugged him off, waving his hand away. "Details, details. Anyway I took the job as your bodyguard officially now."

Gakushu thought to any silver lining as he blocked out most of Ikeda's voice, 'Maybe An would keep him in check. Ikeda would always run off to An for pats on the head.' Ikeda was like a little kid who was begging for a mother's attention, that mother being An.

Gakushu cursed Ikeda for being able to smile like An in some rare situation, it made him less punchable. It was a good thing that Ikeda preferred his usual cheeky smile.

When the cinnamon roll gave Ikeda some attention again, the man said "-Although I prefer to be a part of the big brother job."

Gakushu then smirked. "So you were saying that you weren't my big brother from the first place?" He taunted, the urge to laugh at his face was just too tempting. Ikeda didn't look amused at all.

"I think you just admit that I was your big brother." Ikeda retorted and Gakushu glared back. Now it was Ikeda's turn to smirk, he looked at his phone before he swiftly placed it back to his pockets.

Ren had his hand readied for the candy, he knew that he couldn't get himself too involved or lecturing the two on fighting. It would hypocritical as he was the same with Jones.

"I can look after myself." Gakushu said, as he this time took out his phone when it rang with a ding.

"How rude, looking through your phone when I'm talking." Ikeda whined as the boy looked over his phone.

"You were doing it just earlier!" Gakushu yelled at the top of his lungs. If Ren had the best words to describe Gakushu and Ikeda's relationship, it was just like him and Jones. Okay, maybe Ikeda was better than Jones.
"I thought policeman don't do bodyguard work." Ren accidently joined in before he quickly covered his mouth. 'Shit, I just said the same as that man.'

Ikeda though looked casual, rather than hateful and disdain he used for the Chairman. "Don't sweat it kid, you were curious unlike the other guy that was taunting."

"We don't but I'm like a special snowflake, had time in special forces, secret service and sprinkle on that I went to a police academy in Australia." Ikeda had a smug face as he boasted. "I may not look like it, considering that I am young and handsome at that."

"But I have done a lot in ten years for myself." And Gakushu rolled his eyes.

"Okay, okay." Another familiar voice came along, it was An with a basket of toiletries. "No need to boast now Ikeda, I'm already happy~"

"An! Pat me! Pat me!" Ikeda cheered like a five year old as he ran to the black haired woman. "Praise me!" And that was the effect An has over Ikeda, just wait when you see when a male admirer attempts to confess to her. Ikeda would magically behind his main senior, looking smugly at the unfortunate victim.

With a face that says, 'I dare you, I fucking dare you.' He would then have his Death Scythe in hand, his electrical black baton and would be waving it up and down on his shoulder. And when her Korean junior be around, Tae-Sik just looked super grumpy and intimidating, warding people off.

Sadly for her, whenever she would turned around, Ikeda goes back to his usual smile and Tae-Sik just has a stoic face.

"Oh Ikeda." An sighed, but she had a smile on her face and she complied to his request. She started to pat him as if he were a dog. "How was your day?"

Noct and Ren were snickering, Ignis had a face of neutrality and Gretel was taking photos.

"Now that I think about it, you are the type of person who gets jealous a lot Iggy-kun." Gretel mentioned but the male scoffed at her words.

"I am no such thing."

"You were jealous of An because she convinced Noct to eat his carrots, by just cutting them into stars." She said, she knew that she gave the final blow when Ignis’ posture wavered ever so slightly.

"Hey!" Noct called out.

'Who knew that going to the hot springs makes one to tell stories?' Ren pondered as he looked back to the things he just learnt today. 'And we haven't even dipped into the baths yet.'

"You're such a kid." Gakushu sneered. Ikeda looked back with a pout on his face as he whined. He crouched and lowered his body to hug his senior in a special way.

"Shu Ivanov, you are not Kim Tae-sik." Ikeda then stuck out a tongue as he wrapped his arms around An, pressing his face on the side of her breast.

"It's Gakushu!" Gakushu yelled angrily, Ikeda did retain his child-like demeanour as he stuck his tongue out at the boy.

"An~, He's saying that he's not my baby brother!" Ikeda whined as he faked his tears.
An gently sighed, she had one hand going through his light coloured hair. She couldn't have his ribs be broken. "I know that Rin isn't here, but please do behave." An asked softly and Ikeda frigiously nodded as he unwrapped himself from the comfort of An's warm body.

At least she could ensure that Ikeda wouldn't steal any of Gakushu's sweets for today. "I will!" Ikeda sang and An smiled back, patting him once more.

"We are going to get some brotherly quality time, I say maybe an hour or so?" Ikeda sang as he wrapped his arm around Gakushu while the latter was struggling to shake it off. Ren hoped that the twitch on his mouth went missed.

"Got it, I'm sure there was a piano somewhere here." Noct said to himself, as he turned around and wandered off.

Gretel came and stood next to Ren, before wrapping his arm with her arms. "Ren, you got to hear Noct play." She started to pull the boy away as Ikeda and Gakushu walked further and further into the hallway and away from him.

"Please, you and your violin is like god-like Gretel." The black haired boy spoke up.

"How about we agree that you two are musical prodgies?" Ignis asked as they walked away.

Ren hoped that Ikeda wouldn't come back half dead as he did his best to listen into Noct's performance. 'And why are all of Gakushu's friend is somehow musically gifted?'

Ren was relieved in the next hour or so that the light haired man came back with no injuries, and after that Ren didn't know where the boy went. He returned to his room, the room being shared and for the night with Gretel, Gakushu, Noct and Ignis. He looked around and there was no-one, so he quickly went to his bag and took out several medicine. 'Maprotiline.'

'Moclobemide.' He took out one bottle and he took out another, 'Duloxetine.' He swiftly swallowed the pills with no problems, with help of some bottled water. He hid the capsules deeper back into his bag, in a secret pocket before he grabbed out a poetry book.

In time, Ikeda walked into the room and just saw Ren going through his war poems by Wilfred Owens. The light haired man whispered under his breathe, "Of course you would be fluent in English. You should since Shu was sulking whenever you left for America."

That perked the hazel haired boy's attention, he looked up to Ikeda's eyes with his own widened hazel coloured eyes.

"Isn't he lucky that he has me-" And then Ikeda's head jolted forward, as he let out a whine, Gakushu just stood behind him with an irritable look. He walked past Ikeda to his bag.

"I wasn't sulking." The Strawberry spatted out.

Ikeda looked down and scoffed, he spatted out with "And I was sad because you don't sulk when I go for work."

"Because I don't like you." Gakushu stated with a scowl. Although it only made him look adorable.

"But Shu~ I love you!" Ikeda loudly proclaimed as he faked the tears streaming down, Gakushu felt a twitch to his left eye.
"First it's Gakushu, and second eww."

"Oh Ren, go on ahead without me. I'm taking a bubble bath instead." Gakushu explained, in his arms as strawberry scented shampoo and a towel.

"Let me joined too!" Ikeda cheered. Ren almost choked on his saliva and Gakushu almost tripped over nothing.

Gakushu furiously blushed before he chucked his bag at Ikeda's face and dashed out of the room. Ren could hear his stomps echoing down the hall. Ikeda's face however didn't came into contact with the bag as he easily caught it with one hand. The image of Jones abruptly appeared in Ren's mind.

He tried to ease the awkwardness he was feeling with some water. Gretel then popped her head out of the door frame and then she walked into the room. "Doesn't Gakushu taking a bath with Noct?"

The spit take from Ren was glorious, he blankly stared at the two. "Ha?" The mental image of Gakushu and Noct sharing a tub entered his mind, the closeness they would had and how the dynamic of the relationship. The mental anguish was strong in this one.

"Noct has a bad habit of sleeping at any time, which also includes bath-time." Gretel explained but that didn't help to soothe the boy's thoughts.

"Don't worry, Mr Ignite will be there." Ikeda assured and waved the boy off, and that definitely didn't help at all.

And the thought of the almond haired fellow added to the scene acting like a butler with a Gakushu and Noct sharing a bathtub. 'You are making it worst.'

"Ren, you're looking a bit red." Gretel casually pointed out, before Ren could say a single word to dismiss her claims, Ikeda stepped in.

"Of course he would, he's an outsider. This is quite normal interactions between the two, like close-knit brothers. No sexual or romantic tones, it is easy to judge without context." Although that wasn't the reasoning Ren would expect from the light haired man.

"You speak as if you speak from experience." Gretel asked

"Because I am." Ikeda responded in a deadpanned manner. Ren chocked on his spit.

"How is Gakushu not fazed by this?" Ren remembered the rare moments that he did went on school trips with Gakushu, many which were hot springs however Gakushu wouldn't dip into the relaxing pools and preferred to shower instead. He assumed that he wasn't comfortable so how could Gakushu not bat an eyelid over this.

He hoped that a good dip into the springs would calm him down. This day just has been messing with his emotions too much, and he knew that Gretel was having a field-day.

Next time on Until the Day I'm forgiven.

"Fuck you Johnny! Fuck you!"

"Looks like they are fighting again…"

"Sorry I haven't introduced myself."
"Ikeda! Get back here!"

"It's not what you think!"

Chapter: Before they come
Short Story: Living in a lab

Chapter Summary

Viktor and Ikeda, it is a good thing (kinda) that Viktor is a reaper or else he would had died from exhaustion a long time again.

Chapter Gunpoint – Living in a lab

Ikeda walked down the halls of the Department, with a damaged camera and surveillance equipment in his arm. To say that he was shocked would had been an understatement, it was a good thing that they weren't discussing anything directly about the Department openly as per guidelines.

He wore an unbuttoned light blue shirt with a black top underneath. Matching this were some white jeans and a black leather belt, his light chestnut coloured hair slinked back on one side to some extent while the other was left to be wild and some curved that covered his forehead. He also wore a camouflage patterned backpack and black sunglasses. His casual yet stylish clothes, although he preferred his formal reaper uniform for looking more 'cool'.

And An had a guilty preference for those types of closes, also Ikeda liked them as well. Win-win.

As he walked, he greeted reapers from all sorts of branches; Canada, New Zealand, Iceland, Israel, Lithuania, Malta and Romania. As he walked, he heard news that the spy mission in Belgium, in Brussels was also completed, at least for the team sent.

That team being Noct, Ignis and Prom. It was good since it had been months since Gakushu and the others were able to talk to them directly and instead from coded text messages. If he remembered correctly, it was similar to the Noah Arc Circus a long while back or something like that. That and the demon problem.

It was a mess a few months back when hibernated demons waking up and not knowing that the rules were changed, Gakushu had to fight a high-powered one when he went to Tokyo in one of his school holidays. But that was a story for another day, basically teams were sent to locate and stay until the awaken one and inform of the situation. Noct was best for the job for his odd talent of soothing the disgusting beast with his dance and songs.

Not international news for obvious reasons, but something to work with since the overpopulation of reapers in the past couple of decades. Not as fun as going within the intelligence communities as Ikeda finds it if he was lucky. Not that it was going to be used to influence the world stage, just something to collect to make sure the Department was up to date and the information was useful for specialised dispatches in these types of communities.

Ikeda smirked to himself, of how the world would react that every one of the intelligence organisation and government has at least a Department member; The CIA, NSA, FBI, Secret Intelligence Service, FSB of the Russian Federation. You name it, every single one. Higher or lower ranks, death was looming in every corner.

"Hey Viktor! Mate~" Ikeda yelled, the automatic doors opened wide and it allowed 10 year experienced reaper to enter into the white room. In the middle of the room was Viktor, he sat in his
office chair and his legs rested on the table. "I got you something!"

"What? Isn't that just human technology?" The Bulgarian man asked in a tone bored, he dropped his legs of the table and he twisted his chair around. There was a lit cigarette in his mouth. "Just leave it out the crouch, I will deal with it in my sleep."

Ikeda let out a sigh for his sleep preferring to sleep in the lab area than in his own room, all because of the walking distance. 'Save time my ass, you practically live here.'

For some reason, Ikeda found it odd that Ritsu looked at the device with concern. Maybe the thought that it could had been her was the reason why.

"Yeap, but I found it spying on the cinnamon roll." The light haired man chirped, he spun the smashed up device on his finger as if it were a basketball. The urge to throw it at the Bulgarian scientist like an actual ball was strong but he managed to resist it.

That got the man's attention.

"You heard of the recent attacks lately? Just today, Shu got himself held at gunpoint in the middle of walking from school." Ikeda let out exaggerated sigh, "It is getting ridiculous and I don't know if he is getting targeted because of his father or the unlikelihood that these idiots thought that they could take on a Department member."

Ikeda looked back to Viktor and he did not liked what he saw, his cigarette was barely hanging off from his mouth. "Don't tell me that you didn't know?" Ikeda worryingly asked, judging from the shock in his scientist's eyes.

"Fuck Ikeda, this lab is basically where I sleep and eat." Viktor whispered.

'No shit.' Ikeda snorted as he thought to himself.

With only one hand, Viktor grabbed his cigarette and smashed it into a nearby ash tray while the other gripped onto his locks of messy black-blue hair. "I'm getting 1.5 hours of sleep on avenge here!"

"Fuck me sideways." It was Ikeda's turn to be mind-blown, he couldn't live without at least four to five hours of sleep. "Dude, it has been at least week."

"I haven't been out in the human world in decades, and this is your new dispatch area."

"You couldn't at least heard of it from the whispers?" Ikeda asked but Viktor shook his head.

"I got it, I will get to work." Viktor straightaway knew the seriousness of the situation, taking the device off from his friend's hand. "Did you report it to the Department yet?"

"I got the report ready, I just need leave this here first." Ikeda answered.

"Now, shoo shoo! I got work to do." Viktor waved him off, gaining full attention on the spy device as he turned his office chair around to his table.

"Hey computer girl, make sure he doesn't smoke seven boxes." Ikeda yelled over to Ritsu, the computer just beside to the scientist. "And get him to sleep on a reasonable time, just because he is immortal doesn't give him an excuse!" She nodded and Ikeda took his leave.

As soon his he walked out of the automatic turns, he popped his head out to the side as the doors
opened wide once more. "Don't make me have An come here to force you!"

"Keep your mother hen to yourself!" Viktor yelled back.

"And she's mine!" Ikeda smirked before finally leaving the Scientific Division's halls.

May the Class of End pray that the Department won't found out that it was them all along.
Short Story: His humour

Chapter Summary

Ikeda and more of his interactions with 4 persons, each are important to him.

His humour

"Hola~ Antonio!" Ikeda gleefully greeted his light tanned Spaniard friend, he had just finished his shift in his American dispatch and was just handed the booklet in the counter at the central building. "What's up?"

"Hey Ikeda." Antonio returned a greeting with a big sunny smile. "Zeus is being angry again." And he gestured to the taller and older male dressed in all black suite, with a matching tie and polished. In his arms were files and the other the infamous Death Scythe, the stylized pruner.

Zeus was a codename for William T. Spears that the two liked to use, because mainly his anger could match the thunder god of Ancient Greece at times. It was still a wonder to this day of how Gretel managed to gain a spot of 'daughter' in the man's heart. Anyone else who had received a stoic look, a glare or if you are really unlucky and named Grell Sutcliffe, extra paperwork duties.

'If Gretel is the guy's daughter, wouldn't that mean that Noct and Shu would be his sons as well?' Ikeda pondered to himself, he realised now why the two were always on better terms but he shrugged it off. 'I will still say that he is more related with Ivan.'

They continued to watch as William was chastising a certain red haired reaper who had miscategorise the files of the paperwork, again.

"Antonio, do you know why Zeus is angry?" The light haired man asked his curly brown haired friend with a smile. Antonio had a slight look of unsureness, he was sure that Ikeda had an idea of why William was beating down a red-cladded reaper.

"No, I believe that I don't. Maybe Grell messed up the paperwork, forcing him to go back and fix the work and he couldn't go eat with Gretel?" Antonio suggested. Even though it has happened many times in the past and the two assumed that this was another incident.

Ikeda blankly stared at him. "...That is quite specific."

"Because it had happened before." The other answered with a shrug, they really should had brought popcorn but they were saved when a bowl of popcorn was being passed around as the masses watched. Many waiting in lines to hand in their collection list felt lucky to get front row seats of what was going to happen next. Even Noct and Ignis was sharing the bowl.

"Well no." Ikeda corrected, Antonio was puzzled to why his 'Ikeda cheek' meter was radiating.

"It is because someone stole his thunder."

"Ayyyyyeeeee!!" Antonio smiled widely as he gave Ikeda the finger-gun and Ikeda followed back the gesture like good old mates.
"Get back to work!" William yelled over to the two.

Ikeda knew his next one was perfect from where he was walking to.

Ikeda was passing by the Technology Division and spotted Viktor doing the usual work. "Hey Viktor~ mate, I have a bit of a problem." He yelled over as the automatic doors opened wide and allow him to enter the white space of a room that smelt of ash.

"What Ikeda?" The Bulgarian spoke with disinterest, he went back to focus on developing new spy cameras. "I am busy." He didn't even spare a glance at the light haired man.

"Go asked your mother hen." Viktor waved him off. "Go make Johnny jealous or something like that."

'Pff, that is already on my to-do list.' Ikeda thought, as he pouted and walked closer to Viktor.

"But Viktor~" Ikeda whined as he shook Viktor's office chair back and forth. Finally Viktor, with a sign and a hand going through messy black-blue bed hair. Ikeda smiled wide when he got the man's attention.

"I have been reading a book about anti-gravity."

"And?" It perked the man's interest. Ikeda smiled, he let the silence grow as to let the suspense grow.

"And it was impossible to put down."

Viktor's chartreuse phosphorescent behind his circular glasses widened, then his thin frown morphed in a wide smile. He cracked out a chuckle as he took out his cigarette from his mouth. "Good one Ikeda, I got a math one just for you."

And so Ikeda, took a nearby chair and seat on it informally, with the back of the chair as his front. He was like a five year old child, waiting in excitement for his parent to tell him a bedtime stories. Extra points if you replaced Viktor with An.

"There was a boy shepherd and he had a magic talking dog." Viktor said, Ikeda tilted his head in confusion.

"How does that relate to math?" Ikeda asked and then he was blew smoke to his face. He coughed and stutter from surprised as Viktor continue to smoke his cigarette.

"Just let me continue." Viktor muttered. "He had a talking dog, so the shepherd asked the dog to go round up the 38 sheep. And so the dog did and he came back to the boy and said, I rounded them up and there are 40 sheep." He paused for the dramatic effect. "But the boy counted, but there are 38 sheep."

"And the dog said this, I rounded them up."

"OOOOOOOOOOHNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN!" Ikeda let out an 'o' sound and the two continued their science and math jokes for a good solid hour before Viktor had to go back to finishing his work.

Who will Ikeda talk with next?
"Oh Shu~"

And Gakushu internally groaned in pain.

"Have you heard?" Ikeda asked a certain strawberry blonde reaper who only wanted to just buy a drink by the vending machine.

"What Ikeda?" Gakushu muttered, not even sparing a glance at the reaper as he picked his drinks. "Make it quick, I want my dance practice before going out on shift."

"Come on Shu, I just wanted to ask." Ikeda whined and it made Gakushu's chartreuse phosphorescent eyes twitched with annoyance. "Isn't it great though? That I'm your legal guardian now, surprised that your shitty father didn't noticed." And Gakushu felt another twitch in his eye, the mere thought that this man was his guardian didn't sound right. He didn't know if he should feel better or not that his father didn't look on his papers as Gakushu did all of the work.

"It's Gakushu." The young boy corrected, his head started to feel pained. "And you are my... guardian when you are not out of the country for your dispatches." Why was there a bitter aftertaste when he said that?

'I still can't believe that the Department decided that he would be my legal guardian, his work is all over the place.' Gakushu mentally ranted as he pressed in the buttons on the vending machine for another drink. 'It could had been anyone else, Lucia or Ivan, Rilliane? There were dozens of better choices and the lot are stationed in Kunugigoako town. An, Van, James, Antonio but no. It just had to be goddamn Ikeda.'

"Details, details." Ikeda waved the boy off, Gakushu was very close of squashing the can in his hand but he didn't because he didn't want to waste the drink. But he needed to vent his anger somehow, Class-E had been getting on his nerves at the start of the school year. Especially some of the mischief of Karma Akabane that he had to clean after school, he could had spent that time with Ren who just came back from the States.

Gakushu killed five trees that stay out of sight. Starting the year off with the first of trees killed off was definitely not a good start.

"Anyway~ It's about the guy who got hit in the head with a can of soda-" And something collided to his face, it was cold and hard. And it really hurt, but at least he didn't felt anything fractured or broken.

"And he was lucky it was a soft drink." Gakushu said and he walked off, with a bag of soft drinks as he walked off down the halls of the Department.

Ikeda pouted as he rubbed his sore chin and watch Gakushu going further away. "Aww, he already knew the joke."

And Ikeda realised something, "Thanks Shu for the free drink!"

Thank god for Gakushu that Ikeda was mostly busy in Europe and America after the tournament. But that was a story for another day.

"An~" Ikeda sang as he rushed in to hug the Australian girl and hugging her from the side. "Pat me! Pat me!"

"Hello Ikeda." She greeted her junior with a gracefully and gentle smile as she patted him like an
overgrown puppy. Ikeda whines slightly as he nuzzled in closer in her hand, her fingers cards through his light-hair locks. Too bad that Johnny wasn't around to get jealous.

"… Why are you bruised here?" She pulled away, she cupped his face with her hands and inspected over the injury that was around his chin. She pulled out a small circular container from her chest pocket, popping it open and started to rub the ointment over the injury. It was the ointment Rilliane often uses, and he wasn't complaining.

"Oh that! Shu just threw a can at me." Ikeda said, if it was anyone else, they would be concerned of why he was sounding so joyous about it. But this was Ikeda.

"Did you steal his sweets again?" An asked, she giggled as Ikeda pouted.

"Nope, I think his temper got to him because the Department made me his legal guardian." He said as he gave out his two cents.

"Hey An, have you heard of the drug Medusa?" Ikeda asked his main senior, he didn't noticed of how the Australian girl slightly flinched as she looked to the light haired man with worry and concern.

"I heard it gets you stoned-" Before Ikeda could get his intended reaction or finish his speech, An yacked his head down, burying him in her chest as she started to cried.

"My Ikeda is being rebellious again!"

Funny story to tell, the last time was when he was viewing over Johnny's torso tattoos and seeing over the man's fashion sense. So the young boy applied fake tattoos, ripped clothes because he thought that she favoured these when he went with Gretel's recount of the crush-on-crush relationship between the two.

When An asked about his clothes, Ikeda explained that it was cool and trendy. Then An cried, sobbing her heart out about Ikeda being 'rebellious'. Her definition of rebellious behaviour was not acting as your true-self, such as for the class of Gakushu Asano acting like a cold leader than the cinnamon roll. And she was correct, Ikeda disliked the ripped clothes and he quickly went back to wearing his fitted and stylise European designer suits. That and he wanted to stop her from crying.

"I thought we went passed the stage." An smothered him, hugging him tightly and covering him in tears. Soon afterwards, as surprising from seeing her appearance, petite body with a gentle and graceful beauty was this strong that even Ikeda was struggling to pull away.

An was dragging Ikeda and running, as she ignored the numerous stares of the passing rangers, of a smaller woman dragging away a taller male. She entered the Ward, dashing towards the staffroom, knowing that one certain worker had finished his shift earlier. "Tae-sik! I need your help!"

"What is it?" The Korean man with dark-blue hair in a pompadour, he turned as An along with Ikeda crashed into the room as he was making his coffee.

"What does the drug Medusa do?" An demanded with tears gushing out in her reaper eyes.

'Please tell me that he knows the joke.' Ikeda asked the heavens.

"Medusa in an injectable drug and it enables the controlled delivery of non-denatured or non-modified drugs that remain fully active. It is used to develop Biobetters with potentially improved efficacy, reduced toxicity and enhanced patient compliance." The man explained.
‘…Shit.’ Ikeda didn't expect this to happen. He cursed the fact that although his Korean co-workers worked in the 'Ward', that it was still a part of the Medical Division. He didn't knew that the Medusa drug was an actual drug.

"Ikeda asked me about the drug and that it gets people stoned." An hastily in a panic explained to her other junior.

"I expected better of you." Kim Tae-sik gave a disapproving frown as he shook his head. An was sobbing uncontrollably, her Korean worker was patting her back as a means of comfort and providing her tissues.

"An…?" Ikeda worded, clearly not getting their attention.

"Ikeda, I know that we are reapers but you just can't use drugs for the sake of your safety." An turned back to Ikeda, gasping his hands.

"An?"

"Tell me Ikeda, who was the one who gave you the drug first?" An sobbingly demanded, her cheeks looked very soft and pink after all of her crying.

"An?!"

"It was Johnny wasn't it! My innocent Ikeda is now tainted!" An cried out, Kim Tae-sik looks like he was getting back into his Black Ops persona again. "First the tattoos and now drugs!"

"An!"

"What!"

Finally he had gotten attention over the two, he sighed as he pulled a handkerchief and started to wipe off the tears and snot from An. Now he felt that role reversed for a moment, as usually An was the mother hen of the group.

"It was a joke. Get it?"

"...

An and Kim Tae-sik slowly processed and went back to the joke.

"...

Medusa… Stoned…

"...

"Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh." An exclaimed and then she then turned bright red before burying her face in her hands. Kim Tae-sik face-palmed from misreading the situation.

Ikeda has to now make sure that he needs to first establish the joke before getting straight into it, An worries too much sometimes. But he admires her about that, that and because An immediately blames Johnny.
Chapter Summary

Needed the Iggy edition. Because you won't be seeing him or Noct after a certain amount of chapters. And he was fun to write.

Still having troubles on writing the main chapter though…

His love of Night

Back in the day before An vaguely recounted of being immersed as the process of transferring to a reaper's body occurred. Long before Gakuhou Asano changed into the man he was, or his grandparents were born.

This one woke up in the halls of the Department, in a room cladded in white and he himself was as well. And sat next to him at his bedside would be a young man with neatly trimmed golden blonde hair and piercing chartreuse phosphorescent eyes. His hair was a shade of almond blonde hair to which he liked to stylized it by neatly combing it back, and his eyes once shone bright of the rich green forest.

Ignis had always loved him. He could still pin-point the exact time, as he had loved him the moment he laid eyes on him. The day they met, they were only children with the age difference only being three years apart. He was his servant, his loyal knight who tended to his every needs.

Whose soft hair was as dark as the night, his eyes resembled the deep blue ocean and fitted for royalty by its colour alone. He came from a family of highest nobility, one of four sons and the youngest of six. The boy's name was Noctis.

Or to which he rather be called as Noct.

He was Noct’s only friend in his golden cage of a home, his father was quite protective of his youngest and fragile son. But he understood that the youngest boy needed a companion around his age.

Ignis came the lower pyramid of the social ranking, but he was academically gifted and this caught the father’s eye. And so he offered the family a sum and his parent happily accepted.

It left a bitter taste in Ignis' mouth, was he just cattle to his parents? To be sold like this? So, to ease his mind he thought of the advantages he was going to be presented. A stable home, daily food and masses of connections.

'At least there is a silver-lining to this.'

And he will used them to reach the top. He was then taught in the ways of the noble, on how to conduct himself to how to walk. He thought they were mere child's play. The moment he enters their doors, he knew that he was only going to be measly servant to the youngest child he has not met yet. To waste his talents on just to be a simple caretaker. Now that he looked back, he thought some things that he would now fiery and angrily disagree with.
When Ignis finally met him after completing his training, the first thing that popped into his head that he instead was looking at an angel. Noct was small, his pale skin was like fine-china porcelain, his blue big eyes were memorizing fitted with long eyelashes. The way he sat was strangely enticing, and his delicate features were most prominent, especially for Ignis' calculating eyes. His heart was robbed that day, when Noct said his first words to him.

He was seven, and Ignis was ten when they first met.

The first day on the job however could be least than desirable, Noct didn't ate his meal and every so often or every-time leaves his vegetables off to the side. When he did eat, it was hours later or into the night which leaves the young boy very tired in the day. It did irked Ignis, he could never leave such precious food be wasted but he wanted to understand the boy. So as usual, he carried the meals down the far hall to his bedroom, Noct every often has his meals at his bed.

Noct didn't touch his lunch but Ignis didn't leave, he looked around and observe the many instruments that decorated the room. He thought up a plan, "Young Master Noctis, do you play all of these?"

Noct's blue eyes slightly widened, this was the first time his servant or any servant asked him a question, nobody else dared to do so and yet, and Noct didn't mind. Noct nodded, "Yes, every one of them. My sister likes to describe myself as a canary." He explained. "Albeit a black canary, if such a type exist."

'A small bird that sings.' Ignis thought, he saw how it fitted with his young charge but he has yet to see him sing. "How about we make a deal, I will stay here as long as humanly possible and you play me a song. But you have to finish your meal." Ignis suggested, he twirled his finger around.

Although he didn't expected to get his answer immediately, "Yes!" Noct yelled over with excitement, he haven't felt something like this in a long time. Ignis felt a smile spreading on his face, proud even that it was he who made him smile like that.

It took him a week to discover that the young noble didn't want a servant when he asked Ignis to call him informally as Noct. He still did the presence of other servants and family members, however when they were just the two then Ignis would call him by his nickname. And so he became his friend and was gifted with a smile every time Noct would looked at his way. His heart fluttered each time.

His father or his family never had the time to spend with Noct, and so Ignis stayed with him until the night called them for sleep. The more time he spent with the younger boy, more of his love and desire grew.

And he almost lost his control in one incident. In the days when Noct was allowed to go to his mansion's gardens. Back before he coughed blood daily or his sickness took much of his energy to properly move.

"You, he carried by the songs as it sings.
Carrying a prayer, as you chant and as I dance.
Carrying yourself on an ancient path alongside.
On this day of emotions, our prayer was spoken.
As it;
Traveling along with the sea, as it grows."
Floating along with the wind, as it waits.

Amongst along with the snow, as it buries.

A soft fragrance in the breeze, the air of salt.

As you wished for flight, as you yourself once did into the free sky.

A day when spring comes again, together in arms under the wise tree. As the winters melts away.

That a hope of light would shone through the cage.

From light through the darkening beckoning of the clouds.

Tearing through the sky, reflecting the night.

Floating along with the wind, so that we could see again.

As clear as day, as blue as the summer skies.

May you be blessed by the wind, as this voice was.

And may our hearts become one....As it always has, since the dawn of time."

Noct sang so freely, gracefully and angelically as he projected his voice loud and sitting in his wheelchair. Ignis clapped, "Brilliant song as always, I wouldn't mind hearing that for all my life."

Noct blushed as he giggled and scratched the back of his head. "You can be such very cliché at times."

Ignis chuckled as he pushed the chair around the gardens. "I wish I could take you to the sea... Noct."

"Why's that?" Noct asked in a cheeky tone as he looked upwards.

"It seemed that you really wanted to go as you sing 'A song fragrance in the breeze, the air of salt.'" Ignis mused, Noct puffed his cheeks, the servant and friend loved when Noct acted like the child he supposed to be. He made it so endearing and so adorable.

"I never seen it though, even when I moved here from England, I was stuck in my room that bare no windows." Noct sulked.

"Maybe someday." Ignis said as he combed through his soft black locks with his hand. "Do you know of a legend of the sea?" Noct perked up and his eyes focused on green with anticipation.

Ignis coughed to clear his throat, and he began to sing.

"There is a tradition from a long time ago,

It is a legend passed on about the sea.

Write down a wish on a piece of paper and place it in a glass bottle.

If you let it flow along with the waves of the seas.

If you let it grow, if you let it drag away with the waters.
Then someday, one day that your wish will come true.

Float away my prayer, may you grow and prosper.

May the waves float away, may you go with the sea.

Into the far horizon as it disappears.

Quietly becoming with the waters.

The wishes that glass bottle held, may it one day be granted.

Float away is a little glass bottle, float away my wish.

To the ocean, to the sea, my wish to the waters.

When the sky is blue, to when the far red horizon stretches, to the night above.

May I wish you luck, the glass bottle containing my prayer.

That one day… that the heavens answer my prayer."

Even Ignis finished his song, Noct clapped with passion alit in his blue royal eyes. "Wow! That is very amazing!" He cheered as he clapped wildly. It was Ignis' turn to have a maddening blush.

"Thank you." He bowed to the other, "I only learnt from the best."

Noct smiled so widely, "If we ever go to a beach, we should do that…"

"What would you wish for then?"

"If I say what my wish is out loud, then it won't come true." Noct answered back cheekily and Ignis laughed along. Then Noct yawned, he lifted his arms upwards and he stretched.

"I will take you back to your room-"

"No, can I stay here? Even if it is just for a few minutes." Noct ordered and Ignis obliged, and he waited for five minutes. As quickly as he asked, he had fallen asleep as his breathe became even.

Ignis peered down at his friend and stared at those pink lips. Before he knew it, he leaned down and pecked those lips, they were soft. Quickly he snapped out as realisation sinks in before he quickly started to wheel Noct back into the mansion.

That day, Ignis took an extra cold bath.

However, their times of happiness together came to a stopping point. Noct's illness became worse, he couldn't go outside anymore, his legs easily bruised as his Noct shred tears of pain, Ignis hated to see him cry or be in pain.

"I am the canary in a golden cage Iggy… What is it to a bird who can't fly free into the blue sky?" Noct said as Ignis packed away the books. He cursed his older's sister's nickname for her younger brother.

Ignis saw his reasoning behind his deep blue ocean eyes, and understood why. They were just bones and skin with barely any muscle by now. Small, thin and donned with purple were his legs. He wanted to deny it but his words are true. He had a maturity that was embedded into him. An adult in
a child's body. The boy with deep blue eyes you so adored and a halo of black hair grew up too fast.

'Why must god be so cruel?'

It would be long before illness will take his last breathe, leaving him behind. And yet, Ignis told Noct not to lose hope and was met with solemn blue eyes and a sad smile. Noct wanted to say more it seemed, but the almond blonde didn't pressure him on. It broke the older boy by three years' heart, he could tell from Noct's mere expression that he given up hope.

Ignis said goodnight as he tugged him to bed, then Noct tugged at his sleeves, "I love you."

Ignis felt a blade going through his heart, the way Noct said it sounded so platonic while his own feelings were more passionate. But he kept face, as he loved how those words rolled off his friend's tongue and it should be more than enough for him.

"And I love you more." Ignis answered back, he kissed his forehead and left for his quarters.

And then, his next morning was painted with red. Noct laid dead in his bed by a gunshot wound to the head. It was concluded by an investigation that Noct tried to escape, but due to the conditions of his legs he wasn't able to and he was shot at close range. He was then moved back to his bed and the weapon gone, along with many precious valuables in his room.

The mastermind was captured, that senile old jealous bastard of a nobleman who was envious over the family's wealth and connections to the royal family of England. He was the one who hired the robbers, all but one was arrested and it just happened the last one had direct connections with his death.

Ignis lost his love and his purpose. He stayed here for so long, after his family sold him because of Noct. Everything he wished when he was poor came true because of that boy. So he ran away.

There was nothing left in that house, the golden cage, everything in that house would had reminded of Noct in some shape and form. Even then, everything made Ignis thought about his friend. He travelled endlessly across the country of Prussia, he studied long and hard for some sort of purpose, nothing.

Before he left that golden cage, he found one item that made him cry for endless nights.

A glass bottle with a written note, with a memento of a musical note hair pin inside. He never dared opened it, so he went to the sea and did what Noct would had wanted to do. He remembered books of fishes Noct kept and would beg Ignis to read for him, saying that his voice was beautiful.

'No, your voice was the most beautiful…'

He wondered in the next life, if they be together, that Noct would just be a fisherman, free from the burdens of nobility and of his illness.

'That would be nice…'

After 30 years of aimless wandering, Ignis finally decided to follow after Noct. No matter what he did, nothing could fill the void in his heart and soul. And so he took his life away by the noose, he died with a smile… just as his love did.

That was strange when he thought about it.
Ignis sat in his room in the Department, the time at least for him was the dead of night and he was checking through some recipe book to test on. As much as he found Noct's disdain for vegetables, as he likes if Noct acted like a child for the childhood that was robbed of him, he still need to eat his good damn vegetables.

It was proven to be a mighty challenge for the cook-in-training, he barely convinced the boy to eat mushrooms, but at least they are progressing.

And suddenly he heard screams. Ignis rose from his seat and walked to the door, and he waited until his front door was being pounded upon.

"Knock, knock, knock!"

Ignis quickly opened the door, before he could take a glance, a figure smaller than him rushed in and hugged him. It was draped with a blanket over its head, underneath were black sleepwear. A thing black shirt with a hood and black shorts. And a pillow dropped on the floor.

"Hey Iggy…" It was Noct.

Ignis pulled away carefully, he leaned slight to meet red-shot eyes behind those glasses. He could easily see tears trails across his red cheeks. "Nightmare?" Ignis asked and Noct nodded as he welcomed him into his room.

"Gretel is off on a spy mission…" Noct explained. "So… can I stay here? Just for tonight…"

"I see." Ignis felt some possessiveness bursting, he kept to his calm persona. "I'm almost hurt, why do you prefer Gretel over me." He lightly teased, to which he immediately regretted as hurt washed over Noct's tearful eyes.

"My apologies, I went over line-"

"It's fine." Noct quickly said as he ferociously shook his head, he picked up his pillow. "You were hurt, I understand that."

"I made you feel that you weren't important." His voice was barely a whisper, he clutched his pillow tightly, and he really wanted to bury his face in the pillow. "You're not, you're more than that."

'So much more.' Noct swore that his face was red, he slapped himself for even thinking such a thing.

"It's just… she lets me sleep together…"

"…"

'… oh bollocks.‘

Ignis swore that somehow Gretel was involved with this. Even though he knew that she couldn't bear to see her beloved junior cry, he had a feeling that she set this up. It wasn't his fault that she just so happened to be the matchmaker master. Nor was it when she found out that he had feelings for Noct since the ends of time.

"I-I'm sorry for asking!" Noct stuttered which broke Ignis' thoughts. He walked his way to the couch. "I can take the couch-" Then Ignis reached over to grab his wrist.

"It's fine. I'm just not sure if I'm the right person you want." Ignis explained, he hoped that there wasn't a blush on his face as he let out of the wrist. "I'm not exactly good at this."
"If I go asked William, Grell will be at it for months." Noct said, "And I can't ask Arthur because he was with Gretel as well."

"And you're the only one left that I can trust." Noct said as he looked up to his friend, with a red face but also non-wavering eyes. Ignis could never refuse such a request, especially with those eyes looking at him like that.

"Okay, but let me changed in my sleepwear first." And he did, he kept calm although his heart felt like ripping out of his chest. Changed into more suitable clothing, he went into bed side by side as he turned off all the lights.

"Apologises if I do something wrong." Ignis said and Noct suddenly clasped his hand.

"Iggy." Ignis thanked the darkness that it was hiding his redden ears from the mere mention of his nickname and their hands connected.. "We take baths together."

"Correction, you take a bath and I act as a butler… This is different." Ignis stated. "I'm not exactly good with this hugging and cuddling thing." He seen it for himself with Gretel and Noct.

He wasn't sure that he would control his urge if this continued further.

"I trust you." Noct said. Ignis made his body act on compromise, this was more than enough.

'And why does that sound like it has double meaning?'

That night, all thoughts of nightmares were erased from the two minds and they slept a dreamless night in each other arms. Noct happy that his knight slashed the nightmares away and Ignis happy that he had his love in his arm.

Although, Ignis wasn't happy to found out Gretel had took photos of this. He knew that girl was onto him and yet he found it unsettling that she hadn't made any obvious moves.

"You be there by the time I wake up?" Noct asked, before sleep will come to claim the two.

"Always."

But he wondered to this day, what did Noct wrote for his prayer?

Sneak peak for the next chapter; Before they come.

Johnny shouted back his taunts, An scowled at the dirty haired blonde man with slightly tanned skin who had a slight blush across his face, it was a wonder that she hadn't thrown the tray in her hands dead straight at his face.

Or was that something Ren and Jones would do… probably that.

Ren wasn't sure if he should interfere, he glanced to the side as Gakushu watched and nimble on his toast coated in strawberry jam without too much concern. He looked over to the others who occasionally spare a glance and nothing more. Then again, this was all too common. Although it felt different without the banter of the other café occupants back in Kunugigaoka town.

Who knew that a bowl of popcorn makes all the difference?

Ten minutes go by and the two were still at it, it was probably thanks to their reaper vocals that were able to sustain from all the yelling. Poor Prom who was struggling to gather the two yellers' attention.
"You were fine with it! That is what we have done this for years now!" An screamed, she placed her hands on her hips.

"It is like you said Gretel, I'm surprised that they aren't an item yet." Ren said with surprise in his voice. He watched as the two bicker like an old married couple.

"You think it is healthy for a guy know that his best friend is bathing in the next fucking room!"

Ren choked on his coffee, 'What?' Actually what surprised him most was the fact that nobody bats an eyelid. Sure it had been said that Noct and Gakushu took baths together, with Ignis acting like the butler.

'…Was this a common thing in La Morton?'
Short Story: His Heart

Chapter Summary

Extra on what happened in Primary colours, and I wanted to write about 'Kara'.

His Heart

Today’s last lesson was physical education, and as usual Gakushu was thinking up ways to mask his reaper-influenced strength.

"We are going to do hand-to-hand combat." Karasuma stated.

Gakushu internally screamed. It took a lot out of him just not to slam his head onto and table and cry, but as usual he didn't because it would instantly break the table. He sneakily popped in a bon-bon candy, he almost spatted it out from the taste of it. It was strong, burning almost, musky and bitter.

'What the?!' He quickly took out his bag of bon-bon candy, he almost blanched from the contents. Gakushu accidently took Lucia's candy, whiskey flavoured bon-bon.

'… This day has gone bad to worse.'

He placed the bag back into his bag and went to sulk for the entirety of the lesson before physical education came rolling around. He sulked as he worked on the language of the day, Turkish. Finally PE came around, everyone was getting dressed in their gym clothes.

Gakushu wasn't looking forward to this, hopefully he could be alone again this time and work on his ice-skating routine. He didn't had much of a presence in class, and definitely when the class attempted to assassinate the 'alien teacher'. He wasn't sure how long it would last though, someone was bound to ask him for his help.

Gakushu let out a mental sigh when he stepped outside of the class building in his PE uniform. He did the usual, observed the surroundings and carved out scenarios and plans to maintain control on his strength. He looked around and he felt something off, it was coming from Karma and Rio.

The feeling of 'fucking Ikeda' was radiating from the red-head, not sure about Rio though. So Gakushu dubbed the feeling from Rio to be as 'when… something like Ikeda but not really Ikeda?'

Gakushu's mind clicked. 'Oh! When Ikeda is cheeky but bearable… An fan-boy Ikeda!

Karma had a glint in his eye, as he eyed at the girl Gakushu informally dubbed as beetle girl, aka Hinano Kurahashi. Gakushu felt a shiver gone down his spine, it was like whenever he saw Gretel when she was off on her matchmaking duties. Although it was could amusing to see Ignis or Johnny becoming jealous.

Gakushu had to correct the feeling from Karma, he was always a mixture of Gretel and Ikeda. 'Now he is Gretel-like.'

Karma had that smirk on his face as he was nudging to the girl who had short, wavy orange hair and olive-brown eyes.
"Karma, I have no chance. Did you not see Bitch-sensei?" She harshly whispered, although Gakushu could hear it loud and clear due to Gakushu's enhanced hearing.

"Bruh, you don't know unless you try." Karma whispered back, he sang each word.

"It's going to be fine." Rio joined in for support.

"Rio!" Kurashai gasped back.

"You still have a chance, Karasuma hadn't made a move yet on Bitch-sensei." Rio added. Gakushu still couldn't get used to call his blonde teacher such a nickname.

"Fine, fine. I will start. I want to see if this works, with or without you." Karma said and he turned to Karasuma. "Look into my eyes."

Gakushu didn't who what the devilish red-head was going to do, since going through a character analysis, it seemed that Karasuma as professional and a secretive person. But the exception to that rule was about Anna, he talked about her with no problems.

Actually, it was too easy to get him to talk about Anna. When Gakushu finally asked to do whatever he wants as long he stayed at school grounds after he finished his work early, Irina allowed him and Gakushu almost bolted the class. He wasn't going to risk his first kiss being stolen thank you very much!

During that time, as he was wondering if he should use the home-economics class for some baking. And then remember that he shouldn't because the last time he was bored out of his mind, he baked enough cakes and pastries for a bakery. He spotted Karasuma from an opened door of the staff room and the older man was marking some papers.

Insert some talk here such as, "Why are you here?" and "I finished work early." And eventually, Gakushu was sitting on the couch with a mug of hot chocolate and Karasuma having a conversation with the strawberry blonde student after the grading was completed.

Gakushu asked about government work, Karasuma would answer 'classified'. Karasuma asked how it was going with Class-E, Gakushu would answer 'fine, it's different but pleasant.' It went on for 10 minutes, Gakushu then asked about Korosensei's whereabouts and Karasuma let out a sigh as he sipped his coffee.

Karasuma thought that Gakushu wouldn't noticed the grimace as he sipped his bitter black coffee. 'How did Anna do this? Australian coffee culture?'

Gakushu noticed, 'I feel you.'

"I have a vague idea, he is probably in Disneyland again. Wasting his money again, and going to complain about his wages."

'You should see Ikeda.' Gakushu thought. After knowing the man after four years, from taking Gakushu a shopping trip to the London's famous department store on Boxing day and convincing him not to buy a goddamn elephant. From eating out at Bottega Louie and buying a mountain of macaroons to staying out a five-star hotel in Dubai.

Nothing what Korosensei did could even complete or amount to Ikeda's spending habits. 'He just brought $84,000 belt buckle the other day. Although it was cute when he brought Noct a Heintzman Crystal piano that made Iggy jealous last year.' By the way, that piano made in Beijing cost $3.22 million dollars.
There was also the trend on Valentine's day concerning about An, Ikeda was sulking because Johnny stole the red roses 'spot' since day one so Ikeda had to settle with pink roses.' The kicker here was that Ikeda brought An Juliet roses, where a bloom cost $15.8 million dollars.

An had kept one flower encased in resin, Ikeda had a triumph smile for the whole day because he beat Johnny. She thought they were appreciation gifts and had to give the two the talk of how they didn't had to do such a thing. Never realising that the two were in fierce competition over her.

And Gakushu kicked himself for finding Ikeda adorable which translated into attractiveness. He cursed the light-haired man, he swore that he could even hear his laughter echoing.

'Hahahahahahahahaha!' Gakushu grumbled that went unnoticed as he sipped his sweet drink.

Finally Gakushu gave his teacher a movie suggestion all the way from Australia, 'Four stories, one end'. The month-worth information Karasuma missed out when he returned to Japan, it turns out the movie was accurate in accordance to those fateful four. Then the teacher started to talk about one of his childhood stories with Anna for a good solid hour.

Gakushu watched to see what Karma was going to do.

"So see this stop-watch." Karma continued and then he pulled out a golden pocket-watch before he started to swing it. Right, left, right, left.

The class and Gakushu at a distance watched.

Karma felt an evil laugh brewing inside of him, 'Oh the possibilities! Oh the wasabi!' But test first, he must test this to see if it actually worked.

"Hey Karasuma sensei! What is your most embarrassing moment in your childhood?" Karma asked with a devilish smile.

"Um, I wanted to marry my caretaker and I proposed to her when I was eight. She technically never turned me down, but I doubt that she took it seriously for obvious reasons when I look back."

Karasuma answered, he had a slight ting of pink on his pink.

'Success!' Karma mentally partied like there was no tomorrow. 'Holy wasabi! It actually worked!'

Gakushu tried to stop chuckling, he could just imagine that Karasuma made rings out of flowers and tin-foil for that very moment. 'An was right, Kara is just so adorable. Rilliane was right, he is dorkily adorable.'

"Awwwwwwwwwwww." The girls awed.

Before Gakushu knew it, the class goes and just sits down in a circle, and with devious smiles, they started to question him. Leaving the thought of PE behind.

'Thank the heavens!' Gakushu mentally cheered and thanking Karma, he could go now and finished off the remaining melon breads Nagisa brought him as he was off learning his Turkish. What it bad to think that he had a sudden carving for Turkish delights? '…. Nah.'

"Karasuma-sensei, what do you look like with your hair down? Rio asked and already was getting her phone readied. All the girls swooned when Karasuma let down his hair from its usual clean combed style. The fringe reached to his forehead and had a slight curliness to it to the right.

"Why don't you keep it!? It looks good!" Rinka yelled, she was almost foaming at the mouth. She
and every girl in Class-E was taking pictures of Karasuma and his new hairdo.

Many of the students thought that Karasuma's answer would be because it was unprofessional, it was messy and the usual stuff like Terasaka was thinking of.

"Because it makes me feel bad, it feels like I'm just copying Anna." Karasuma said, surprising the class.

Gakushu looked back from his book to the teacher, 'I could see it.' Karasuma's curly-like fringe has some resemblance to An's unique hair style. 'It even sways and curls to the right.'

Kurahashi asked with a blush on her face. "Karasuma-sensei, who is your type of woman?"

Karasuma had a massive blush on his face, and it made the girls go mad. Even Gakushu took a picture of it with his customised black smartphone. Nagisa was sitting there in bliss as he remembered the times of when Gakushu blushed like that. Karma was wondering of how Gakushu would look like with that blush. Gretel would had been proud with these two 'big brothers in the making.'

Okuda stepped in. "Let's go easy, what hair colour?"

"Black, like mine." Karasuma said as he pointed to his own hair. The males were almost awing of the childlike manners of their stern teacher.

'Irina is missing out.' The class but Gakushu's thoughts merged.

'That sounded like what An would say about her Kara.' Gakushu thought instead, and he had to stop himself from snickering. As he painfully remembered the things said those moments when he was forced into Lucia and Ivan's drinking games.

"Personality traits?" Megu asked with her arm shot up.

"The usual, kind, nice and all that stuff." The teacher answered diligently but much of the class groaned and moaned.

"Boring~" Karma whined, more of the class whined along with him and Gakushu rolled his eyes.

'He is more Gretel this time.'

"Come on, it doesn't have to be that deep." Kanzaki begged. The class but one begged the teacher to finally reveal his tastes.

Karasuma finally let out another sigh. "Graceful, like an angel. Although I don't have a choice in what type of clothes she would wear, but I like summer dresses with how it flows in the wind."

'… I'm sensing a pattern here.' Gakushu thought as he stopped reading his Turkish book and payed more attention to the ongoing interrogation once more.

"Body type." Okajima asked before he was slapped on the back of the head Okano.

"Petite, cute." Karasuma straightforwardly answered.

As Kurahashi happily beamed before turning into a blushing mess by the teasing of Karma and Rio. Nobody noticed of expression painted on a certain strawberry blonde boy.

"…" Gakushu blankly stared at his teacher with a gaped mouth.
"...."

'.... That is just An, that is literally just An!'

'Black hair, gracefulness, petite body, summer dresses. The fact that he had the, 'just like mine' saying!' He started to list as he connected more of the dots.

'Hell, he kind of, sort of copied her hair style!'

'Man, he never let go after 20 years.' And Gakushu couldn't talk anything bad about this as any other person usually would. That anyone were those who was not from the Department.

Since Ignis was the same as well and he couldn't love anyone else after 30 years when he was human. And Gretel was using that against him for her matchmaking schemes.

'Talk about devotion.' Gakushu stared at his teacher with widened violet eyes while the rest of the class continued the questions. 'I guess his heart never changed after 20 years...'

It reminded Gakushu of Ignis and Arthur committing their unforgivable each of each of their respective masters. Arthur took a sword and stabbed himself just to die alongside with Gretel. And there are many others, such as Lucia for her beloved Wolfie. It was not uncommon for these particular reasoning.

Gakushu also just realised that Irina and Kurahashi had a crush on the stotic dark-haired teacher, he felt sorry for them. He can tell that Karasuma was an 'Anna fanboy', the guy still kept photos of her in his wallet and mini photo album. He wouldn't even be surprised if he kept a shrine for her.

Karasuma still had the hand-made teddy bear Anna made for him, and in good mint condition his hunch was correct, Karasuma will never marry because nobody can matched to An, aka Anna.

And Irina sneezed as she marked the grades.
Before they come

Chapter Summary

An eventful day to say the least, Johnny and An continued fighting and Gakushu in a skirt. Nothing too usual... right?

Before they come

Breakfast was going smoothly, the group were at the café that was ran by Grim Reapers as per usual. Gakushu was digging into his meal of toast with extra strawberry jam and some fresh waffles on the side. Noct decided to have scones, with Prom's famous homemade jam and some cream. Gretel was sipping a Harrods' white Darjeeling blend, Ignis was having his fourth serving of black coffee and Arthur was enjoying his Assam black tea with added milk.

Ren decided to go for a pancakes dressed in Canadian shipped maple syrup, he never knew that pancakes could be so heavenly. So good that he almost cried tears of happiness, 'This must be what Gakushu experience whenever he eats his sweets. An is such a good cook.'

'She would make a good wife.' Ren concluded and Ikeda would had agreed with the hazel-brown haired male.

Ikeda meanwhile sat at the table next to them and he held the morning paper spread open, where titled at the first page was 'The Kungigaoko strangler kicks again!' At his table was a simple and beloved espresso made by barista An. Ikeda hadn't even made an attempting on snatching Gakushu's waffles.

Breakfast was going smoothly.

"Fuck you Johnny! Fuck you!"

"Well excuse me princess!"

"Looks like they are fighting again..." Noct said to himself as he, and the others watched An and Johnny fought once again. And it's only like what? 7:30 in the morning."

It was a good thing that they were the only serving customers in the café.

The two hadn't stopped bickering or at each other's throat after Johnny sparked the fight, to be honest right now, the group didn't even remembered clearly why the two were fighting about in the first place. It was probably because An ignoring Johnny in flavour to talking with Prom.

"What were they fighting now again?" Gakushu blankly look at the screaming pair before sipping his coffee overloaded with spoonfuls of sugar and cream. It shouldn't even be called coffee of how white it looked.

"Something about clothes, but I do agreed with An's guilty preferences for suits and dress shirts." Gretel shrugged as she sipped her tea. Arthur sat with the group and nodded to the blonde girl's words. He had some errands to run though once he finishes his scones.
'Have you even seen his uniform?' Arthur thought, Johnny's reaper uniform consisted of black ripped t-shirt, leather jacket and red jeans that are also ripped as if he was some kind of rock-star.

"Oh! And I have some new clothes I could like to test today." Gretel cheered.

If Gakushu wasn't paying attention on the ensuring quarrel, he would had paled and ran for the hills to hide a good hiding spot. However Noct heard of this comment, and next to him was Ignis and he pinched the sleeves of his friend's white dress-shirt. A notion that went unnoticed by everyone else but one.

Iggy here already knew what was on the boy's thought. "I know, I will protect you." Ignis whispered to Noct's ear. If Gakushu was test subject number one, then the test subject number two would definitely be Noct. It wasn't their fault that they had slender bodies like Gretel's.

Nor was it Noct's fault that he preferred this younger form, that and because he could never be that tall as his friend no matter what age. So much for that one romantic wish he wanted to do, he wondered how Gretel would help him out on this. She did say that she was looking into it. He finally admitted it to Gretel this year, the one thing that clicked with her matchmaker persona, and it was quite fun to see the man jealous.

Johnny shouted back his taunts, An scowled at the dirty haired blonde man with slightly tanned skin who had a slight blush across his face, it was a wonder that she hadn't thrown the tray in her hands dead straight at his face.

Or was that something Ren and Jones would do… 'Probably that.'

Ren wasn't sure if he should interfere, he glanced to the side as Gakushu watched and nimble on his toast coated in strawberry jam without too much concern. He looked over to the others who occasionally spare a glance to the pair and nothing more. Then again, this was all too common as it seemed. Although it felt different without the banter of the other café occupants back in Kunugigaoka town.

Who knew that a bowl of popcorn makes all the difference?

Ten minutes went by and the two were still at it, it was probably thanks to their reaper vocals that were able to sustain from all the yelling. Poor Prom who was struggling to gather the two yellers' attention. Poor guy was trying to be the peacekeeper.

"You were fine with it! That is what we have done this for years now!" An screamed, she placed her hands on her hips.

"It is like you said Gretel, I'm surprised that they aren't an item yet." Ren said with surprise in his voice. He watched as the two bicker like an old married couple.

"You think it is healthy for a guy know that his best friend is bathing in the next fucking room!"

Ren choked on his coffee, 'What?' Actually what surprised him most was the fact that nobody bats an eyelid. Sure it had been said that Noct and Gakushu took baths together, with Ignis acting like the butler.

'…Was this a common thing in La Morton?'

'Did Johnny and An even go to La Morton?'

"So are you admitting that you were actually horny?" An sharply retorted, she had the smile of
triumph from Johnny's maddening and bright red face.

'Wait just a moment! Time-out! What did you say!!' Ren wanted to know what they said earlier to make sure that his ears were working properly. However God won't allow that simple request.

"I wonder what you were doing on the other side of the room. Um?" She suggestively asked, as she placed her hands on her hips with a raised brow.

"Not with the nightmares I would have from your chest board!" The dirty blonde main quickly retorted.

"I'm average!" An angrily screamed back at the man's ear.

Ikeda took insult to that, it was no secret that he liked An's body type as it was clear with one of the ways he hugs his main senior. Another thing that irks Johnny. 'And them hips' as quoted by Mark.

"Dickless!" An yelled.

"Prude!" Johnny jeered back.

And the two turned their heads away, Johnny let out a grunt while An let out a 'hmph'.

"They have started the name calling." Ignis took of his glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose hard. Noct passed him another coffee, he gave his thanks as he sipped his black coffee. "It's getting worse."

"No duh." Gakushu muttered, finishing the last of his waffles.

"Lets' hope that this will only last for a month." Noct whispered to his friend.

"I seriously doubt that." Ignis answered back.

"The last one took 6 months." Arthur added his two-cents in the conversation.

Prom nervously tried to get in between the pair, with both of his hands out as a sign of peace. "Come one guys, please don't fight. You two are friends."

"Stay out of this Prom boy!" Johnny yelled, it wasn't good that he had the look like he wanted to punch something, and that glare was directed at a certain wild haired blonde male.

'…. You fucked up.' The gang thought. Noct added another month to the expected duration. Because everyone knew how much of a motherly and protective personality An has. 'Prom boy' had only 6 years of experience, and An once took over as his main senior as he was unexpectedly sent on a dispatch spy mission for six months in his first year as a reaper. Gretel and Arthur continued to watch with an unreadable expression, Gakushu instead focused his attention on his needed breakfast.

'What should I have later? Maybe a maple walnut cake, or a coconut cake- Wait, Noct hates coconut.' Gakushu mused, eating his six serving of toast and jam. 'What about a praline turtle cake? But I really want to try An's pumpkin spice cake, I heard she makes good homey-foods.'

'And it has to be good enough that she managed to convince picky eater Noct to eat carrots.'

"Don't you dare talk to him like that!" An screamed as her motherly instincts kicked in, standing in front of the male and with her arms spread out, acting like a shield for Prom. Johnny's intensity of his glare increased by 10 fold. Ren turned and looked to Ikeda, before looking back to Gakushu.
"Hey, is that normal?" Ren asked as he poked at the strawberry blonde, once he gathered his attention he shifted his gaze onto Ikeda. Ikeda right now was a mixture of Gretel's temper, the protectiveness of Arthur and Ignis for their respective 'masters' and with an air of killer intent surrounding him. With a dark sneer on his face, his leg over the other and his cheek being rested by his hand.

Basically, something you should avoid at all cost, and because of that white scarf he donned around his dark trench-coat collar, he looked like a high-end mafia leader. All he needs was a set of bodyguards donned in black next to him.

"Yeah. Anyone who demeans An would get glared to death, especially if that someone was from Ikeda or Tae-sik." Gakushu whispered, Ikeda looked really pissed and all of that anger was directed to Johnny. He also thought that further added to Ikeda's dark look was the fact that An and Johnny were close enough that bathing wasn't much of an issue.

'Nobody says that to his main senior and gets away with it!' That was what Gakushu got from reading the light haired man's facial expressions. The strawberry blonde internally groaned when he thought that it was adorable.

"Who?" Ren asked about the second mentioned person.

"Don't worry about it."

This was getting tedious, the fight continued on to its' 25 minute mark and it was almost impossible to stop as the two were off in their little world. The shouting match continued, Prom was shifting at the far back and had the first-aid ready for the worst case-scenario. Especially for Johnny.

"If you hate my chest so much, then maybe you hang out with someone bigger you likes you. Dickless!" An screamed once more, Johnny puffed up his chest and towered over the much smaller black haired reaper.

"Maybe I will, flat-chest!" Johnny yelled as he glared down at the female worker.

"Fine!"

"Fine!"

Fine!

Finally, Johnny made his way to the exit and slammed the door, thankfully the windows were reaper-made. An stormed away to the staff room.

"..." The café was silent, with only the gang and Prom in the facility, not sure what to do or say next. Not even the two sweet-tooths, Noct and Gakushu continued eating as they swallowed in the quietness.

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"... At least they didn't claw at each other this time." Noct added as he broke the silence, taking a bite on his scones. His almond blonde haired friend nodded and he wiped the jam and cream was that hanging off of Noct's soft cheeks with a handkerchief.

"I just hope that John doesn't do anything idiotic, that man acts on his impulses sometimes." Ignis
added his two cents in the conversation, as he sipped on his third black coffee for the morning.

"Not on my watch." Surprisingly it was Ikeda who muttered those words dangerously, and not Gretel. It was good that Kim Tae-sik wasn't around.

"I should go talk to her." Prom announced as he made his way to the staff room. Ikeda quickly followed the worker and it was best if the group went away now.

"I guess we should go practice now." Gretel said as she took her last bite of her breakfast.

And for some reason, Gakushu felt a shiver going down his spine.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Gakushu yelled.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Gakushu screamed loudly some more as he ran as fast as he could, with Gretel closely following after him with a new dress in her hands. A dress that has Gakushu's name written all over it.

"Oh Gakushu-kun~" Gretel cheered as she tailed close behind the strawberry blonde boy. "Strawberry~"

"No! No! No!" Gakushu chanted with tears in his violet eyes but Gretel still called out his name. The strawberry blonde pushed toward even more to distance the gap.

"But my Strawberry." Gretel whined, she hadn't even stopped for a breather after 20 minutes of non-stop chasing. Even Gakushu was reaching to a breaking point.

"But nothing!" Gakushu yelled back as he still kept his eyes forward along with his mind. "You said that it won't be a maid outfit!"

"Yes. And this is a magical girl themed dress." The blonde girl retorted back with a huff. Was it him or Gretel was speeding up more? No, it wasn't his imagination.

"I made it with extra laces, I even had it blue since it brings out more of your violet purple eyes." She said if it made everything better. It didn't.

"I thought we already did this song!" Gakushu screamed. The song where Gakushu was forced to wear a French maid outfit.

"Version two with Iggy-kun and Noct-kun!" Gretel answered back with a smile.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Help me Ren!" Gakushu burst into one of the practice rooms, surely Ren would let him under his shirt, since Arthur was gone for his Department related errands and so Ren became his protective shield.

But Ren laid on the cold wooden floor face-down, drenched in sweat and he didn't response to Gakushu's cries. He was out cold from tiredness and was closer to death once more. 'I should really work on my stamina or fitness…'

"Ren?!!" Gakushu called out as he hurried to his friend. "Are you okay!?" He asked, reaching over to his hand.

"Ha? Gakushu? Is that you?" Ren asked huskily but he still hadn't bulged, as he still laid down on
Gakushu was so concerned over the brown haired teen that he hadn't noticed a looming female with a smile hidden by a hand as she inched closer. "Heck no you're not~"

"I got you~" Then a pair of hands came to grope his chest, Gakushu instantly froze and paled, a shiver rushed down his spine. She whispered into his ear, "And how nice of you, this is the perfect place to change."

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!" Gakushu cried, tears fell down as he was being dragged to the dressing area. Even as he was clawing the floors, Gretel had no problem dragging Gakushu, even with just one leg.

"No! No more!"

"But we haven't even started yet?"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Ren eventually snapped out of his near-death experience, the first thing to enter his mind was Gakushu's screams and Gretel's struggles. 'I might sit back on this one...' Ren remembered Arthur's advice back when Gakushu was forced into a corset. He still flinched from just remembering it, of how tight it was around the waist, it was a surprise of how no ribs snapped.

"And we're done!" Gretel cheered, she popped out and walked with Gakushu slowly following behind her. Gakushu this time wore a frilly blue and white dress that barely reached to his knees, his image was the fine definition of a magical girl... or boy in this case. Full of tiny frills, with ribbons arranged at the neck, waist, and on the shoes. His legs are cladded in pure, virginal white over-knee socks.

It's perfectly cute and it fitted with Gakushu's unlimited amount of adorableness, especially how he was looking down to avoid Ren's contact with a reddened face. Ren had to mentally slap himself from further ogling over the magical strawberry.

'But he's so cute.' One inner voice whined, but it was override when another voice 'Shut up me!'

"Looking cute as always." Ren nervously chuckled.

Gakushu narrowed his eyes, "But I want to be cool, not cute." He whispered to himself, he felt another maddening blush when it related back to Ren. 'Please don't notice Gretel, please don't notice Gretel!'

"What was that?" Ren asked.

"Nothing."

"Well, at least you're not wearing a corset this time around." Ren mentioned, hoping this time around that would help the boy feel a bit better of his predicament.

"That is at least a silver lining in all of this." Gakushu scowled. 'He has a point... At least I could breathe properly in this.'

"Oh~ Here is my matching pair." Gretel sang with cheer as Noct and Ignis came into the practice room.
"She got you too?" Ren asked the boy with the halo of dark hair, who was unlucky enough wear a ball-gown white dress and a crown of blue roses with a veil. Ren felt so lucky that he hadn't been dressed by Gretel. Not yet, but still!

"And Iggy too." Noct signed as he pointed to the almond blonde male, he was dressed in a well-tailored suit. The suit itself was dark, with thin white pinstripes that went down vertically, the vest was passionate rosy red and it was the same for the velvet tie. Matching this was a black dress-shirt and black prada-dress shoes. "Although he is lucky because he's not the one wearing a dress."

"Look on the bright side, at least you two are suffering together." Gakushu meekly suggested. He glared a certain friend a glare. "Unlike someone over here."

All four looked onto Ren, still dressed in his gym gear and three of whom were envious.

"Hey, you're just pouting that you are the wearing the dress and not me." Ren smirked back, it was weird to think that Gakushu's glare could no longer do the same effect as he had back he was in main building. If anything, it was cuter of how his eyes narrowed and cheeks puffed up.

"I'm not pouting!" Gakushu yelled back.

"If it makes you feel any better, do you want to go ice-skating after practice?" Ren suggested, and Gakushu's violet eyes immediately started to sparkle. He did a good job of not having blood dripping down his nose.

"Yes! It was a shame that Viktor was out of the country for that honeymoon though."

Ren chuckled before he looked back to the pair, 'I don't get about Gretel saying matching though.'

Gakushu and Ren looks to Ignis who had a slight ting of red on his pale cheeks, they looked to Noct who was looking a place to nap at. 'Oh, ohhhhhhhhhhh!'

As the other two were looking around, mainly Noct finding the bench to be a decent napping spot and Ignis' shoulder to be a good pillow. Gretel texted Ren and Gakushu, remembering that all reapers had enhanced hearing.

'It is reaching to a boiling point, hopefully we will see the two together by the end of this trip.' Gretel texted the younger boys. 'After decades of planning and pinning, Iggy-kun is at his limit.'

'Have you see him snapping his chopsticks when he found that we once dated?' Gakushu texted with a smirk.

'Got any plans?' Gakushu texted back. 'You know that Iggy, no matter how he feels for Noct or the other way around. He still has the servant mentality, he feels undeserving for his master aka the Kitten.'

'Well, I have a secret weapon on my sleeves.' Gretel typed back.

'Is it another jealously tactic?' Ren joined in the chat, he still didn't know how Gretel got his number, and he made a note to make a new security system for all of his phone and devices.

'Nope although that is fun to do, thank you for the idea Ren-kun~' And Ren internally groaned for giving Gretel ideas for her devious plans for Ignis and Noct. He looked back at the pair to find Noct already napping away on his friend's broad shoulders and the other reading a novel.

Ren internally let out another groaned, he cured Gretel for setting up the platform and started to
polish it. She will get what she wants, and she was going to use his heart against him.

"We are going to need you guys back, Vella wants a dress session for the song." North called out as he stood outside of the door. "We having troubles getting the costumes."

"Which one?" Gretel called out.

"The Oracle one." North answered.

Gretel nodded, "Okay I will be there in a sec."

Gakushu went to go around and behind of the hazel haired boy, lifting the back of Ren's shirt and proceeded to cower underneath his shirt.

"Ren, let me hide here."

"She will come back in a few minutes."

"I know."

"… Why do you have that bag?" One person called out as he watched the other with crimson red hair coming into the room with a bag.

"I just wanted to know who will be sleeping with, just to make sure that it isn't an assassin." The other said with a cheeky tone.

"Karma, I think that is very unlikely." He sighed as he ran though his sky-blue hair.

"Remember that other time on the beach vacation Nagisa?" Karma reminded.

"Right now that I'm seeing, I just see ordinary bags." Nagisa sighed once more, as he looked over and focused on that had strawberry themed key-chains.

"Come on, have fun and let's find some blackmail material." The red head whine and battered his eyelashes.

"No-." The blue-haired boy pulled the bags away and it dropped to the floor.

"Rattle." One bag rattled.

"Was that just me or did the bag just rattle?" Karma asked no-one in particular. Curiously and concern got the better of them and those surrounding the two. So he decided to open that bag, after searching through the mundane items such as clothes and poetry books, he found a secret pocket.

Unzipping the compartment as more people started to gather round him, the red haired boy pulled out a bottle of medicine, and another, and another.

"Maprotiline, Moclobemide, Duloxetine, Zoloft…" He read the contents of each bottle, and much to his horror, he found even more.

"It must be really bad, I never seen so many pills."

"Fuck, these are pills for major depression." One boy with black hair whispered, loud enough for everyone to hear as he browses through his phone.
"We should just stop, this is his or her personal belongings." A girl in pigtails ushered, but the boy with sky blue hair had a sunken feeling about this. Something about that other bag with strawberry-themed keychains resonance with him.

"Do you have a name?" Nagisa whispered softly the one who started this whole discovery.

Karma whispered back to only Nagisa's ear. "... It's Ren's."

"Crash!" A platter of plates and cups crashed to the wooden floors of a café, An panicked as she rushed in to clean up the mess. 'Oh no!'

However in midst of her panic, "Ouch!" A minor cut was made.

An hissed from the sudden sting on her finger, she panicked hard enough that she managed to cut herself from broken shards. If Johnny heard about this, he would never let it down of her moment of clumsiness but he would had done it in a teasing manner as well. However their recent fights had becoming more toxic by the day.

It worried her greatly. So much so that she had to keep Ikeda in line on not 'murdering his ass', or as he puts it. Instead, Ikeda sang her a song from the lessons he learnt from Antonio on the acoustic guitar, a song about tomatoes after an inappropriate joke.

'Oh Ikeda.' An happily sighed, although he didn't have the adorableness of Kara, she would say that Ikeda was like an overgrown puppy. 'Maybe he could use that song to encourage Noct to eat his vegetables, I should tell Ignis about this.'

The way he tried to cheer her up this morning after the fight was caught amusing yet endearing as well. Her memory flashed back to just this morning, as Prom made her some coffee. A good strong black coffee to restart the day.

"Thanks Prom." She whispered to the blonde male, she felt a smile slowly etching as she took a sip of her black coffee. 'A Nordic roast?' She looked deep into the favour of her freshly brewed coffee.

"How is it?" Prom, the trainee in the art of the coffee asked.

"It is fine, but it could use some work. It is a bit over-extracted, your proper grind level is good in its' consistency and you used the right type of water." An commented with a smile that gave her the title of 'Girl of grace'.

"But we have all the time in the world." She also lightly joked about their reaper status, Prom chuckled as he scratched the back of his next with a slightly flushed face.

And then Ikeda started to speak. "I heard that smaller breast are more sensitive." An and Prom's spit take was glorious.

"...What?"

"I heard that smaller-" Ikeda repeated with no problem before An dashed in to cover his mouth. Her face and Prom's were as red as a cherry tomato. Actuality Prom would probably be best described as a face of a raging volcano.

"S-stop, I heard you the first time." An stuttered. "Where did you learned that from?"

"Mark." Ikeda answered without a care in a world.
"Of course." An sighed, burying her blushing and hot face in her hands.

Ikeda titled his head slightly to the side. "Threesome?" Prom should really stop drinking coffee with Ikeda was around.

"Hyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!"

"Stop it Ikeda! I think Mark is having too much of an effect on you!" An yelled although she still hid her face, Ikeda and Prom could see stream emitting from her.

"Nah, I like my puns more." Ikeda whined. And his boasting laughter fades away in her mind as it left behind a smile on her face.

'What to do?' An pondered to herself as she careful placed the shards on the tray, straight after distracting herself with that memory, the situation beforehand kicks in. 'What should I do…?'

"Are you okay?" A male voice called out, breaking out of the girl's thoughts.

'Oh no! A customer!' An berated herself some more for being clumsy.

"I'm fine, I will get your order soon." The girl said, only giving a quick glance upwards being looking back down as she scrambled to clean the shards. She could tell that the man had black hair and was tall as Kim Tae-sik. 'Oh dear, oh dear!'

"You're hurt." The male said, he kneeled down and was careful around the shard objects. An didn't look up to get a good look, she wanted to hide her face that was as red as Karma's hair now that her blunder was seen by a customer. Although from what she could see, she saw that he was well dressed in a typical black business suit and prada-dress shoes.

"I'm fine, please don't worry. It is only a scratch." An assured, she didn't saw that the man's think frown as she slowly picked up the shards. "Please sir, I can't have you hurt as well… I promise that I will get your order as soon as possible."

"An! Are you okay?!" Prom came dashing in with a health-kit in hand and almost tripping on the way. "I heard an 'ouch!'"

"Sorry that I couldn't come as quick when it happened, the company called in." The company he talked about is another code-word for the Department.

An finally looked up and turned to Prom, with a smile and a chuckle. "I'm fine Prom. You shouldn't run, I can't have you hurt as well." Her motherly instincts kicked in as the needs of Prom was placed above of her own. But it was reasonable as the Department matters are far more important than a little cut to her finger.

"My apologies, it was all my fault. I wasn't paying attention and I bumped into her." The other man lied as he stood up, An's eyes widened and before she could said anything, the man took the kit off of Prom's hand. "I should treat the injury, it is the least I could do."

"I will clean up the mess." Prom declared before he rushed back in to get a broom and a dustpan.

"N-No, it's fine." An stuttered, she felt a blush going through her face as she kept it down and still sitting at the floor. Clutching both of her hands and placing it on her chest. "I'm a quick healer, it will heal just fine.

"No it's not." The man said. He extended out his hand, "Careful. Even so, I just want to check if the
cut is deep. And to make sure that it doesn't get inflicted."

"You be surprised, even though I thought for wound minor as an accidental cut, it didn't stop bleeding after five minutes even after I put pressure on it." And then he pinched around her sleeves.

'…!'

'Why is this person using all of my tricks?' An thought, yes these were what she once used to check wounds. Whenever her tearful but stubborn Kara refuses to show her his wounds in attempts to 'man out'. What always get him was when An pinched around his sleeves, letting out a pout to the young boy. It always work on him and Johnny.

'Johnny…'

Finally An gave in, he wouldn't budge and so she took his hand. His touch was gentle.

"I'm sorry… I haven't introduced myself." The male whispered softly, finally the black haired girl looked up. The well-built man in front of her had spikey black hair that was combed black, his dark eyes were piercing and yet had some sort of shyness underneath.

"My name is Karasuma Tadamoi."

"Where's Gretel?" Noct asked his strawberry loving friend, as he started to pack up the music sheets that was scattered around him as if it were his nest.

"Springs." Gakushu quickly answered as he popped a well-deserved macaroon into his mouth.

"Aren't you lucky?" A male reaper from the Vietnamese Branch told a class, he was wearing the inn's uniform that screams 'front desk receptionist'. "We can rent the whole place for just you guys-"

"Wait, ignore what I just said. There's a few patrons in there." The worker quickly apologised as he checked the computer list. He turned around and was met with some disappointing looks. "Sorry kids."

"Should we still go?" Kayano whispered to Okuda, and due to the reaper's enhanced hearing, he heard every world.

"We might as well take full advantage of this trip." Rio joined in the conversation. Korosensei decided to give the class a well-earned break and allowed the class to wander around. Some of the girls and boys decided to take a dip. Korosensei sulked them for that, because his first choice of the excursion was the hot springs but Karma quickly retorted.

"You suggested a local hot-spring, but Gretel offered us a re-owned hot-springs." And like that, it was another crushing defeat by the blonde Gretel once again. She was on a roll.

"Let's just go." Karma exclaimed impatiently, "I have been sitting in that train for hours."

"Alright." Nagisa sighed, and everyone there decided to take the bath. And so they did, they went their separate ways. The males changed, draped in towels as they soon entered the baths.

The stream emitted by the baths were surrounding the area as the boys entered the hot springs. Karma noticed in the bath was a person basically head-deep in the water and was clearly enjoying himself. They completely bypass the male because he was doing his own business.
The group settled for the same bath, after they cleaned themselves, then they soaked into the hot springs.

"Man, this is the best." Karma surlily spoke, as he soaked in the water.

"You said it." Isogai muttered back in bliss. "So happy to be here."

"Too bad that Gakushu-san isn't here." Nagisa almost sulked, he made a pouty face as he sunk down in the pools. Even as he was supposed to be relaxing in the soothing waters, his brotherly persona was still on.

"Yeah, Asano is missing out." Maehara boastfully laughed, "I bet he regrets not coming with us."

Terasake felt a tick in his eye. 'Gakushu this, Gakushu that.' He was still not behind the whole anew image of Gakushu Asano, the adorable and innocent 'Strawberry'. Karma's favourite nickname for the strawberry blonde.

"Why are we been talking about Gakushu all the time?" Terasake harshly accursed. "That is all you have been doing."

'Because why not?' Karma smirked. He should talk more about Gakushu if it gets on Terasake buttons, and it is fun to talk how cute Gakushu was surprisingly…

"And don't get me started on how cute he is Nagisa." Terasake quickly said before Nagisa uttered a word. Although he had to face a glaring blue haired boy.

"It is true though." Isogai supported Nagisa's view and Terasake turned to glare at the other. "He looked younger when he flustered.

"I can't help it, but when I think back to the things he had done. There seems to be a cute filter over him." Isogai pondered back to the days. "Now when I look back of his glares, they are more of pouts now."

"Maybe we talk about Gakushu-san a lot because we don't really know anything about him." Itona suddenly appeared, shocking the group as they turned and splashing some water. "Think about it, we have attacks targeted on him, his secret true personality, his several connections to Candy Fest and La Morton. His secrets has secrets."

"Yeah, especially with him and that police guy." Maehara pointed out. He scrunched up his face in concentration. "How did he met someone so cool?"

"Where to start!" Terasake groaned. "Three points!"

"The first one." Itona said, "The one where Class-A attempted to imitate Gakushu Asano."

"And failed miserable." Karma was amused when he thought back to it, his words of 'wasting good quality soda' has more meaning now that he knew of Gakushu's sweet-tooth.

"The two seemed close." The blue haired boy muttered, "Although I didn't like how that man just threw a knife at him."

"Bruh, did you not see Gakushu catching it like it was nothing." Maehara crossed his arms.

"I know that but that doesn't mean I like it!" Nagisa leaped up from the waters. "As Gakushu's big brother, I cannot have any harm come to him."
"Did you forget all the antics he had against us?" Terasake was getting tired of Nagisa's shit, even Karma and Isogai were on the blue haired boy's side.

"Well, I can get behind that Gakushu was simply acting under an act. I would if I have his father." And Isogai felt a shiver going down his spine, even midst the streaming waters. "I'm just happy that he didn't come off worse than I would expect."

"Thank the lords for his outside-school friends!" Nagisa praised.

"But what about that wound at his temple?" Isogai whispered and immediately crushed Nagisa's mood. "There are a million scenarios."

"I don't know if I want to know." Nagisa whispered as he slowly sank back into the waters. Even Terasake couldn't say anything harsh about Gakushu around that. "All I know that it is a sign that I failed."

"Nagisa, I think that wound is old." Maehara assured the moping boy but Nagisa continued to sulk, he narrowed his eyebrows and blew bubbled into the water.

"Come on guys! Cheer up!" Karma exclaimed. "Look, the past is the past."

"It is the same for the Strawberry here, we can know look into the present and into the future on how to protect our youngest here." Karma proclaimed. "Gives us an excuse to dress up Gakushu all cutely just like we had with Nagisa here."

"Wait, Gakushu is the youngest!?" Maehara gasped, Nagisa and Karma stared at the boy.

"How could you not know this?" Nagisa sighed. Although the thoughts of Gakushu in a maid outfit almost made the hot springs dyed in blood.

"Great, you added another cuteness filter." Isogai muttered to himself. "Or two." He had to admit, with Gakushu petite and slender body, he would look cute in a dress.

"Guys, did you not remember how he is not really talking to any of us but Karma and Nagisa!?" Terasake attempted to remind the group of Gakushu's past.

"Gakushu is just shy." Nagisa said as he waved off the male, Karma nodded in agreement, remembering the words of Rin. While the rest of the male population was looking at the two as if they grew two heads.

Gakushu Asano, the student council president of the main building, was shy!?

"You said it sister!" A chirpy female voice called out amongst the mist, a girl in a pool of males.

"..." The male population stared at the direction where that voice came from. A person sat at the edge of the bath. The person they just thought earlier was a male, was standing up and smiling at them.

"... What? The baths here are co-ed." A girl with short blonde hair damped from the water and stream and a folded tea-towel on her head. Eyes green as the English plains, her body was slender and petite, and she was only in a towel. She had a smiled that would had rivalled with Karma's devilish grin. It was Gretel.

"It is good to see that you are so worried for Gakushu-kun."
Co-ed… that means!

Gretel turned around, slightly lifting up and see gave a royal-like wave. "Hello ladies~" And the stream cleared and died off, on the other side where the female population of Class-E.

Kayano fainted the moment she saw Nagisa.

"Where is that cutlery?" A tall man with neatly trimmed blonde hair and eyes as emerald green and as the forest whispered to himself. He was currently trying to search for some forks and knives that went missing. He was asked by Roman from the Italian Branch and the Scientific Divisions, who was doing kitchen duty at the inn to go search for them.

Sure he and the others could probably go to eat elsewhere, but he was intrigued of how a whole boxful of utilises went missing. He checked the storeroom, he checked the kitchen and then the dining area but he found nothing.

He started to search in the inn's rooms, he had no leads, so he might as well start to search every inch he could muster. Arthur just so happened to walked into one of the rooms which Korosensei and Irina happened to stay at who were looking into student reports.

"Ah, you must be Asano-kun's teachers." That was a pleasant surprise.

"Ha, it was probably good idea to search for the forks." Arthur was amused by the disguise Korosensei brought on but he mustn't delve into it. Because firstly, he hasn't received any orders to get involved and nor did Gakushu as of yet.

Although he had been hearing rumours that one of the Department's surveillance operations has restarted. It would had been normal if it wasn't also the Scientific Division getting involved as well. Othello was having a field day.

"Have you see where the cutlery was? I couldn't find it from the kitchen." He asked before the teachers could question his association with Gakushu Asano.

"Ikeda! Get back here!" Gakushu voiced roared as it echoed through the many walls.

"Hahahahahahaha!" Ikeda's laughter boomed. "Run Forrest, run!"

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhh! Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled back with fury laced in his voice.

"..."

"..."

"Sorry for bothering you, I have found them." Arthur bowed and he shut the door promptly as he walked off.

"What the fuck…?" Teresaka thought along with Itona as they stare at a wall, which was impaled with forks and knives straight through the wall.

'How?' The young male students' thoughts merged. The knives and forks were deep into the wall, and yet it looked as it was just thrown there.

Then they heard more screaming. "Ikeda!" A booming voice resonated the building.
That was Gakushu…

"Hahahahaha!" Another voice echoed as it travelled the halls.

'That was the policeman from school the other day.'

"Get back here!" Gakushu screamed from the top of his lungs as he chased Ikeda around the inn. It was a good thing that the floors were reaper-made. Or else there would be craters from every step he took.

"Come on! Share, let me have some!" Ikeda laughed between breaths, as he ran with Gakushu followed in pursuit.

"No! Get your own!" Gakushu yelled in fury. He was looking forward on eating those chocolates, and not because he was wanting to share with Ren.

"But Shu~ It's Mariebella chocolate!" Ikeda whined and Gakushu was picking up in speed.

"You have the fucking money!" The Strawberry lashed back, he could already list the things Ikeda decided to buy. A luxury sports car to a $4200 toothbrush, the chocolates would be nothing.

"But it has your love." Ikeda said.

'My love…' And then the image of Ren spot into Gakushu's head, of the hazel haired male whose hair covered the left side of his face and he was eating the chocolates.

"Aghhhhhhhhh!" Gakushu screamed, he wasn't sure if the redness on his face were due to frustration or embarrassment.

Gakushu's screams had Ikeda laugh harder. "Hahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

"Ikeda! I swear to god when I get my hands on you!" Gakushu yelled, he was one step closer on breaking some ribs and getting his chocolates back. He was clawing and almost snatching at the man's back.

"Just break only one rib." Ikeda sang as he basically ran and skipped.

"No! You don't get a say!" Gakushu taking his chances, he tackled him to the ground and they started to wrestle. The two slammed down to the floor, Gakushu shakily extended his arm out. "J-Just give it back."

"Come on Shu! Little brother here needs to learn how to share." Ikeda grunted, as he tried to push the strawberry blonde off. But that was difficult when you have someone whose strength is a little stronger than the average reaper, who was gripping his light coloured hair while the other was trying to reach out for the box of sweets. And he was also laying on top of Ikeda's back.

"Screw you!" Gakushu screamed into the man's ear.

"Gakushu?" A voice called out but it wasn't enough to break off the scene.

"Come on Shu, you have other boxes." Ikeda whined as the struggle continued. "Just let me have this one."

"It's Gakushu! Ga-ku-shu!" Gakushu's temper was getting the best of him, he couldn't wait to start breaking the man's ribs once he got his chocolates back.
"Gakushu?" The voice tried again, Gakushu was bothered of why this random person decided to get into his business. So much that he snapped.

"What!?" Gakushu yelled over to the voice, he glared at a group that stared right back at. When the red haze slowly fade away from his vision, Gakushu's mind became clearer and he saw a familiar class of students looking at him as if he grew a third eye.

'Say… why do they look so familiar?' Gakushu mused. Some had their hair slightly wet, and two of which had blue hair while the other had red.

"… Nagisa, Karma…. Everyone?" Gakushu worded, as the stares continued, the realisation eventually seeped in. The strawberry blonde madly blush from head to toe.

"It's not what you think!" He exclaimed as he leaped up, he flustered that now everyone was seeing him, in a most casual of clothes. Strawberry themed pyjamas, really short pants with strawberry prints and Nagisa was mentally giving it the thumbs up.

'Them shorts!' Nagisa's mind drifted off into big-brother territory.

"Ack!" Gakushu crossed his arms over his chest as if he was an innocent maiden.

'Did he just acked?'

"Please excuse me!" Gakushu yelled, he turned back and ran, blushing a deeper shade than Karma's hair.

"…"

'Ha, Nagisa was right. He is shy.' Isogai added the blushing Gakushu in his sleep-ware to the growing list of the cuteness filter.

"Well that is one way to drop the bomb shell." Ikeda whistled, he was laughing uncontrollably as he rolled across the floor. He laid on his stomach and rested on his hand as his arm supported his upper body weight.

"Does this mean I get to keep the chocolates!?

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**Ikeda's stories**

"So you're his class." Ikeda mused, the light-haired man decided to enter the room where the class was staying at. He already made himself feel like home as he leaned behind the couches where most of the students sank in. "Never thought we would see each other again."

"And you are?" Okuda meekly asked as she slightly turned to him. Enhanced by the softness of his red-brown eyes.

"No-one important, just Shu's awesome big brother." Ikeda boasted, he flicked light layered hair. Now that the class observed closer, his middle fringe that a slight curliness like how Karasuma has when he lets down his hair but Ikeda's swayed to the left. "But since Shu was screaming my name earlier, it's Ikeda."

'So you're the one who brought that $4200 dollar toothbrush…' The class' thoughts merged, it wasn't implausible going from what clothes the male was wearing. It was obviously high-end, with his dark suit set matched with a deep-blue vest. Although it also looked as if he was one-step closer of
looking like a mafia leader.

"And we met a few days ago too." The class knew what he was talking about, arresting the would-be kidnappers of Noct and Gakushu, as well as standing up to Gakuhou Asano will no worry for his own life or future.

Korosensei was unsettled, from how much this man resembled much of Gakuhou's old and decreased student. From the structure to face and down to his cheekbones, the only difference from the two were the hair colour. And even then, the light hair of white-platinum blonde looked to be dyed.

"How's Gakushu-san?" Nagisa asked, he wondered what happened to the strawberry blonde after he ran off.

"Shu? Last time I checked, he was in his room and hiding under his blanket." Ikeda answered with amusement. For much of the class, it was again difficult to see Gakushu Asano in a different light, to view him with younger characteristics.

Nagisa wasn't complaining though, he wished that he had a photo of it though.

"Oi, I remember you!" He exclaimed as he pointed to Karma. The red-head jolted from the volume of his voice.

"Shu was ranting to me about you months back." Ikeda gasped, he eyed closer as Karma for further observation. "Yeap, you fit the description. So you are the red-head version of me."

"To be honest, I don't get it." Ikeda then let out a sigh, he dragged his gloved hands back and through his light and fair coloured hair. "I am clearly more handsome."

And the girls agreed while most of the males wanted to gag. "Something about him cleaning after one of your pranks," Ikeda worded, he rested his hand on his chin. "Didn't know what you did but something happened, something wasabi-related I think?"

And the class turned their eyes on Karma Akabane, he shrugged and gave them the trade-mark cheeky and devilish grin.

'Of course.' Karma snorted, he actually didn't remember which prank it was considering the number he pulled and especially on the main building. He was already in Class-E, so he had free range on what he could do. Although he was somewhat saddened by how Gakushu felt about him in the past, it connected Gakushu on how he was once a Class-A student.

"Which caused him to miss out on greeting Ren at the airport, or something like that near the start of school. Shu was sulking for a good while after his temper died down." Ikeda further explained. "He ate 10 bowls of ice-cream that day."

"Nothing like that other time when he eat 25 bowls." "..." The class response as they tried to processed that. Korosensei had a poker-face as well.

'…. That is so cute!' Nagisa thought, and then he felt a competitive aura around him and strived to be Gakushu's friend that was even closer than Ren.

'Ha…. Didn't know that.' Karma thought, and then he felt a jealous stab of how Gakushu was close with Ren. Although he felt that he didn't had that right, after learning of Ren's condition…
"Say, you've met Ivan?" Ikeda asked.

The image of the Russian man popped into Karma and Nagisa's mind, with his flat yet curly and bouncy black hair. And that lingering smell of alcohol.

"Um, yeah?" Nagisa uttered.

Ikeda's face lit up instantly with cheeriness. "Oh boy! I got some stories to tell you. As Shu's awesome big brother, it is my duty to tell stories about him! And I heard that nobody is exchanging stories! And we're at the hot springs!" And so the class started to gather around Ikeda, itching for stories about their once Class-A classmate. Especially Nagisa. Korosensei had his notebook readied, Karasuma wanted to stay out of this and so he started to look through his grading papers.

"But this is a common story amongst my group but for you, it is new." Ikeda waved it off. "Turns outs that Ivan is Shu's favourite shoulder pillow." Nagisa added Ivan to his list of rivals.

"One time, good old Ivan wanted to help Shu in his math homework that was assigned by his father." Ikeda recounted that pleasant memory. "Sure, good old Shu insisted that he was doing fine."

And most of the class either chuckled or scoffed. 'Now that is the Gakushu we know too well.'

"Ivan insisted that he wanted to help. He ended up throwing the book down, saying that they were university level questions than for ones for high-school, better yet junior high."

"Ivan spent the next couple of hours swearing the crap in Russian." Ikeda let out a laugh. "Any worse and Ivan would had personally went for that man. We had to call Lucia's husband go calm him down."

'Wait a moment here…' Nagisa remembered meeting Lucia and Ivan, he knew that they were very close that he naturally assumed that the two were a couple. It was only logical, from how well the two knew and were comfortable with each other.

"I thought Ivan and Lucia were?" Nagisa voiced his confusion and Ikeda looked into his blue eyes.

"What?" Ikeda tilted his head in confusion until it finally clicked. "Ohhhhhh! You thought that Lucia and Ivan were married."

And then what the class didn't expect Ikeda to do was to laugh his ass off. He tried to contain his laughter at first, covering his mouth but it had to be freed. "Oh my gad! That is rich!"

Ikeda proceeded to roll on the floor with his arms clutching around his stomach. "Lucia could never do that! Like in the history of ever!"

"Hey, you don't have to laugh that much!" Nagisa shouted, his face painted in red but it only made Ikeda laugh even harder.

"Hhahahahhahahahahahahaha!" The male's laughter filled the room, he tried to catch his breath but was hilariously failing. "I got to tell Wolfie about this when he gets back!"

"Man! I haven't laughed this much in months! First Shu and now this!"

"What are you doing?" A new voice spoke out, Ikeda looked up as he flicked a fake tear to see Ren looking down at him. Ren dressed in casual clothing, a red college jacket and denim jeans.

"Sup Ren!" Ikeda managed to say between laughter and in breathes. He stopped his rolling, he still
laid on the floor as he lifted one of his legs and placed it at the back of the couch. "Where were you? Shu wanted to see you before we found out his class was here."

"I noticed." Ren muttered as he gazed around the room, passing at each of Class-3E and its' teachers.

"I was only out for a private phone-call with my guardians." Ren swiftly explained. He looked up and instantly met eye contact with Karma's golden yellow eyes.

"Hello Akabane." Ren said without any emotion… Was it the class or did the temperature just dropped?

'How does he make it so intimating?' The general consensus of the class, how was it even possible if Ren never had assassin or any specific type of training. Even the strict Karasuma was slightly affected. He had never seen a look on a student like that, if anything he only saw it in his colleagues after they came back from a mission.

"Hey Ren." Karma waved back, he did his best to withstand Ren's glare although it was somewhat failing when there was a bit of guilt eating up Karma's conscious. The two continued their stare-down, until Ren finally broke the stare when he let out a sigh.

"I'm guessing that Gretel set you guys to come here." Ren pinched the bridge of his nose. "I'm not even surprised at this point."

"Knew that from the start." Ikeda sang. "You know, I think Ivan should be Shu's dad. Sure Rin's boyfriend is the official step-dad but the resemblance is there."

Ren agreed. "Anything is better than that man."

"Hear me out, Shu Ivanov." Ikeda stood on his feet, wrapping his arm around Ren's shoulder as the other waved to the sky.

"Isn't Shu an Egyptian name for air?"

"Ha, I didn't know that. You learn something every-day…"

Ikeda looked back to the others, who were starting at that pair and had no idea what he was talking about. "His full name is Ivan Ivanov, funny I know."

"If you tangled it enough, you can get Shu's hair to be just like Ivan's." Ikeda explained as he ruffled his hand around, he used Ren as an example. Ren was not happy.

"Wait, I got a photo on this." Ikeda said as he pulled out his black smartphone, he scrolled through his albums. "Actually I got a lot of photos, we should really do an exchange again."

"Hey, do you have any pics on Shu?" He asked to no-one in particularity.

'Wait what?!'

"Tada!" And the photo was shown to the world.

A younger Gakushu, possibly around 10 years old was resting on an older man's chest, the man was Ivan as it can be seen with his curly black hair tangled like a nest and dressed in militaristic uniform. He was drooling as the two slept, but Gakushu's hair was also in a mess as if someone earlier rampaged their hands through his soft strawberry blonde locks.

'Uh, they did it even when he was a kid.' Karma thought, he remembered when he somewhat stayed
at his house. Gakushu sleeping soundly, next to a drooling black and curly haired man, and another by his side was a woman with long blond hair. Although this photo was even cuter, he could even see Ikeda's reasoning.

However… Nagisa was dying from blood-lost by the end of it.

"Nagisa!"

"I can die as a happy man."

---

Next time on Until the day I'm forgiven.

"Gakushu-san, this is alcoholic!"

"Look on the bright side, nobody is drinking through a funnel nor is Lucia and Ivan are here."

"I thought An was supposed to be a happy drunk."

"Yo pretty ladies around the world~"

Chapter: Drunken Secrets
Short Story: Some Secrets

Chapter Summary

Two minor small secrets, near the beginning of the year.

Some Secrets

"Damn it Jones." Ren muttered himself as he walked to school. If you looked closely, underneath his eyes were soft swollen eyes of sleep deprivation. His eyes underneath were dark, more like would had been dark if not for the makeup he used to cover it up.

Ren didn't have the best first few weeks in Japan after he returned from his usual trip to the States. He covered his mouth with his hand as he let out a yawn. He spent almost all of last night re-organising his papers because Mr Lance A. Jones somehow misplaced and messed up a 250 page document. He also wasn't happy when Jones came empty-handed on information about the La Morton Institute.

Ren wasn't exactly happy that he had to scrap the investigation altogether. Or the fact that his order on the books he had been looking forward to read hadn't arrived yet. He was surprised that he hadn't broken the purple haired man's nose yet, with all the things such as books or bags aimed at his face.

"He is so paying for my next meal." he grumpily whispered, and he started to think of all the expensive restaurants in town. And the thought of Avery kicking the man's knees helped to ease the anger as well. 'It is a surprised that the two are actually engaged.'

He stopped at a nearby café, and he checked his watch and saw that there were still 40 minutes before the bell rang. 'I still have time.' He told himself before he walked in.

"Welcome!" A cheery voice, even in the early hours of the morning, called out as the hazel haired boy walked to the front counter. Working there was a young woman and dressed in the café's uniform. A simple short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey pen skirt and well-kept leather shoes. She also had a apron tied around her waist, her eyes and hair were dark coloured and tied in a mid-ponytail with its ends curled to give it its bounciness. Even her fringe that covered her forehead curled and swayed to the right.

"What would you like to order sir~"

'Ummm, I already had three Cappuccinos at home this morning… Maybe something stronger?' He thought to himself as he checked the menu hanging above.

"I'll get an… Americano please." Ren said, thinking that he might need the extra strength to get him through the day. Another day at school, another boring day with only Gakushu making it bearable.

"One Americano coming up!" The worker cheered and went to brew his coffee to perfection.

'You know what, I'm feeling better already.' Ren felt a smile forming, all thanks to the worker's positivity. He hovered around the selection of pastries, and when he looked to the strawberry shortcake, he thought of Gakushu Asano.
'Probably because of his strawberry blonde hair.' Ren chuckled to himself, he saw that Gakushu would evade all kinds of sweets in his time at the main school building. Although he did eat that candy during one of the rare events that he did attend with the school on some reward trip. He was sure that Gakushu was only eating it out of politeness although he was sure that he was hallucinating from the sugar high of the sparkles that surrounded the boy.

'It would be cute though.' Ren nodded to himself, imagining Gakushu eating his cake with an indifferent scowl. 'Yep, definitely cute.'

'I wonder what he would look like if he actually smiled.'

"Hey is your order." The worker called out, bringing Ren back from his thoughts.

"Ah- Thank you very much…" Ren hovered his eyes down to her chest to read her nametag, "An."

"Have a lovely day." An smiled gracefully, and Ren gave a nod before promptly leaving the café.

"Hey, isn't that Shuuie's friend?" Johnny said as he swept the wooden floors.

"Ha, I thought he looked familiar." An said as she placed her finger on her lips, "He was a nice boy, it is good to see that Gakushu has at least one friend in that horrid school."

James added as he wiped the tables. "For a second, I thought it was Rilliane for a moment. With the whole hair colour and coffee addiction."

"Say, doesn't she have another meeting with the demons and angels to look after?"

Mark dropped an empty tray to the ground. "…Fuck!"

Ren had to hold in a yawn as he went through all of his classes. 'Keep it in there, keep it in there.'

He wondered if this was how his aunt and Jones had to deal with daily. Actually, he didn't have to wonder, he already knew because he had to endure one of Avery's meetings when he was eight. It was one of the most boring meetings on whatever Avery does on a daily basis, financials and what-not. It was a good thing that he brought in a good book.

And that was happening to him, he got bored of his English class that he settled to read a Stephen King book. 'Different Seasons.' It was a collection of novellas and he was thinking of re-watching the Shawshank Redemption movie because of it.

'I have nothing else to do, nothing.' He pondered to himself. 'Nothing productive, to say the least.'

Then a teacher noticed the distracted look on the boy and called him out to read a verse from a Prussian Memoir. He hoped to catch him off guard and triumph over the big 5, while directly winning against Gakuhou Asano.

"All of it."

'Oh come on! I was getting to the best part!' Ren internally grumbled as he stood up from his seat with an old-looking book in his hands.

It was the blank verse from a noble who lived in Prussia, and although Ren enjoyed the work of the sickly boy who died too early, he already read this book 25 times. This book wasn't owned by the school, it was his own copy. 'It could have been worse, I actually like his works. I could be doing PE or something… Don't I have that today?"
And so, the hazel haired boy spoke the translated text in perfect English.

"Someday, I want to walk away…
To where as you once told me long ago
To when the sky is bathed in golden.
And the path as we walk away…
To the world of midnight.
Where the darkness filled up the sky.
Where it breathes its' icy cold."

He continued on, remembering the sad look when Avery gave him the second-hand book to him. Next to her was Jones bearing the same look, looking down at the younger and much smaller Ren.

"Where I wished to go, where I wished to see.
There, I can hide of my deepest of secrets.
As I bury it deep of my heart, as you once told me.
As it floats away."

Another reason why Ren liked the works of Noctis was he thought it matched him. It was… poetic.

"There, you can see the sky donned in stars.
The stars that will shine your path through the midnight…
And the stars reflected on our immortal souls.
As we walk amongst the dark world of the midnight.
Into the world of dawn, as the night meets with her sun."

And Ren closed the book, "Her sun, his moon, the sea."

The class applauded for his perfect English as he went back down to his uncomfortable school seat. When the claps died down, he looked to his watch, 'How much longer? I don't want to spend the rest of the lesson staring at Gakushu.'

Especially when Gakushu looked to him as he spoke, there was a spark of life fluttering in his violet eyes. It was actually quite rare to see Gakushu like that, and often or not, it was often directed at him. 'Strange…' He tried to deduce the meaning behind his eyes.

He already passed the time by mentally collecting information about his schoolmates. The only one he couldn't figure out was Gakushu. 'Wait… That sounded a lot weirder when I thought about it out loud.'

'Thank god that Jones can't read my thoughts…. At school.'

*It is seems that even Ren had these sort of thoughts from the very start.*
Finally, school had ended and currently Ren was housing in the school library. He was tired from his all-nighter and decided to take a little nap. He resedt on his arms as he laid over the table.

After an uncertain amount of time, he woke up groggily, he felt some drool leaking onto his sleeve as he weakly lifted his head up.

"Had a good nap Ren?" A familiar and male voice called out, Ren froze. He snapped up to see Gakushu Asano sitting in front of him, working on a few sets of paperwork with a bored look.

"Gakushu- I mean, what are you doing here?" Ren stuttered.

"I needed to get away from the crowds for a bit." Gakushu answered as he placed another sheet onto the 'finished pile'. "They can get a bit overbearing sometimes."

'You mean all the time,' Ren thought to himself, understanding Gakushu's pain. He quite like it when Gakushu was a bit more honest with himself than donning on the 'act'. He couldn't explain it, something felt off about Gakushu because he could relate the same way. He acted as the 'play-boy' and all the girls flocked around him. It was an easier way to read of their personalities, many of which were ugly.

"Let me help you." Ren said as he pushed a pile of paperwork to himself. He mentally screamed at the chairman for giving his son this amount of work, along with the other duties pushed on the younger boy's shoulder.

'He does more work than most adults!" Ren angrily thought, 'But he hasn't complain a single thing about them too…'

"How many hours are you sleeping?" Gakushu ask, reverting his eyes back to Ren.

"What?"

"How many hours are you sleeping?" Gakushu asked again, but firmly this time.

"Well…" Ren nervously scratched the back of his head. He didn't knew how Gakushu had that sort of effect on him, he dealt with a government agent and here a 14 year old boy made him more nervous. That look was daring him to lie.

'I dare you Ren, I dare you.'

Gakushu continued, "You're not yourself today. You didn't have that usual passion in your eyes when you spoke of Noct's work."

'Fuck!' Gakushu internally berated himself, using his friend's associated name instead of the other.

"Noct?" Ren tilted his head a bit to the side.

"I thought it adds some to his character, he was fairly young when he was shot, I thought it was more befitting in his personality to shorten his name given from his work." Gakushu half-lied his way. What he didn't expect that Ren completely agreed with him.

"You're right, he would." Ren looked to him. "Kind of hard to un-see it now."

"You even have the dark circles." Gakushu pointed out.

"I do not-"
"It's faint."

"And you're using makeup as well."

'Damn, as expected as the first ranked student of the main building.' Ren mentally praised Gakushu's top-end observation skills.

Ren sighed, "Maybe 4 hours at best or 2 at worst." He finally admitted to the truth.

It was Gakushu's turn to sigh. "Ren, you need your sleep. You mustn't exert or risk your health for your studies." He said, and Ren caught on the sadness that followed in the Strawberry's voice.

"I can't have you passing out in the middle of class." Gakushu scolded.

"Right, right." Ren said as he waved the boy off.

"You're not being sincere about it." The strawberry retorted back.

"I will sleep on time tonight."

"Promise?"

"Pinky promise?"

"Ren."

"I give, I give. I just had a mishap on some work, won't haven't again."

'Not if Jones wants a nose job.'

Gakushu set down his pen. "Do you want some tutoring sessions? I have the time to help you."

'I have all the time.' Gakushu innocently thought. 'I can manage.'

"It's fine, just that I misplaced some work and it shuffled around."

Gakushu went into the library, just for some peaceful time before he had the night shift and to get away from his father and the other students. That was where he spotted Ren taking a nap on the table. He knew that Ren wasn't getting his sleep properly, because he was drowning in a large cup of black coffee when he walked to school.

He didn't want another person to grow addicted to their caffeine like Rilliane, he could only manage that she was taking her 21st cup as the meeting was still going. They probably brought in a game of monopoly to pass the time, it wasn't like they took the meeting seriously when two-thirds of it was waiting for demons and angels to stop bickering at one another.

Gakushu walked closer and stood next to the sleeping Ren, he leaned down to observe of Ren's face. He poked at his cheek, and Ren remained unresponsive. '… Cute.'

And then he felt something that was left on his finger, 'Make-up?' He leaned even closer to Ren's face and gently rubbed under his eye, unveiling the dark circles.

'Jet-lag? No, it's been weeks…'

"Unnnnnnn." Ren murmured, Gakushu jolted and froze like a statue. "Damn you Jones, get back
here and help me fix your screw up."

Ren continued his nap and Gakushu let out a sigh of relief. He stared at his friend's face, it was quite handsome when he looked up close. With the sharp structure of his jaw, long eye-lashes that fluttered, complimented by the gentle and warm eye-colour of hazel brown. 'He will go to places.'

Then Gakushu's face felt hot as he shook that thought out from his head.

And then an idea popped into the strawberry filled mind, he looked to the left and then to the right and found that they were the only two in the library. He smiled to himself before he took out his phone. He focused it to Ren's sleeping face, zoomed in and snap!

Gakushu took a photo of Ren sleeping, he smiled widely as he looked down at his newfound prize.

"The usual?" Rilliane asked as the two stood on top of a building, Gakushu sat on the ledge of the building as he watched the cinematic records of the occupant inside of the home.

"The usual." Gakushu answered, "Tanabe Isao, born in April 3rd 1952. Died from liver failure on XX XXXX. Remarks, none.' And he stamped the 'complete' sigma on the profile picture of the elderly man.

He watched as the records slowly disappeared into the moonless sky with a bored look. "When will we have the moon back again?"

"Hopefully before the end of this year, I was lucky enough to get out of that meeting within a day." Rilliane sighed, drinking her god knows how many cups of straight black coffee.

"That's surprising."

"Any more left on the booklet?" Rilliane asked, leaning over his shoulder and Gakushu shook his head.

"That was the last one for the night." He closed the booklet and he passed it to his main senior. He reverted his Death Scythe back into a keychain and reattached it back on his phone. He looked up to the clear starry skies through his glasses before he stood up and patted his knees to clear the dust.

"I will see you tomorrow Rilliane." He said as he stretched his arms out, standing at the edge of the ledge.

"Have a goodnight Gakushu-chan, sleep well." Rilliane said.

"I will." And the young reaper jumped off the five story building, onto level ground without a flinch and proceeded to walk back to his father's home.

'I wonder what is on that phone that made him smile so much?' Rilliane pondered over her 'child.' She knew that he wasn't smiling because he was going back into that house.

Gakushu donned in his reaper uniform, the black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up. It was only buttoned to the waist down, underneath was some military-styled white cargo pants. Matching this were some black boots tucked in and black leather gloves. In his hands was a phone, acting as the boy's light source as he walked through the dark streets of his hometown.

He stared at his phone, with a growing smile, the first picture that popped at his phone was him

And at the menu page, in the background was Ren's adorable and sleeping face. It already made him
feel better.

"My treasure."

Viktor was only the pop-up background screen.

_The two did look similar._
"Strawberry please, please come out." Gretel tried to coax the boy out from his hiding place.

"Let me hide here!" Gakushu yelled under his protective shell of his strawberry printed themed blanket. His face right now was the colour of cherry tomatoes, Gretel knew that even as he hid.

"Come on Gakushu-kun." Gretel patted the blanket cocoon, Gakushu could just feel the playful smile directed at him and his soul by the blonde. "I even have cake."

"No!"

'Stubborn.' Gretel was surprised, Gakushu could always be bribed with cake and especially when it was his favourite strawberry shortcake. The kid had a sixth sense for his favourite treat.

"What happened?" Noct asked as he sat aside of the hiding Gakushu, opposite of Gretel. "It must be bad enough that he is refusing cake. And strawberry shortcake at that."

"Gakushu showed his true side to his class." Gretel answered, air-quotes around 'true sides', Noct let out an 'o' sound and Gakushu scoffed.

"Everyone thinks that I'm weird!" Gakushu cried out, Gretel sighed as she rubbed her temples. 'We had this discussion weeks ago!' Gretel wouldn't mind repeating the talk, even if she has to repeat this a dozen of times. But she was on a time limit here, not everyone was a reaper and especially not Class-E. And especially not Ren.

"Gakushu-kun, we talked about this."

"Oh yeah?! Did that ever mention of my classmates seeing me in my shorts!" Gakushu yelled from under the covers.

'Nagisa seems happy enough.' Gretel thought back, she swore that the blue haired boy looked as if he was going to die as a happy man. 'Maybe I could use him to make Ren jealous?'

"Maybe I should transfer to Weston College…" Gakushu whispered. "Ikeda has the papers ready, I can go right now." Gakushu wanted to run away, he was dying from embarrassment and because he was a reaper, he was never going to die therefore continue to feel embarrass. "Take me to the Sapphire Dorms!"

"Someone else could do my job!"

'Not on my watch.' Gretel immediately went into action, with one prized important information known by two persons. "If you do, how would you see Ren again?"

The blonde girl felt a rip in her heart, she was running out of time and she knew if things continue the way they do then Gakushu will be left with regrets… What only she knew in the group, something that she wanted to threw up from just knowing about it. Gakushu Asano has a 75% chance of experiencing a mental breakdown, and that was from the start of the school year.

Gakushu flinched and he finally popped his head out from his protective cocoon. "You win this time
"I love you too Shu-kun." She hummed, as she combed through his strawberry blonde locks with a cheery smile while she felt sadness eating up her soul.

"Hey guys, Gilbert is setting up the kakorake machine." Feli burst into the room with his well-known bubbly expression. His short chestnut brown hair bounced with excitement, maybe he could finally filmed Gakushu's infamous pudding song? "Do you want to come?"

"Sure." Gakushu jumped out from his shield of warm and fluffy blankets as he dashed to the pasta loving reaper's side.

"Pasta~" Feli sang as he skipped his merry way. "Let's go~"

"Hey, I thought you were going to see Class-E?!" Gretel yelled as she in a stumble followed the pair. Noct quickly followed behind.

"Tomorrow, I promise!" Gakushu yelled as he quicken his paste. "It's not really like they are going anywhere else anytime soon."

Gretel placed her hands on her hip as she walked and sighed. "You better…"

Well that's one thing scratched off from the list, now what to do think?'

She might as well start to finalise plans for Ignis and Noct, it has been fun experience for the past 150 years with these two but she believed that Iggy was at his limit. 'Actuality, he has been at his limit since the moment Ignis met Noct for the first time 180 years ago.'

'He is quite stubborn. I will give him that.' Gretel inwardly smiled when she glanced at her adorable once-junior, Noct. 'But what he didn't recount that Noct shared those feelings as well 180 years ago. And it makes the challenge all the more fun.'

And it was good to show off to Ren how good her match-making skills were, she will get her way. How should she use her secret weapon was the question?

"Hey Mr Ignite~" Ikeda sang when a certain male with almond sandy blonde hair and a plate of pasta in his hand. The other glared and somewhat sighed as he met with the light haired male.

"It's Ignis, hello Ikeda." He then turned to Ren and gave a slight nod, "Ren." Ren gave the male a wave back. "Have you seen Noct?"

"No, I haven't." Ren answered, both ignoring the whine coming from Ikeda.

"Geez, why are you acting like Gakushu?" Ikeda complained with a pout and arms crossing. "Is that why Noct dated Shu in the first place?"

The light haired male smirked in amusement when the other's green eyes widened. "You knew about this?"

Ikeda gave the older man in the class that reads 'No duh.' And then he let out a scoff."Yeah, it was quite obvious." And then he felt a hand tightly gripped onto his shoulders.

"Wait, wait, wait! Gakushu dated?!" Rio squealed. And many more girls followed in their squealing.

"Yeah, before school started this year I think." Ikeda answered, he wondered why the blue haired
bean and red-head Ikeda was emitting a dark aura. "It didn't last too long, they rather be best friends if anything."

"No last year, just before Christmas." Ren corrected the man, recounting of Noct's words. Although he knew the true reason why the two dated, Gretel was hard-core in her love-matching game, he wondered how Ignis felt about this as on the outside he was as stoic as usual. He was probably internally screaming, Ren knew that he has been doing that quite often lately. Especially with Jones.

"So, who wants to see Shu sing?" Feli came bursting into the room, everyone drawn their eyes on the bubbly reaper of the Italian Branch as the awkwardness levels rose.

"…" Everyone blankly stared at the bubbly Italian.

"Was I interrupting something?"

Either way, Nagisa and Karma took charge on want to see their 'Cinnamon Roll' behind the karaoke machine. The class followed along mainly due to curiosity. Ignis followed to know of Noct's wellbeing, Ren because he didn't trust Karma and Ikeda wanted to dick around. The teachers came along to supervise.

What happened next, nobody saw it coming. Okay, maybe Ikeda?

'What the fuck…?' The general thought of the class and its teachers.

Everywhere they looked, someone was drinking and wearing some sort of costume. Gakushu was in the middle of the room, sitting on the floor with Noct and Gretel, all three covered in a blanket and drinking bubble tea. "What about pudding?" Noct asked as he sipped his milk-tea in a daze.

"Nah, I'm really want some jelly right now." Gakushu responded honestly as he finished his drink before going for the next. "Strawberry jelly would be good right now."

"Jello shots?" Gretel sleepily suggested as she offered up a shot glass, beside her was an arrangement of cakes and pastries waiting to be consumed.

"So, how's life?" Gretel asked as she took a mouthful of coffee-toffee cake. The group has yet to acknowledge the introduction of the class. "How's school?"

"Dull, I finish work earlier as usual." Gakushu said, Gretel hummed as she eat her third slice of cake and most of the class scoffed. "Nagisa is cool to talk with though." And a certain blue haired boy internally cheered as externally awed.

"Cute, too bad that he is already taken, don't remember her name but she had green hair." Gretel mused, and Kayano flushed. "So Noct, how about you?"

"Mr Coconut has been fine." Noct said and then Ignis felt a twitch in his eye. Ren couldn't help but smile a bit, it was still funny that the confident handsome man that was Ignis was jealous over a coconut. The class started to giggle as well, mainly from the girls.

"I'm guess that Ignis jealous over that again." Gakushu muttered. The students' eyes were directed at the almond blonde. Korosensei had that cheekiness in his grin, Ignis felt his eye twitched some more as the teacher began writing his notebook.

"Since when was he not jealous that Noct's attention shifted away from him?" Gretel chirped as she drowned her next cup. The other teachers eyed at the male. Ikeda was leaning over Ignis, burying his
head in his shoulder as he held in the snickers. As the almond blonde male had a stoic face although he was a bit pink and looking to stab Ikeda.

"I'm sorry but the ship left the port years again, with Gretel as its' captain." Ikeda snickered, he had done enough laughing and rolling on the floor for today. He might let Ignis off for a bit, just for today… maybe the next five minutes? "All aboard?" He sang.

"Or so I heard." Ignis growled under his breath, his glare similar to William and it was directed at Ikeda who remained unaffected. "This is rather unprofessional-"

"Jeez, just hook up already!" Hoshino complained as the pink haired female drink an empty can at the almond blonde. He easily caught it and threw it into the nearest bin that was filled to the brim with empty bottles. Karma remembered her from the Team Mart shop when he goes for his strawberry milk fix daily.

"We have been waiting for decades here." Ben yelled over from the couch, diverting his attention away from the moment as Arthur was singing a song about 'fish and chips'.

"Let's go go everyone! Let's go? Let's go!" Arthur was the one dressed in a pirates outfit as he yelled into the microphone, "Pub, pub, pub, you say? Go! Fish and chips!" The other reapers that sat on the couches dressed in their own costumes sang, horribly out of sync though together as part of tradition

"Even Gakushu in on it. Or should I say, on board on the shop" Ben pointed his thumb to the boy, looking very content and comfortable in his shell of blankets. The girls and boys of Class-E were blasted away from his sheer cuteness, especially with his face of content. Nagisa was taking many, many photos. "Hell, he dated Noct so he could later make you jealous."

"Since you didn't notice, we had to scrape the idea." Gretel chirped as she dug into another plate of carrot cake. "That was the plan, Arthur told me." Nagisa and Karma sighed in relief, while most of the girls sighed in disappointment.

"Arthur!" Ignis called out to the singing male and main senior.

"What? You are so cute together, I'm just sad that Noct doesn't go to me anymore when he has nightmares. He always go to you now." Arthur cried defensively as he held his hand up in surrender and dropping the microphone. "It is the same for the strawberry with Ren."

"That is true." Gretel chirped as she pours herself another glass, "I didn't even plan that to happen." Ignis internally cursed himself but at the same time was happy to be there when the black haired boy needed him.

"Was I the only one who didn't knew anything about it?" Ignis groaned, he felt a headache coming to his temper.

"Looks like it." Gretel shrugged. And then she scanned across the room,

"Gakushu?" Ren interrupted the conversation, as he was more concerned over what he was drinking.

"Ren?" Gakushu caught on to Ren's voice, he turned a bit and lazily glance to the hazel haired boy. And then he burst into happiness, the class knew that they were not imagining the sparkles surround the boy. "Ren~" Nagisa was in heaven right now.

"Drink~" The strawberry blonde offered his drink to his friend. And then Nagisa pouted because the strawberry didn't share his drink with him first.
'Rival!' He eyed at Ren.

"Ah- Sure." Ren decided to take a sip and he immediately regretted it, it burns as it went down his throat, the bitter aftertaste lingered on. He quickly choked as he spat it out before going into a coughing fit.

"What the hell was that?!" Ren choked as he gasped and soothed his throat.

"Bubba." Gakushu sang, as if it was obvious as he beamed to the boy, Ren did a good job on not dying from blood lost. Nagisa was losing in that game though.

Korosensei came round and took the drink off of Ren's hand, he took a sip and his beady black eyes widened. The teacher gasped,"Gakushu-san, this is alcoholic!"

'And then!' The entire class scanned the room and analysed each of the bottles. 'Everything is alcohol!'

"EHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" Many of the students voiced their concern. Karasuma especially was horrified at the sight that the group of La Morton's student was drinking. Irina was bad enough to deal with but dealing with alcohol induced teenagers was un-imaginable!

He looked to his right. "Drink! Drink! Drink!" Ben and a group of males were egging on a female to drink a bottle of wine. And she did, the entire bottom and she slammed it on the table and the crowd goes wild.

"Another!" The girl yelled. On the other side, there were a group of shirtless males drinking all the hard liquor they could get their hands on.

"Another!" A male with dirty blonde hair demanded as he threw his cup and smashed it to the ground. The group roared as they threw around their shirts. Karasuma knew that he was going to have a long night.

"Look on the bright side, nobody is drinking through a funnel nor is Lucia and Ivan are here." Ikeda suggested as he kicked an empty beer can. "I'm still surprised of how they got the cinnamon roll to drink, since he always screaming and running in terror but that could also be because of Lucia and Ivan."

'Theirs is worse!!?' The thoughts of Karma, Nagisa and Ren merged. They have heard of small bits of how the two love their A-game in drinking. 'How do they still have their livers!?'

"And nobody is bathing in vodka too." Ikeda added, he took a bottle of whiskey and took a sip. "Ah, you guys are cheaping it out here if you're drinking Evan Williams."

"Excuse me for not wanting to buy a $10,000 per bottle!" One reaper from Australia yelled, "Where is my goon!?!"

"Acting as North's cushion." Gakushu called out with a flushed face and the most adorable smile, meanwhile the oak-brown haired boy was passed out on the floors and drape over with a blanket. His trusty partner, Vella sat beside the sleeping boy as she continued to drink her sweet cocktail and sang a lullaby.

"I wonder if it is a good pillow." Gakushu asked, Noct voiced his friend's words as well. Noct especially was interested although he was content on having Ignis' shoulder as a pillow. Ignis won't admit it publicly or so openly, but he was fine with it as well.
"You guys are from La Morton, you got the budget." Ikeda sighed as he placed the whiskey bottle back down. "Come on guys, you aren't even mixing drinks with red bull! Where's the fun!?"

'That is dangerous.' The class thought. 'How the hell is he a police officer?'

"Shut up! Unlike you, I want to keep my liver for another week." Hoshino cried out as she flung the red solo cup to his face to which Ikeda swiftly dodged. "Go make Ignis jealous or something."

"Cut me some slack here, I'm still getting daggers from Mr Ignite because I brought Noct that piano from Beijing." Ikeda whined. "The next time I could do is let me be Noct's shoulder pillow…. That is actually a good idea."

"Ikeda." Ignis possessively growled, drawing Noct closer to him but Ikeda kept to his cheeky smile.

"What, you make this too easy. And I'm a good pillow, ask Gakushu although not as good as Ivan. " He let out another booming laughter for the night. "It was a shame that you didn't provide us more entertainment when you guys were off in Brussels."

"You guys are lighting up from the mood, have you not seen An and Johnny's fight just this morning." Prom called out across the room.

"Poor girl is drinking her heart out in the corner." Ben pointed to the corner with his thumb.

'An!?' Karasuma remembered the girl he met earlier in the afternoon and cared for her minor injury. After that, he left after receiving his order and a blinding sweet smile on his way out. He started to search around the room to find her.

And then Gakushu abruptly stood up as he curled himself with his smugly blanket. Nagisa and Karma somewhat wished that it was strawberry themed for his strawberry blonde hair. "God we need this, it is depressing right now with An and Johnny! Something like we can watch as we pass the pop-corn! Be more jealous Iggy! Be more-"

Gakushu wanted his drink back but he tripped on his sheet and he fell to the side. The strawberry blonde did embraced for impact, as he supported himself with his arms and knees however his sheet slipped off… Showing of his short boxer briefs to the world. "Awwwwwwwwwwwww." He whined cutely. Nagisa was very close of collapsing from lack of blood.

The girls and guys all had blood dripping down from their nose. As Gakushu was wearing nothing but a very short waist black apron, he had a white collar but he was revealing his pale, tone yet lean chest. Although Gakushu's reputation as scary and cold has been taken blows many times, this was the final punch and nobody could now unsee the cuteness that is Gakushu Asano. There were many nose-bleeds.

"… EEHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" The class yelled once more together.

Noct shuffled over and he pushed Gakushu back and forth, muttering something incomprehensible, shredding off his blanket and revealing of the outfit he was wearing, a white toga wear the skirt was a bit too short. Gretel came over, now showing that she was wearing a sexy maid dress with knee-high socks and bunny ears.

"They are definitely drunk." Ikeda noted casually. Key word to Class-E, casually, like this was a normal and daily occurrence. Enough that this man wasn't surprised. "Drunk enough that they are started to wear the costumes."

"Who wants costume!??" Gretel yelled loudly and was followed with cheers from the other drinking
reapers.

'I wonder what An is wearing.' Ikeda thought to himself, because whenever there is alcohol around, you would always catch the Australian reaper of 20 years.

It was Ignis' turn to blush, he quickly intercept and draped the black haired boy with his jacket. It was a good thing as the class didn't spot the bullet wounds that draped the boy's pale chest.

"I'm nawt drunk! You're drunk!" Noct denied before he took another shot of vodka hastily and then coughed up harshly. Ignis comforted the boy as he rubbed circular motions on his back and offered Noct a bottle of water.

'Noct was a denying drunk. I'm learning someone new every-day.' Ikeda thought to himself as he continued to listen to Noct denying that his throat was burning. 'Aw that is so cute~'

It wasn't hard to tell that the guys of the class were about to be dying from blood-lost from now the sight of Gretel. Now that everyone noticed it, everyone that drunk had some kind of 'sexy costume'.

Vella was in a sexy play-boy bunny costume, with ears and a tail to match. Another girl was in a nurse outfit. Gilbert however was only draped with a bed sheet as he chugged at his beer, alongside with West as the two drunkenly sing their karaoke. It was a safe bet that the two German drinkers were the happy drunk types, and that most of the others were the reckless types.

"I don't feel so good." Gakushu muttered as he covered his mouth with his hands as he paled before turning a bit green. "I think I'm going to be sick."

Karma's brotherly instinct kicks in, he dragged Gakushu and headed for the windows. He quickly and harshly slide the window upon, eventually Gakushu couldn't keep it in longer and vomited as he leaned over the window. Karma patted and rubbed the boy's back for some sort of comfort. "There, there."

The girls were blushing of how cute-looking Gakushu's bottom was. Even though failed to noticed that Ren was glaring at the red haired teen. Gretel would be writing down her plans but she was too focused on her drinking. All she could think was, 'Time to hit with the vodka once more.'

'This is all too familiar.' Karma thought back to the times when he helped Ichigo as he vomited in the public trash-bin. It didn't help that Gakushu here had the similar features as the Candy Fest idol.

"I got another blend ready!" Gretel cheered as she led up her drinks. "Who wants eggnog?!"

"Yay!" Noct cheered and he lifted his arms up. Gretel came and hugged the boy with drinks in hand. Gakushu turned around and cheered as well, less euphorically though. "Yay..." He quickly turned back and vomited more of his stomach's content. And Ren walked over to his side to help the boy.

"Iggy! Come join us, I will make a blend for you and Noct-kun." Gretel offered the almond-blonde haired man a drink. Before he could answer no, another thought interrupted her. "Hey, doesn't that sound like a pairing name for you two?"

"Eggnog! Eggnog! Eggnoct!" She sang as she swung side to side. "Eggy!"

"Stop that." Ignis plead.

"When will you two fuck already?" Gakushu asked, causing much of the room to gasp, mainly Nagisa and for Ignis to turn red like a tomato. Karma was laughing of how it reminded him back at
home of the café incident with Johnny and An. "Who would top? I am curious about that." And then he went back to vomit.

"Urghhhhhhh..." The drunk Strawberry groaned, his hair held back by Ren. Ren whispered words of comfort to his ear as he helped the boy, he wasn't going to let Karma take the credit.

"It is obviously going to be Iggy, you know... He is surprisingly kinky. You should see what he reads." Gretel said with a slur and Ignis choked. She playful slapped Noct's back, "Prepare for sore hips! He is going to release his pent up sex-drive."

Ikeda has now officially rolling on the floor, it was another story added to the endless adventure so the Department. First the whole tournament arc, when Gakushu was dangling from a rope attached to a helicopter as he flew around the city. What's next, An as a pole dancer? That would actually be nice.'

"They are quite a popular shipping around the place." Gretel said as suddenly there was pile of thin comics behind her. She flipped to the next page, since Ignis had full range of the book, he was as red as a tomato.

'What am I doing to Noct!?'

"Please, please tell me that is not a thing." Ignis asked, as in Gretel's hand was a doujinshi booklet. Another reaper came beside her and snatch one of the books, the reaper was from New Zealand and he whistled.

"Holy shit, this is really kinky."

'It is.' Ignis internally groaned.

"What? You do know that doujinshi pairings back at work is a proud tradition." The reaper explained as he flicked through the pages. Luckily for him, the books eventually but suddenly disappeared before anyone else could grab their hands on them. Although it didn't help in knowing that there are artists within the Department crafting such scandalous smut.

And also, Gakushu had another drink of bubble tea in his hand as he leaned over the window. "Hey, did me how it goes. My sex life is your sex Noct! It is already getting kinky enough with Ikeda, Johnny and-"

'When did he!?' Everyone thought of the drink that suddenly appeared in his hand.

"Okay, no more for you!" Karma stepped in and snatched the drink away.

"Dylan- no!" Gakushu cried out as he mourned for his drink. Karma flinched and he stared at Gakushu. The strawberry blonde pouted as he looked over to the red head and then he paused to stare at Karma. His big violet eyes that glitter stared deep into the red-head's soul. "Aka-san? Is that you?"

'...No.' And then Gakushu beamed as he lunged towards him.

"Aka-san!" Gakushu said as he bear-hugged the boy, smiling and rubbing his face on his chest. Karma's face turned into the colour of his hair, Nagisa internally cursed the boy and Ren froze like a statue.

'It can't be...' Karma thought back during one of the school holidays, when he was run over by a boy donned in black. A simple black tank top and black cargo pants.
"…" The class stared at the scene. It was getting wilder and wilder by the second.

"Aka-san! It has been so long! I haven't seen you around but that could had been the wig." Gakushu dripped as he looked up into his amber golden eyes.

'… No way.' Karma remembered of how the boy fell to the ground face first, how he covered his pink nose after the impact.

"Sorry that I hid under your shirt, it is a big habit of mine." Gakushu meekly whispered as he pulled himself away, Karma was sweating of how Ren was glaring at him, how does this kid without any experience in the art of assassination make a death-glare so intimidating?

'It is…'

'It's him.'

"So Karma." Nagisa eerily whispered as Karma felt a hand on his shoulder. He shakily turned around and see Nagisa's smile. "When was this?" When Nagisa had the assassinate look in his blue eyes staring down to Karma's soul.

'Fuck… How the fuck do I explain this!?' Karma asked himself as he was subjected to the looks from his classmates. Easy answer, you don't. Gakushu wandered off and went back to his main circle, he must have his sweets. Gretel couldn't eat all of those cakes by herself.

"Hahahaha! I remember, you were sobbing for Aka-san. Aka-san! Save me!" Gretel teased, she pulled at Gakushu's flushed cheeks as he weakly tried to pull away. Miss Irina and the girls were so tempted to pinch those cheeks that look as soft and bouncy like pudding.

"What a cruel name, to be named after for red in Japanese." Noct whispered as he shook his head.

'I was dicking around!' Karma internally yelled at the raven haired boy.

"Gakushu, I need to ask you something." Isogai asked the boy.

"What is it?" Gakushu asked with his mouth stuffed with cake and many photos were taken.

"Are you Ichigo from Candy Fest?" He asked.

"Yeap." Gakushu immediately asked, no questions asked and no hesitation.

'… How could we not see this?' The class thought. Even Korosensei was shocked. They really should have seen this coming. The pieces fit together, he even looks like the idol if you just dyed his hair blonde.

'How terrible, using another persona to show one's true self while the real other behind a mask!' Nagisa internally screamed. 'I failed as a big brother again!'

The moment Karasuma's drifted to where it seemed it looked like that kind worker from the café earlier in the day. He almost fainted. As An was wearing nothing but the infamous killing virgin sweater. Was he the only one that was noticing this!? Because everyone around her was just drinking away. And why was she crying? Suddenly he felt like he went back in time, back when he was eight years old. It didn't help that An looked like her Anna.

"He hates me Prom, I'm telling you!" An sobbed, she leaned over the coffee table and buried her face in her crossed arms. "He didn't even want to go drink with me!"
"I know that's not true." Prom answered with a bit of a slur as he poured in another shot of whiskey for her. "It's not your fault that he has the night shift today."

"It is." An whined and she took in the shot, drowning her sorrows away. She slammed the glass on the table, she let out a sniffle and a cough, before hiding her face in her arms as she leaned over the table. She cried some more.

"I thought An was supposed to be a happy drunk." Ben asked, as he leaned over the coundch. "I always see her happy."

"Not without her drinking buddies, she'll be emotional and drowning the room with her tears." Ikeda explained as he cut some limes for his tequila shots. 'Another reason why I should kick Johnny's ass tonight.'

"Come on An, cheer up." Prom said, re-filling her glass once more.

"Achoo!" An let out a gentle sneeze and her shoulders started to shiver. The alcohol wasn't doing its job in warming her up, all it was doing was making her depressed. 'To solve this, more alcohol!'

"Um, An?" Karasuma called out to the girl, unsure what to do. What he did knew was that he didn't want her to drink this heavily for the sake of 'drowning your sorrows away.'

"Kuma, Kuma is that you?" An whimpered.

'Was that some side-boob?' Karasuma was dying from embarrassment as he was refrained himself from glancing to the side. Ikeda quickly stood next to Karasuma and kneelt in front of An, he looked like he wasn't flustered by what the Australian girl was wearing. He coughed to clear his throat, "Yo pretty ladies around the world~"

"...Eh?" That was the general response from Class-E. 'What on Earth is he planning?'

"Got a weird thing to show you, so tell all the boys and girls." Ikeda continued to sing in English, An looked to the light haired man in a daze, as she tried to follow what Ikeda was sing. Rio thought that it was a strange song.

"Tell your brother, your sister and your mama too." Ikeda sang cheerful and slowly An started to smile. If it were possible in Karasuma's eyes, the slight made his heart flutter like a high-school girl's crush.

"Cause we're about to throw down and you'll know just what to do." And finally An knew what she must do.

"Wave your hands in the air like you don't care!" An joyfully sang, she waved her arms high and up in tune with the song. And it went accordingly to plan, and Ikeda slipped through his trench coat down her arms.

Mission accomplished.

'You're good.' Karasuma thought.

Ikeda whistled the tune as he started to button up the coat. "Ikeda~ why do you smell nice?" An drunkenly asked as she leaned over, burying her face in his chest as she hummed. "Spicy, yet soft and sweet."

"YSL La Nuit L'Homme." Ikeda simply answered, and he just finished the last button.
"Aww~ You were always so adorable, not like K-hic but... hmmm, maybe..." Ikeda let An pondered for a bit, she was so cute for her own good. All Ikeda wanted to do was smash his lips on hers but he has the best self-control.

"James Bond!" She cheered. "Classy yet cute. You got the suit and everything."

'Nice!' Ikeda thought proudly of himself. And he was a mental note to wear more suits, it was win-win for him.

"Come on Gakushu." Nagisa begged as he was in a middle of a tug-o-war battle with Gakushu over the alcoholic beverage.

"No! My bubble-tea!" Gakushu cried as he yanked the drink back.

"It's alcoholic!" Nagisa yelled back as he pulled the drink to him once more.

"It's strawberry flavoured!" Gakushu cried as he yacked his drink back finally from Nagisa's grip.

Ikeda stood next to Nagisa, with An comfortably on his back. "Just bribe him with something, here."

"Not even for..." Nagisa paused as he read the small pink bag, "A tote box, Mariebelle New York." He said slowly. Gakushu snapped up and to Nagisa in great thought, Nagisa did his best to ignore the sparkles that surrounded the strawberry blonde.

"You know that you don't have to do that Nagisa." Gakushu slurred as he placed his drink down, swiftly Nagisa look the beverage away.

"It's fine." Nagisa insisted as he threw the drink into the waste bin that was the less filled with beer cans.

"You do know that it cost 25 US dollars for a set?" Gakushu stated as he popped a piece into his mouth.

'For just 8 pieces!?' Nagisa swore that his eyes shot right out of his skulls. Before he pondered too much on the piece, he must change the subject.

"So~ About Ikeda. Is he really the same police officer?" As much as Nagisa saw the experience that backed the man up, it was difficult to get behind his over-the-top personality and spending habits.

"Yeah, same guy who went to Dubai and brought a gold-plated Ferrari. I hope that Ikeda haven't scared Isogai with that toothbrush, I was too scared to ask him afterwards after I found out that Ikeda brought me a 4200 dollar toothbrush." Gakushu explained.

"Ummmm, caramel." The strawberry noted as he chewed some more. "Wish it was strawberries though."

"Gakushu, do you like strawberries?" Nagisa asked.

"Yes! I love them!" Gakushu beamed and he spread his arms out wide. "This much!" And Nagisa was down for the count, dying happily with blood dripping out of his nose. He was taken to the sidelines as he was dragged by Kayano and Rio.

"Ha, Shu is an honest drunk. Go figure." And then he felt something missing form his back. 'Oh boy.' An went back and started to drink with Prom again, this time with spirits. Before he went back to get his main senior, he noticed something, it was unsettling.
'Is it me or are there more people now than before…?'

'…. Is that a DJ I'm looking at? He might has well go before hell breaks out.

"Hey, Lover boy. Pick up Shu." Ikeda asked and Ren blushed. Before Ren could retort his words, Ikeda pointed behind him with his thumb. "If you haven't realised, they stopped the karaoke machine."

"And we are having more kids coming into the rooms."

Now that they realised it, those kids brought in a huge number of crates and one was even setting up a DJ booth.

"Feli, is that Alfred?" Ikeda asked the chestnut haired Italian as he eyed at the familiar blonde American.

"… Oh pasta…" Feli cursed. Prom snapped from his drunken daze to find himself staring at the American reaper that was Alfred. He learnt from the best of the group's favourite Russian and German, Ivan and Lucia.

'Shit!'

"Get An, get as many as we can!" He leaped from his table. "This party is going to be like Ivan and Lucia's! With or without them!"

"Code-red! Code-red!" Feli cried as he started to run in circles, as he waved a white flag around. Prom joined in his panicking as well. Ignis and Noct already left the room, the almond haired male carried Noct on his back as they bolted out. He wasn't going to stay back and be under the influence of the partying reapers, he barely survived that one time when he drunk with Ivan and Lucia.

"Get them Feli!" Ikeda called out as he grabbed him and held him under his arm. "Evacuate, evacuate!" He ushered Class-E out of the room.

"Come on Gretel!" Prom yelled as he started to drag the senior reaper and she responded with uncontrollable fits of giggles.

"Class-E, move out." Ikeda ordered as he caught the class's attention.

"The music is starting!" Feli cried as DJ Ben started to fist-bump the air as the beat was building up.

"If you not drunk ladies and gentlemen, get ready to get fucked up!" The stereos roared. More people started to shuffle and stand up. "Let's do it, ha ha LMFAO!"

'Crap! The song is starting!' Prom flinched as he went back to An. "Come on An, let's go." Prom tried to grab and pull the Australian female away as well, but she remained glued her spot. Clutching onto Roman and she cried out a 'no'.

"You know what, Lil' Jon, yeah!"

"Johnny! I'm sorry!" An called as she buried her face into Roman's chest. Prom cursed at the song for having a reference to Johnny as almost everyone in the Department called him.

"An!" Prom called out to the Australia reaper once more but to no avail. Karasuma was also helping in the effort, he was surprised of the core-strength this girl held.

"Let me drink my sorrows!" An burst into tears as she binge drink her vodka. She passed the bottle
to Roman and he started to chug as well.

"Come on, I will be your drinking buddy." Roman patted the girl's head as she snifflled.

"All of the alcoholics, where you at? Let's go!" And the reapers cheered. An lazily threw her arm up.

"She can't be saved!" Prom cried as he yanked Karasuma's collar and dragged him out of the room. Karasuma was shocked by the strength of the petite man. "Once she starts drinking the vodka, she won't stop! Ikeda couldn't even stop her!"

"When I walk in the club, all eyes on me! I'm with the party rock crew, all drinks are free!"

"We are running out of time Ikeda!" Prom yelled over to Ikeda.

"You think I don't know that!" Ikeda yelled back as he carried Gretel off.

"We like Ciroc, we love Patron!"

The reapers yelled, "Yeah!"

"Fuck!" Ikeda swore aloud.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Take the innocent!" Prom cried out as he ushered Ren and the Class-E students out of the room. Ren supported Gakushu with his arm around his shoulder as they hastily made their exit.

"What's going on!?" Isogai yelled.

"Shut the door! Shut the door! Once the song starts, the madness will spread! Contain it! Contain it!" And Karma did what Prom was begging, as soon he shut the door… the music started blasting.

"Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots!"

"Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots!"

"Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots! Shots!"

"Shots!"

"Everybody!"

"We barely made it." Prom finally collapsed to the ground, his legs jellified as he laid face-down on the floor. Gretel only giggled as she sat on the floor.

"I will get the hangover kit ready tomorrow." Feli tiredly and warily whispered, dragging himself and Prom back to his room. "Let's start with you first."

"Ikeda, where are you going?" Prom asked as Ikeda started to walk away from the group.

"Getting back at John."

"I will get the first-aid kit." Feli stated.

The music continued to blast.

'Yeah, we just get them to be now.' The class, the teachers and Ren thought as they eyed at Gretel and Gakushu who were sleeping quite happily. It had been an eventful night.
Karasuma only wanted a light snack, as much as the class didn't know, but he hated drinking black coffee. He only started just to see how Anna could like such a thing, it has no sugar! He hoped that he will get a sweet ice-tea. First day in Hasetsu was basically a freebie, no planning and just free-time. He entered the café that was the closest to the inn the class were staying.

It was almost empty and quiet, a blonde worker went to the staffroom with a cell-phone in hand. While the other worker was placing the cups on her tray. 'Perfect.'

The teacher entered the café and was confused to why the place was empty, not that he was complaining. He checked over to the selection of cakes and then he heard a crash behind him.

"Crash!" And a sounds of plates and cups shattered to the wooden floors.

Karasuma quickly turned around, "ouch!" She hissed, a cut was made on her finger. At that spilt second, he thought that his mind was playing a cruel trick when he heard that familiar voice.

He felt the air knocked out of him, his heart skipped a beat and he was question why Anna was in front of him. Kneeling on the floor, her fringe covered her forehead and swayed to the right with curliness as it brought it a sense of bounciness. The only difference what the length of her hair, as Anna had hair that reached down to her back while this person's whose was tied in a mid-tail was only a quarter of that length.

'Anna?' The immediate thought came to his head before he quickly shoot it down.

'No, she is not her.' He told himself this as he shook his head. Karasuma careful treaded towards the worker as she slowly cleaned the shards, 'something must be distracting her…'

A memory quickly flashed when he saw the helplessness in her eyes that day, when Edward trapped her in his embrace. She felt so small. He felt his heart beating faster and faster as he approached closer to the girl.

'Kara.' A voice echoed from the deepest depths of his heart.

'Kara.' Her smile.

'Kara.' Her voice.

'My little king…'

It had been a long time that his heart fluttered like this, sadly as much as the class wished, he never had that same sensation for Irina-sensei. He felt bad for using her, as a means to move on from his first love. However that will never happen, there was nobody like Anna, who became his reason, who was his everything.

She was the only who encouraged him to pursue what he wanted, he wanted to be in the army and she gifted him with a teddy-bear donned in a military uniform.

And so he asked, "Are you okay?"

He felt his heart ripped out of his chest the moment their eyes met, even if it was for a quick glance. Gretel was going to have a field day once she found out.
"I'm fine, please don't worry. It is only a scratch." The female worker assured, hiding her face that was flushing bright red like one of his student's hair colour. Karasuma felt a bit of warm on his face, like his heart was stolen once more.

'Damn, she even sounds like her.'
Short Story: Meanwhile

Chapter Summary

As Gakushu and the gang were in Haestu...

**Morning after**

"Why the hell are we breaking into his house? Not that I'm complaining, imagine all the blackmail material we could find." Antonio whispered as they unlocked the front door with ease after Gakuhou Asano had left the building.

The man went off to work. Antonio simmered in fury as the man didn't seem to care for his son, the son that was country out of town and enjoying himself at Hasetsu and he didn't even blink an eyelid. As much as the Spaniard was happy for the little Strawberry, just once can the man just care!? 'God!' It was bad enough that he crafted the path of a reaper for the child!

And then he mentally slapped himself, 'Focus! You are on a job here.' He crossed his arms as his partner, who had curly black hair that looked as if it was making it's own nest. Antonio was wearing his reaper uniform to highlight his experience in the intelligence division, dark olive green militarist cargo pants with black leather boots. He wore a jacket that was similar to the FBI's but instead replaced on the back was the GRD, the Grim Reaper Department.

Next to the Spaniard was 40 year experienced reaper from the Russian Branch, Ivan Ivanov. He was wearing his familiar black reaper uniform that reflected on his militarist background. "Data collecting, now that the school is back on surveillance. The 'Zeus' wanted more information. Both legal and illegal means." The Russian shrugged as he closed the door behind them. First they checked around the kitchens, bathroom, living room, dining room before making their way to the second floor.

One room they attempted to check was locked, as Antonio found first hand as the door-knob rattled as he tried to turn. "That's Gakushu's room, we can leave it." Ivan answered as they checked around the home. The house was lifeless, there were no family photos that would normally be hung around the house, but Gakuhou wasn't normal nor was he loving.

The two finally made their way to Gakuhou's office. Antonio clicked his tongue as if it was an insult. "Of course his office would be this neat." He wanted to rip off the certificates that hung on his walls, especially that paper showcasing his Bachelor of Education certificate.

"Check the draws. I'll check the shelves." Ivan commanded as he looked through the book shelves first. "After that, we can set up the cameras."

"You're the expert." Antonio sang to the man who had top-notch experience in the Russian secret police force. He went office to the desk, scanning over the pens, yesterday's morning paper, documents and lots of paperwork.

'Paperwork, paperwork and paperwork.' Antonio shifted through the papers before neatened them and placed them back as if they weren't touch. He sat on the big leather office chairs, and he slide opened another draw from the office table. 'Oh great, some more paperwork.' He sighed as he went
through finical papers, on school, from meetings concerning about his school and some government papers. Even then, the government papers wouldn't even worth mentioning.

'Boring, boring and boring.' Antonio flicked through each page before dropping them back to their rightful place. He was hopeful that he could find some good blackmail material to share among their group of grim reapers stationed in this town. 'If only Ikeda was here, he could suffer with me.' And he cursed the man for getting to spend time with Gakushu on what was essentially vacation time. 'And it came after his Dubai holiday!'

'Shuuie is probably singing his pudding song right now!'

"Antonio, pay attention." The senior Russian voiced as he popped a book back into the shelves.

"Got anything." Antonio asked, he needed to start a dialogue before he dies from boredom. He started to spin around in the office stair.

"Nothing remarkable." Ivan flipped through the pages of a math textbook. "How's work at the convenience store?"

Antonio smiled, "It is the usual... Actually no because I don't get to give Shuuie his usual box of candy."

'Even Ivan's getting bored.' And he checked the third draw, "Oh~ Files." He happily sang as he picked a folder. Ivan came round and started to read one of the folders as well. And then that moment of joy quickly died off.

"Awwww that was a bummer." It was just more boring paperwork and the bills.

"Welcome to my life." Ivan laughed as he closed a file and went for another one. "I did this a lot back when I was in the KGB. Lots and lots of paperwork."

Antonio went for another draw and it didn't budge. 'Locked?' On closer inspection, there was a keyhole. Ivan took out his kit and started to pick the locket, "Clicked!"

"...Photos?" Ivan voiced as staring about the pair were piles of photos, one that immediately caught their attention was Gakushu. Antonio almost threw himself as he snatched a photo, it was a photo when Gakushu was only a toddler. The tanned man squealed in delight as he dived into it.

"Cute!" Antonio awed, uncaring for how loud he was, it didn't matter when the two were wearing their uniforms. "Oh! Look at this one!" He picked up a photo when the strawberry blonde was only two years old. There was one in a pumpkin costume, Gakushu eating strawberry flavoured ice-cream and another of him losing his front baby tooth.

Ivan found an album deep within the unlocked draw. Inside were photos of Gakushu that only dated back to when he was in junior high, the days where he would hide behind a mask, Gakushu only gave a polite smile. This one was when he won an award for poetry alongside with Ren, this one was when he won the championships at the national soccer tournament. Much of the photos here mainly consist of Gakushu with Ren, some could be deemed as stalker-ish. There's one when he was at school at the library, the two were studying and didn't even notice the camera capturing their moment together.

It was as if Gakuhou Asano knew that Gakushu was happier with Ren.

"I don't get it through, why would he hide this?" Ivan asked, confused and lost on what to think of Gakuhou Asano. For four years, he hated the man for being so unloving but here, this is a treasure
cove of memories the man had taken of his son.

He picked on photo when Gakushu was four, smiling widely for the camera and in some ways smiling towards his father. Ivan could easily tell that Gakuhou looked at this one the most, the Russian could easily see the tear-marks staining the photo.

"Crap, look at this Ivan." Antonio gasped as he showed him a photo, it was of Gakushu and Gakuhou, both were smiling so happily and carefree. Both looking like an actual family, the Spaniard swore to God that he stepped into the set of an alterative universe. Gakushu was adorable, it didn't help that he already saw when Gakushu de-aged himself because of the flu. His small hands gripped onto his father's shirt, the cheeks chubby and bouncy were rubbing onto Gakuhou's.

"What happened?" The two asked to themselves. Gakuhou then was relaxed, with his hair unkempt and reached to his ears similar to his son. His clothes were more casual than formal, it was a huge contrast when a comparison was made from the Gakuhou then to the Gakuhou now.

More photos consisted of Gakushu, the photo that looked to be of the little toddler taking his first steps. Ivan could see the teardrops stained on the photo. The smiles lessened as the years progressed through the photos. The mark Ivan could see when Gakushu was five where the smiles started to lessen and the photos reveal the distance the two became.

What happened? How did it come to this? To the point where Gakuhou pushed his son to the point where he decided to traversed the forest alone for his ultimate act at age ten. To when Gakushu saw himself as unlovable, who trusted more in Ren than his own father. Ivan had so many questions.

"What happened?" Ivan asked to no-one in particular, "What happened from this?" He picked the same photo of the two smiling so happily, to when he was only five and then to the photo of when he was 10 who only looked to the camera and Ivan could see the hint of sorrow within those violet eyes. They were dulled over, no longer bright with life but sullen with grey.

The two dug more into his secrets, Antonio even found a drawing Gakushu did and at the bottom of the corner was neat written, the two assumed it was from Gakuhou. The writing said, 'Age:4'. And then they found another shocker, it was a crude drawing of Kunugigaoka Junior High-school acorn mascot in orange crayon, this one was drawn when he too was only 3. And if they knew their history correctly, the school had only been around for 10 years.

Ivan, with his calculated hunch, there was a change when Gakushu was five. The photos showed that.

"What the?" Antonio was confused. Then he found a snippet of a newspaper article that dated back 10 years ago. 'High-school student bullied, driven to suicide.' He handed it over to Ivan.

"Got any idea where Gakuhou would have that?"

"...."Ivan started to connect the dots as he traced his finger on the news clipping, he travelled into his mind to when he collected information about Gakuhou Asano. 'He was a teacher before Chairman of Kunugigaoka Junior High-school. It is possible that 10 years ago, a student of his committed suicide and mostly set the chain of events that changed the relationship between Gakushu and his father.'

Ivan tried to take a step back into the past, but it was almost impossible with the amount of reapers joining the Department daily, monthly and yearly. Even more some from Japan and South Korea who has one of the highest suicide rates in the developed world. He eyed at Antonio who continued to dig through Gakuhou's secret photos, perhaps he could ask the man for a favour as he could see easily go into the archives. Antonio did work in the Identification Division, and he had easier access
than a man like Ivan who worked in both the Intelligence and Retrieval Division.

'But what?' Ivan asked himself some more. 'How could the death of one student drastically changed Gakuhou Asano? What made the man changed from a loving father to the Chairman we so love?' And then one certain photo caught his attention, he felt the air from his lungs being sucked off.

"… What the hell I am looking at?" Ivan picked the photo, his hand shaking as the picture stared back at him. Pinkish eyes were staring back at him. "What is this?"

"This is fucked up." Antonio peered over at the photo.

Antonio wanted to throw up.
Short story: Their humour

Chapter Summary

The usual gags of the Department.

Their humour

Just before the first round of exams and some time after Korosensei became teacher of Class-E. Before the infamous tournament that left a certain strawberry blonde boy a scar around his temple, Gakushu Asano had just finished his early rounds and headed to the nearest Team Mart's staff room.

With a key in hand and the door in front, once inserted and opened revealed the world where Grim Reapers reside. Gakushu Asano came around during the weekends while his father was at work in his meetings, donned in his black reaper uniform as he walked through the central building of the Department.

An and Johnny were talking to each other at the lounge area. Rilliane was sipping her coffee with a phone on her ear. Gakushu just hoped that wasn't her 20th cup.

Ikeda casually walked with a smirk and his hands in his coat pockets. His black trench coat was unbutton and it left the back to fly around where Gakushu could easily imagine Ikeda's best friend Antonio following the light-haired male with a wind blower or the coat could fly around like in all action movies.

Gakushu however wanted to kick Ikeda's teeth in but he kept his temper inwards as he grumpily waited in line for his next assignment. He allowed his neon-green reaper eyes behind his black-framed glasses hover around the main centre as an attempt to pass time.

He looked up to find a reaper, who took in an appearance of someone in their mid-thirties on a high platform and was cleaning the high arch windows. He was wearing a janitor's uniform fitted with a safety harness, his skin was tanned, hair jet-black and on his face donned a moustache. Gakushu swore that it was Juan of the Mexican Branch doing the windows. Juan just loved to play around on his stereotype.

He already imagined the man humming to himself, Gakushu had to admit that it was a very catchy tune. 'They call me Juan, they can me-

Gretel texted back that she and Arthur were currently freezing in the fields of Siberia. Whatever assignment they have, the strawberry blonde didn't know, then Gretel texted him again. They and a team of reapers were trying to find clues of infamous seceder, the Undertaker.

'... Fun.' Gakushu thought to himself. The beginning of the year has yet been eventful, at least to the standards of a Grim Reaper. Although there was that tournament nearing around the corner, which he couldn't wait to watch. He scrolled through his phone, looking at emails, photos during his time in Washington D.C, the new update for his stories and messages back from Ren texted back when the hazel haired boy was in America.

There was one photo Gakushu really liked. The photo of Ren and his uncle at Disneyland was quite
funny, his uncle had lavender hair slimmed back with gel and on top was the Micky Mouse ears. His eyes were the colour of the sea, not deep-blue like Noct's but more on the lines of blue-green. Ren too had his hair pulled back due to the headpiece of his Micky Mouse ears.

'He should really pull back his hair more often.' He couldn't help but smile he looked over the photo. How funny it was to see Ren's strained smile, not one of fake politeness but one of annoyance, like him and Ikeda. His uncle widely smile as he wrapped his arm around Ren while the other crossed his arms. The photo take Gakushu assumed was from his aunt, she always wore sunglasses, even indoors.

He only hoped that Gretel doesn't found out about this, he knew that she would take it the wrong way. He already had trouble explaining why he has Ren's sleeping face as his phone menu background, he said that it was cute and it was a rare moment to see Ren like that. He didn't like the face Gretel was making but she hadn't made any moves yet, as she should because he and Ren were only friends, best friends.

He may had stared a bit longer on Ren's adorable yet handsome sleeping face when he didn't realised that Ikeda stopped at the middle of the main central and caught everyone's attention. Whispers were muttered as Ikeda was having a stare down with Mark, tension grew yet Gakushu couldn't for the life of him figure out why Ikeda was staring at the Australia, Mark wasn't Johnny nor did he he had a likening for An.

'Was it another comment about her hips? Ikeda can get possessive over his main senior.' And Gakushu couldn't help but see it enduring and adorable, if only the man didn't go his way into telling his pudding the other day.

Ikeda pulled his arm up and aimed it to Mark's head, he pulled as finger gun? Mark quickly did the same but he had two hands folded as a gun aimed back at Ikeda. The reaper next to them, Ben from the American Branch aimed his finger gun towards Ikeda. More reapers followed, many stopped what they were doing, and some even dropped their brief cases just so they could have two 'guns'.

Johnny played along, alongside with An who used the couch as their barrier. Juan stopped his cleaning and aimed his imaginary weapon as his fellow colleagues and eventually almost all of the reapers at the main centre aimed their finger guns to at least one reaper. Gakushu aimed to a bubbly Spaniard and the other at a male German.

"...."

Everyone was dead silent as each every reaper finger-gunned at each other. Feli was frantically waving his white flag in surrender, Gakushu aims his hands at Antonio and Gilbert.

"...."

"...."

"...."

"...."

"Bang!"

Ikeda made the first move and Mark fell down to the floor as if he was killed at blank ranger, Ikeda dodged invisible bullets from Ben and that instead hit Hoshino. Everyone was yelling bang as they all ran around the hall like children. Gakushu say he was at most risk so he dropped the plan on shooting Antonio and Gilbert as he ran for cover.

"Bang!" Gilbert yelled as he fired at West.
"Bang!" Ivan proclaimed as he joined along with Lucia as they took down Ronald.

Some jerked their head back and collapsed, others grasped at their chest before falling. Gakushu was running around and dodging to the best he can which was kind of hard when there are invisible bullets flying around the place. Van crawled through the ground like it was the trenches of World War I, Christopher Neubert was sporting a limb as he shot James down. Prom performed a Matrix like stunt as he dodged the bullets.

"Bang bang bang bang!" An chanted as if she was firing a machine gun.

Johnny already landed 20 kills before receiving the 'killing blow' from Prom. Ikeda wasn't that amused that Johnny got to rest on An's lap as her overprotective nature kicked in.

"Argh! My leg!" A reaper with a French accent yelled.

"Not the face! Not the face!" Grell cried because getting some imaginary lead to his face.

"Iggy!" Noct yelled over Ignis' body, the older male was protecting the other as he mowed down the reapers with the power of imagination before being struck by Ikeda. The almond blonde male was going to ignore the burning sensation as his face was being wrapped around by Noct's arm before being buried at his chest.

"Bang!" Antonio yelled over to the man who was cleaning the upper windows. The male reaper got 'hit' and he fell down from his platform, he didn't fell completely down as his safety harness prevented it. Now he just dangled there.

Ikeda switched his weapon to a heavy-duty weapon as he dashed through the cafeteria area, many reapers sat underneath the tables as they eat their respective foods. A sign that they want no part in the game but they allowed the others to have their fun.

"Boom! Boom!" Ikeda shoot at Rilliane who only looked up, not playing along and only gestures to the light-haired male to wait. Ikeda groaned as he dropped his arms before crossing them like an impatient child. Rilliane talked through her phone once more before ending it with a goodbye to Thomas Freeman. She put the phone away and looked up to Ikeda, she then gasped and threw her head back and slumped like a corpse as she toppled over the table.

"Rilliane! No!" Gakushu cried out as he ‘mourned’ for his main senior. Gakushu barely dodged the bullet as he ran to Rilliane.

"Fall back men! Fall back!" Ben yelled before finally being defeated by the might of Ikeda. Ikeda proceed to his next victim while he avoided the imaginary bullets. He saw Antonio shot down by Prom, Ikeda knew that revenge killing was nearing.

Feli meanwhile was hiding behind a table as it acted as a barrier with his teeth chattering and in his hand was a white flag.

"I think he is having a Vietnam flashback." Riku whispered who sat next to the Italian, he positioned his finger gun down is lap before reloading it.

"Dude, he's was from World War Two." A reaper with a Swedish accent ushered back, he threw a grenade over the table, it 'exploded' and caused the surrounding reapers to be forced into the air then plummeting back down to the paved and polished floors of the Department.

"Oh? Are you now the joke reaper?"
"What on Earth are you doing!" A loud booming voice radiates the building and everyone froze. They all turned their heads to William T. Spears.

All of the reapers playing stopped that they were doing. Some mid-freeze on the middle of a killing, Ikeda was just about to shoot Prom.

"Looks like the Zeus is back." Antonio mused, his head rested by his hand as he still laid on the floor. And behind the angry looking man was Gretel, Arthur and the team earlier sent to Siberia.

"Aren't you supposed to be dead?" Gilbert asked as he rolled over to the Spaniard.

"We're all dead."

"Get back to work!" William yelled.

"Awwwwwww." Many of the reapers whined, moaned, groaned or grumbled as they went back to their respective jobs and duties. Some picked up their papers and brief cases.

"Shows over!" A reaper yelled as she got up to her feet.

"Has anyone see my files?"

"Dude, I think I got your brief case."

"Da~ thank you."

Juan dragged himself up to his platform as he climbed his way back up with his safety harness. Gretel was amused but at the same time disappointed that she missed out on the fun game.

"It is good to see you so active." Gretel sang as she pinched Gakushu's soft and squishy cheeks. "Good thing I signed you up for the tournament."

And she walked off with Arthur.

".... what do you mean you signed me up for the tournament?!!"
Short Story: Paperwork

Chapter Summary

The wonderful and beautiful world of paperwork.

Paperwork

Paperwork as the dictionary had defined it as routine work involving written documents such as reports and letters. As much as the Department was filled with meetings with the devil and the higher angels, undercover missions into the governments of America or North Korea.

That and the gossip.

"What do you mean I'm the honorary step-dad?" Thomas asked Rilliane as they went out to eat for lunch at one of the many Department's food-courts. He made sure that Rilliane didn't order anything coffee related that lunch.

"Well, I'm his mother." Rilliane answered and thoms couldn't help but feel a slight of jealously towards the strawberry blonde boy who was currently in English Class back in Kungigaoko Junior High. "And he already has a dad, even if he is a dick."

Thomas nodded as they picked up their trays filled with food and walked over to the table benches. As soon as he sat down to eat his Reuben sandwich, a thought dashed through his head. "Doesn't that mean you have some sort of married relation to the man? Divorced yes but you still had that marriage earlier."

Rilliane looked over to her boyfriend as if he grew a second head or third eyeball. "You're not calling yourself as his step mother."

Rilliane's voice was ripped out as she blankly stared over to him. No words escaped from her mouth as his words slowly sank in. She then buried her face with her hands.

"...Crap."

The Department wasn't just missions and fun-talks. Records must be kept, papers must be tracked, missions must be approved, assignments must be given out and when this is happening every day for every single branch and division within the Department. There was bound to be roomfuls of paperwork. And all were sent to the 'Office' building, as they waited to be filled in or filed away.

No matter how mundane, uninspiring, soul-draining or boring paperwork will be, they were incredibly important for the steady rise of reapers entering into the ranks of the Department daily. Or else the Gods of Deaths could barely keep up with the events of the real world.

This didn't sit well with a particular reaper who was quite impulsive and has a carving for love and excitement.

"God damn it Grell! You misplaced the reports again!" Ronald yelled as he chucked a mug for the red head and cladded reaper.
It was the usual routine for the Department.

An

"And we are done!" An cheered and the reapers around her cheered alongside her as well. She and the team were cooped up in one of the many offices of the Department after pulling the short end of the stick and the prize of paperwork duty.

They all finished the paperwork given then since their four shift of paperwork duty. The female dressed in her black suit filed and packaged, she popped them on the tray and waited for someone to take them away. And they did, Thomas Freeman of the English Branch came into the room. The stoic male thanked the reapers of the room, he excused them from their dreaded paperwork duties and all cheered wildly.

Somebody else will suffer in their place!

Thomas placed the trays of paper on his trolley, before going to the next office for another pile of trays. Everyone there started to pack up for the next group, An drowned her third cup of straight black coffee. She woke up 3AM in Kungigaoko's time for this shift.

'At least my caffeine intake isn't bad when compared to Rilliane's addiction.' An mentally chuckled and she had her hair go through her hair. Something felt missing…

"Crap, I think I left my hairpin in that file!" She jolted out from her seat and slammed her hands on the table.

"Why?" James asked.

"We ran out of paperclips." An simply answered.

"Grell Sutcliffe!" A booming voice yelled from outside the office. The group rushed out to see what was happening with their heads popping out of the door. The reapers next door and many more did the same. Thomas Freeman was chasing down Grell as the other screamed in terror.

"How the hell do you misplaced and shuffled a supposed to be 300 page document!?" He shouted as he speared his weapon into Grell's head. The reapers hissed in pain as if they could fill the pain too, as well as the pain for the next set of reapers for paperwork duty because they were the one who has to clean up Grell's fuck up now.

"… Say, how would a human react with small traces of material made in the Department?" An hoped that the hairpin didn't end up for some governmental position in the human world.

"Don't know." Johnny shrugged. "At least it wasn't your Death Scythe." The other hairpin that was struck into her ponytail was her death scythe.

"Yeah…" An whispered as she touched the back of her hair to feel the other pin.

"Aren't those gem stones made from your blood?" Hoshino pointed out as she recounted of how red the stones that formed five-petal flowers where.

"Why is that a thing?" Mark asked.

"It was a phrase! I thought it was cool!" An yelled with a blushing face. "And I felt bad, Johnny and Ikeda made something similar with their blood for my birthday and I had leftovers after I made their
Johnny didn't like the looks the rest of the group but An gave to him. He knew that they were copying Gretel's infamous gesture.

And Ikeda was happy to keep An's hairpin, at least for the day.

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Arthur

"Looks like you picked up the short end of the stick again." Gilbert said to the group.

Arthur looked to his stick without emotions, he nodded and went off to complete the paperwork. He went into the building where all the 'magic' happens, went to his designated room and to his desk before going straight to work.

"You heard? Ivan put a group of mundanes in hospital a few days ago."

"Hey, if it doesn't give us more paperwork. I don't care." Another reaper shouted from his work table.

Injuring humans without orders wouldn't get any reapers any sort of punishment or paperwork. Even if they were children, reapers wouldn't get punished. Almost every reaper were quite happy with this rule, especially those stationed around Kungigaoko town. His long-time friend and once master Gretel earlier placed a student from Class-A into hospital after she fractured five of his ribs.

"How many?" Arthur asked as he placed another pile into the complete area.

'I went off to America and Ivan is already breaking ribs. Shame I couldn't be there to watch.' Arthur told himself as he went for another report. 'Huh, sales gone up for the café. Good for them."

"Five? Six?" Feli asked.

"What happened this time-" Hoshino was interrupted as the door was slammed opened. They were surprised that the door hadn't fallen off or shattered from the mere force of it.

"What on Earth are you doing here!" Gretel came bursting into the room, her hair was in a mess and face reddened from both the running and anger.

"What are you talking about?" Arthur spoke calmly as he neatened a patch of paper before settling it to the complete pile. He made the mental note of how her dishevelled appearance was adorable.

"I was the one who was supposed to be paperwork duty." Gretel walked over to Arthur's desk, to both compose herself and sink back into her lady persona. She took out her phone and showed him the chart.

"I thought it would be nice if I took your burden."

"You've done this for 200 years." Gretel's smile twitched. Everyone in the room would be worried for anyone faced Gretel with an annoyed face, but this was Arthur.

"You did say that you disliked the work." Arthur chimed.

"Who doesn't, but I should still go and do it." Gretel puffed as she crossed her arms.

Arthur faintly smiled at her answer. 'Of course, that's how dedicated you are.'
"Sorry to interrupt." Feli stepped in between the two. "But can't you just do it, together?"

Silence filled the room as Arthur and Gretel blankly stared at the occupants.

'… Why didn't we think of that before?' The two blondes thought in embarrassment. And they did an excellent job on not showing any betraying emotion.

'You seriously haven't thought of that?' The occupants of the room thought as they stared back in disbelief.

"Grell!" Rilliane yelled from across the hall. "This is the fifth mess-up this week! And why did you painted one of the offices red!"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaa!" Grell let out a shrilled scream.

"Must be the usual." Gretel mused.

---

**Rilliane.**

The Department offers classes on the wonderful world of paperwork and spreadsheets. It was mainly used as an extra helping hand for reapers struggling on the ins and outs of document filling, data collecting and sorting. However since the modern era, the Department decided to enforce these classes as mandatory. As there was an increase of complaints by older and senior reapers were posed at the terrible and sometimes laughable attempts made by the younger and newer reapers.

These new problems could be explained why. Suicide rates were high amongst school and college students. This was especially for two particular countries for their younger population. Japan and South Korea who has one of the highest suicide rates in the developed world. Rilliane knew of the main senior who had to take in one of those students back in 2013. The poor kid was afraid of bees.

Some of these suicides were related to the pressures of school, it was logically that they would connect paperwork and homework. For the Department, they were left with a strange equation of new reapers with a school background added with paperwork and then equalling to usual avoidance

Rilliane was busying tutoring the new batch of reapers on the wonderful world of paperwork. As boring as it was, it had to be done. As much as reapers love to comment on the quota for soul collecting decreasing, paperwork was always piling up. And nobody likes paperwork.

"There are many types of paperwork from lease agreements, reports and letters." Rilliane went on to explain to her class on sorting papers and making sure they take notes to never mix up one type with another in one pile.

"And remember kids, paperwork is not homework."

A reaper donned in a simple black suit came bursting into the classroom.

"Rilliane! We need you! You were always better at this."

"What happened?" Rilliane asked.

"Say, what would you do with… this?" The reaper with sorrowing and pitying eyes revealed the trays of paperwork that was lazily put together. Not only that but it looks as if somebody dumped a bucket of red paint and drowned the papers in it.
The class swore that they heard someone's heart breaking that day.

Rilliane goes up and picked the closest to her. She started to flip through the papers slowly to see what was wrong. Somebody had mixed up a reaper from the German Branch administration into a high-school with finance papers from a high-class and reaper own New York café. There were papers on bank statements and even some medical records for Ikeda and his numerous visits to fix up his ribs.

If you dived even closer in that single file, there was also papers for the planning of the 'secret' Dōjinshi Convention to fulfill the fan-girls and boy of their shipping needs. Turns out that 'Iggy x Noct' was quite popular in the community. Coming in second was 'Ikeda x An x Johnny', and it created some of the most kinkiest Dōjinshi she had ever laid eyes on. That and she wrote a novel with that particular shipping.

'So that's where it was.' The hazel haired reaper could see papers that Drake needed after he complained during breakfast. Finalising papers for the Department to allow the reaper from the English Branch to take his pet sun conure out in his new dispatch.

"Who've done such a thing?" Rilliane knew the answer but she prayed to the heavens that her answer was wrong.

"Grell Sutcliffe."

Her answer was right.

"...

"...

"Where are you going?" The reaper asked as Rilliane stepped out of the classroom.

"I'm getting myself a coffee."

---

**Ikeda**

They didn't know, he didn't know how this usual meeting between Angels and Demons with the reapers acting as a neutral entity ended up with a boatful of paperwork. He and his group for the shift was already dealing with enough work from sorting out papers detailing profit, losses and sales of reaper-owned business.

He had finished with 300 files and he knew that he deserved a short coffee break.

"I'm going to get me some coffee, anyone want any?" He asked. It ended up with Ikeda with an order list for seven other people in his office. He was only whistling along to Gakushu's infamous tune of the pudding song as he performed a balancing act. If An were there to see it, she would had been proud and come help Ikeda with the load. Either way it was a win-win for the light haired man.

And also today, Rilliane and Gretel handed him a box of the glorious dōjinshi's from the convention. Turns out he, An and Johnny were a popular pairing.

"Pudding, p-pudding, pudding-pudding parade." Ikeda whistled as he moved through the hall. He stopped by at the front desk of the 'Office' to sign back in again. Along the way, he was met with a familiar Spaniard, he had lightly tanned skin and curly brown hair.
"Hey Ikeda!" It was Antonio, however Ikeda didn't greeted him back as he stared that the man had in his hands. A boxful of paper, paper from a Team Mart convience store that where he may or may not worked in.

"Please tell me that it isn't more-"

"It is what it looks like." Antonio weakly smiled as he gestured the papers. Ikeda groaned and whined to his friend. The Spaniard lightly chuckled and went to pat his head. Ikeda sobbed and wanted An instead.

"Shuuie is battling a high-level demon in Tokyo!" A reaper came rushing into the hallway.

"Grell! How the hell did you ripped up papers that has the locations of demons hibernating for 400 hundred years?!" William's voice boomed from down the hall. "Oh! Who just happened to not know any of our new rules in placed barely 100 years ago!?"

"…"

"What…?" The lady reaper at front desk muttered. She then flinched by the dark looks of Antonio and Ikeda as they watch as Grell was being chased by a mob of wrathful reapers. Angry for Gakushu and how Grell created more work for them to clean up.

"Big brother Ikeda is coming!" Ikeda placed the orders by the side and dashed his way for the doors. "Antonio! Crack a rib for me!"

"Grell!" Antonio yelled as he let his protective instincts kick over to hyper-drive.

Even An joined in the chasing as a group of reapers ran after for the red-head reaper.

---

**Gakushu.**

Gakushu Asano just came back from an early morning shift after collecting four souls in his hometown while his father was out on a meeting on the weekends. He changed out from his uniform to settle in his fitted suit set as it was standard when working in the 'Office.'

He couldn't wait for the sweet relief of his warm bed and more comfortable clothing. Noct must be rubbing onto him, as the well experience black haired boy would his pyjamas underneath of his reaper uniform.

"Shu, you made a mistake around here." Ikeda pointed out. As he tapped the end of his pen around the name box. Gakushu looked up in horror.

"It's supposed to be Fuhrmann. Not Fuhrman."

"Crap!" Gakushu cursed as he hurried to correct his mistake.

"Minor mistake, I'm sure you be screaming in terror as you overthink about it while in the shower." Ikeda casually pointed out as he placed another file to the pile and Gakushu's breath hitched.

'Got you there.' Ikeda mused to himself as he let out a whistle.

"…"

"It's Gakushu." He huffed as his cheeks flushed pink. Ikeda laughed.
"What's with the sulking face?" Ikeda asked, he rested his cheek with one gloved hand while the other poked Gakushu's soft and bouncy cheeks with the end of the ball-point pen.

"I'm not sulking!" Gakushu angrily remarked as he finished up his papers.

"Are you mad because big brother is always right?" Ikeda cheekily sang. He smugly smiled as the strawberry blonde's face became as red as a tomato.

"You are my cousin!"

"That still counts as family." Ikeda said. "Ah, you forget to say distance cousin."

Before Gakushu could think of landing a punch to the man's ribs, the two and the rest of the reapers on shift in that office heard an ear-piercing scream.

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

The voice was familiar in these halls. Everyone turned their heads to the window, the Department decided to change the halls a bit and place windows for each office. These windows allowed those working to see outside to the hall and occasionally waved to a passing or working reaper from outside the room.

The group and many others from other offices could see a reaper clad in red running down the hallway with tears behind his red glasses. Chasing behind him were William, Gretel and Arthur.

"Why does he still do paperwork?" Gakushu asked. His chartreuse phosphorescent followed the scene. 'Maybe this will why they installed windows on the walls?'

"Honestly, I don't know." Ikeda said as the two watched Gretel and William delivered a heavy blow to his skull.

The two and the rest of the office watching hissed as they too could feel the pain.

"That's going to leave a mark." Mark remarked.
This chapter will be deleted as soon as I upload the next chapter.

I am so sorry for not being very active this year but I have a lot of things going around in my life, like my final years in high-school.

But now that is out of the way, I am trying to balance between my art and writing. Anyone that follows me on any of my social media accounts will know that I have been very active in my art. I even got posters for Until the day I'm forgiven along with some drafts. I will try and get the next chapter out as soon as possible.

POSTERS:
The day after

Chapter Summary

Guys, the long await main chapter. Man! It has been months!

Sorry about that, I have been busy the past year with final years and art. If you followed my accounts on tumblr: sommerannie, paigeworld: annie14neko, deviantart: sommerannie that I was active to draw.

And I got posters for Until the day I'm forgiven. I'm trying to come up with designs for Kara.

I did wrote some plans for other fanfictions as you will see later on here because I thought it would be nice to see what I was thinking of. And because I have been re-watching a lot of Fate/Zero and Unlimited Blade Works lately.

And oh boy, I wrote almost 15000 words...

The day after

In Hasetsu, there was a boy with strawberry blonde hair as he slept soundly, smuggled into the warm comfort of his cutely themed blankets. Unknowing of a group watching him as he slept. Then came the sounds of his phone blasting at his ear that was too early for the morning, "Please… five more minutes." Gakushu grumbled as he buried himself more underneath the comfort of his warm blanket.

His makeshift alarm didn't listened to his pleads.

Gakushu sighed to himself as he groggily reached his arm out and grabbed his phone. "Alright already!" He yelled at his phone, "I'm up! I'm up!" And he turned off the alarm.

He dragged himself up from his blanket cocoon and he let up a stretch with his hand still holding his smartphone. He let out a yawn before covering his mouth. And a chill stabbed all over his body, his chest felt exposed to the air for some reason.

'Everything hurts.' His head pounded as he yawned. He rubbed his eyes as his head attempted to soothe the pain-filled head. He remembered last night that he was busy getting drunk on, of all things alcoholic bubble tea with Noct and Gretel, what came afterwards was anyone's guesses.

He just hoped to the heavens that he didn't made another elaborate tunnel system, as such as the one he made underneath Class-E back when he was only 13. It was useful... Until he found after one of my nightly shifts that they had been closed off.

'Damn you Korosensei…. I pulled out my cards early on that one.' The alcohol made him more clear headed.

"It started out with karaoke! Karaoke!" Gakushu screamed into the morning, he kneeled to the floor as he slammed one of his fist down. "… I'm tired." He sniffled.
He went back to sleep, it wasn't like he had school or the early shift.

"Seriously Nagisa, you're getting all over the mats." Karma whispered as well as snickered.

'....'

'.... Nagisa?!' And Gakushu shot right up, fully awake as his vision slowly started to clear. He thought to himself that he must had worn his contacts to bed. Soon he was staring at the faces of Class-E, staring at him and almost all with blushing faces. Some of the girls were attempted to a bit more above.

Nagisa looked to be in bliss with tissues shoved to his nose. He waved to Gakushu. His shirt was covered in blood that clearly came from his nose.

"What are you doing here?" Gakushu asked, he remembered that Class-E were staying at the inn as much as he wanted to forget that. Why did they had to witness him and Ikeda wrestle each other for some chocolates? He wanted to ask what they were staring at.

'Are their questioning my cinnamon self!?... How did they found out my cinnamon self!?' Many thoughts came rushing to his head. He didn't knew what to do if they found out about his 'true self'.

"Rise and shine~ Ich-i-go." Karma playfully sang as he poked at Gakushu's nose.

"Eh." It took a while for Gakushu to register Karma's words. He turned around to be met with Ren who was looking away. The hazel haired boy gave him a jacket while his face was as red as Karma's hair.

'Why-' And he looked down on himself.

"Ekkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk!" Gakushu cutely screamed as he rushed to hide himself under his blanket. His chest was exposed, he was only wearing a mini waist apron along with his boxers. It was a wonder that Nagisa wasn't yet dying from loss of blood. Now he rather explain about his cinnamon roll self than that plus while wearing this embarrassing costume. 'Why didn't I just opened up back when I was sitting there in class?

'Oh yeah, I didn't want to. The others have to start first and then I open up.'

'And no, it wasn't because I was shy.' He snapped to his inner thoughts that was strangely under the voices of An and Gretel.

"So, you remember last night?" Ren asked with unsureness once Gakushu stopped his screaming.

"Of course I remember last night!" Gakushu yelled from under his cover. He wanted to die, even if he was already dead in the first place.

"Well, parts of it at least." Some silence has passed.

"...." Gakushu didn't want to do it but the silence was eating away at him. Someone has to start the conversation somehow, he wasn't sure if Gretel planned for this to happen though. "So, what did I dp last night? I can't exactly remember."

"Where do I even start?" Karma sighed. "You staying here, you drinking and underage to be as that. Then finding out that you are the idol Ichigo from Candy Fest."

If Gakushu was drinking his usual morning drink of strawberry milk from a carton, the spit take
would had been glorious. 'I am the one who revealed our band secret!' He thought in horror, he thought that it would be Gretel doing the unveiling being more of the dramatic character in the group. He can already imagine Ikeda's annoying laughter grinding into his ears, rolling on the floor with tears in his eyes. 'Hahahahahahahahahahahahahahah!' Even in this situation, he felt a tick in his eye.

"After that, you gave me a lap dance." Karma boldly claimed with a smirk.

"..." Gakushu face of horror was amusing but at the same time send a shard to Karma's heart.

"Nooooooooooo!" Gakushu screamed from underneath the blanket as he burst into tears. "Not my innocence! I didn't even have my first kiss yet!"

'He what!?' The class and Ren was in shock. All of their minds, even Karma was blown. Everyone except Nagisa of course.

"Tell me that my first kiss wasn't stolen! Nagisa tell me!" Gakushu cried out to Nagisa.

"First kiss!??" The class and Ren yelled back.

'Oh my god, he is just so precious.' Rio was so tempted on going there to just pat his head. 'I can see why Nagisa kept to his brotherly complex for Asano.'

The cute image of the cinnamon roll for Gakushu Asano was intensifying by the minute. It didn't exactly help that Gakushu was the youngest in the class as the girls learned last night.

'So cute.' Kayano thought as well as the rest of the class.

"Oh no he did not!" Nagisa cut into the conversation as his inner 'onii-chan' awaken, Karma would laugh about Nagisa had the face that he was hungry for blood. Kayano was holding him back by the waist from lunging for Karma.

"Alright, he tackle me down. Either way, still half naked when he did." Karma laughed. The class could see steam coming out from the blanket.

"Strawberry, don't faint on us." Karma whined as he patted the blankets. Gakushu flinched and buried himself deeper.

"Gakushu-san, everyone knows the way you acted back in Class-A was fake." Isogai explained. "Well, Ikeda told more stories as you slept."

"Ikeda." Gakushu growled as he popped out his head from his blankets. The boys and girls cooed at this sight. Because of the cuteness filter, his glare for the ribs of Ikeda was now a pout under the filter.

"Too be honest, we started to doubt your coldness when Nagisa over here started to rant about how cute you were with some sort of hat." Rio pointed over to the guilty blue haired male with her thumb. "And I did a little back eariler when you carried me piggyback style."

"Or that time you helped Isogai in your own little way. Like re-gifting or getting the other guy fired at his workplace that was seriously turning the place down." Maehara reminded the strawberry blonde.

Gakushu tried to respond back but he couldn't find the words, at the end he remained silence and either confirm or denied Maehara's points.
"And don't forget the concert. When you went backstage, I think it was An who was started to explain that you somehow portrayed your anger for our antics and lack of sweets as your cold persona instead." Isogai went back, Gakushu wanted to run away so badly as of now.

"You know what this mean?" Karma sang. Gakushu squeaked as he feared what the male thought and the rest awed. "It means that you can't hide any more secrets from us."

"That includes your true and cute little true self." Nagisa nodded.

"Do I have too?" Gakushu whispered.

"Yes." The entire class chorused and Gakushu let out another sigh. Ren comforted the boy as he patted his strawberry blonde hair.

"You can take your time." Ren softly softly, he glanced back, making sure that Gakushu couldn't see the look on his face that he gave out to Class-E.

It was the same look he gave to Jones, even though he would always laugh it off as if it was a joke. Jones was never terrified of Ren, if anything he was always amused, this was the man that taught the hazel haired boy how to hack when he was four. The class however couldn't help but feel intimidated under his gaze, even with their training, Ren with no experience in learning within the End Class was able to put off a death glare that even Karma was and currently sweating buckets.

"I guess the upside of this is that I can have cake for lunch." Gakushu pondered to himself as he thought up what cakes he should have. 'Definitely strawberry shortcake, maybe I should add some banana cake or even a lemon sponge cake. But I have been meaning to try out that Chocolate and hazelnut meringue gateau'

"I will get that strawberry shortcake." Ren gently but also warmly smiled to his best friend, Gakushu couldn't help but feel butterflies knowing that his smile was directed at him.

"No Gakushu-san, you cannot have just cake for lunch. That's isn't good for your body." Nagisa cut in, sensing that Ren's deathly aura ceased and the butterfly sensation withered from Gakushu's stomach.

"You took your time." A new voice called out and everyone turned their heads around.

"See, told you it wasn't so bad." Gretel came into the picture as she gracefully yet casually lean by the doorway. As usual, she was well dressed with her simple yet stylish black and white in a horizontal strips Sailor-Lolita dress where it reached to her knees. A belt that was the same material as the dress but white was wrapped around and tied in a ribbon on her right to highlight her waist. High dark navy socks strapped by sock garters matched with her polished black low-heel shoes. Along with her signature large white and almost bouncy ribbon on her head band

"Sister knows best after all." Gretel gracefully waved to the group as she smiled. The class noticed how it gave her the aura of nobility.

"You planned this!"

"I have no idea what you're talking about. I didn't plan for you to get drunk on bubble tea." Gretel giggled as she walked off, most possibility to the dining area. "See you at breakfast. Good job on finishing four years of my work. The group back in Kungigaoko Town will drink tonight."

The class stared at the opened door and turned back to the blushing Gakushu when he asked. "Guys… can you go out for a moment? I want to change…"
Ren felt something, like a volcano erupted in his head. He forgot that he was standing next to a half naked Gakushu.

"Morning." Gakushu voiced as his classmates and Ren walked into the dining area and the others muttered and tiredly greeted back. It was clear that the alcohol had just caught up on their bad life-decisions.

"Karma, don't replace the sugar with salt." Gakushu curtly said when he spotted the crimson haired male cheeky demonic smirk. "I already knew of the trick."

"Looks like someone is retracting back to their mask." Karma sang.

"That's not it!" Gakushu retorted back.

"Gakushu-san, take your time." Nagisa affirmed once more as he gently patted his back.

The strawberry blonde slightly glanced at the blue pig-tailed haired male before shyly looking away. "I'm getting some breakfast."

"Do you want some coffee?" Ren offered. Gakushu quickly accepted that offer, as much as he trusted Karma as he had with Nagisa. He wouldn't be able to take his food. A few days ago, he had the privilege to try out Karma's cooking at his house when Nagisa suggested that the three should do some cooking and baking. Lets just say that he wouldn't be surprised if Karma somehow set fire to the kitchen by making only cereal.

Seated at Gakushu's table was Ren, Nagisa, Karma, Kayano and Ikeda. The light haired male decided to insert himself into the table because he didn't had anything least better to do. Violet eyes glared at Ikeda's chartreuse phosphorescent. Ikeda offered the strawberry bon-bon candies Viktor usually ate.

"You win this round Ikeda bastard." Gakushu annoyily groaned and begrudgingly accepted the truce in the form of candy as he pocketed it in his hoodie pockets.

"Love you too Shu." Ikeda cheekily smiled then going to read his morning paper.

"It's Gakushu." Gakushu corrected and he rubbed his temples to calm himself. He turned away from his senior reaper and then processing to add numerous spoonfuls of sugar into his coffee.

"That's a lot of sugar." Kayano noted as she too drowned her pancakes with maple syrup. There seemed to be a mutual understanding between the strawberry blonde boy with the green haired girl. Ikeda muttered something about Gakushu's sweet obsession before turning to the next page.

Gakushu would go out a throw a plateful of food to the man's face, but a; as much as he hates to admit but Ikeda would easily catch such a throw and b; because he didn't want to waste his pancakes. And finally it was because the front page of Ikeda's paper caught his eye, 'serial killer of Kungigaoko strikes once more.'

The strawberry blonde thought that he should later ask who was killed, he was usually the one who picked up the souls of those the man killed.

"Gakushu-san, that is not healthy." Nagisa took note and broke Gakushu's original train of thought. 'Maybe I should not give him so much sweets next time.'

"I don't care. You wanted to see the real me, so you will witness my sweet-tooth to the fullest"
extent." Gakushu scowled as he turned his head away from the group who just laughed at the end. Nagisa was right, he was painfully adorable. Karma felt a toothache from such cuteness.

Breakfast was going smoothly, everyone was enjoying their respective meals and Gakushu slowly and finally opening up to his class. It almost prompted another drinking session for the reapers stationed right there to celebrate of how their little cinnamon roll was growing up.

"Well excuse me princess!" A male voice cut through the morning.

"..."

Everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at the closed door. They could hear more yelling and shouting from the outside. Nagisa swore that he heard this voice before.

"Oh boy, not again." Prom groaned, "It is too early in the morning." He stabbed into his waffles drenched in honey.

"What-" Megu voiced.

The shouting grew louder and the doors snapped opened, coming inside was only two people who were screaming at each other's throats. One was a male with spiked dirty blonde hair, slightly tanned skin and eyes sky blue. He wore leather jeans, a ripped red shirt underneath his leather jacket. The shoes were black converses, overall he had the aura of a rock-star.

The other who stole Karasuma's attention was a female with long silky black hair that was tied in a high mid-tail and its ends curled. It was the same for her fringe as it curled and swayed to the right. She wore a simple short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey pen skirt and well-kept leather shoes. She also had a apron tied around her waist.

"There they are, and they're back at it again." Arthur sighed to himself as he sipped his English Breakfast tea. "It's only 8:30 AM."

"Oh I gave up." Gakushu blurted, burying his face in his hands and shocked his entire class.

Gakushu Asano giving up on something.

"Shouldn't we separate them?" Korosensei asked over to Gilbert.

"Korosensei, trust me. Don't get involved, the last guy that tried that ended up with his face smashed." Gakushu warned. And that person just so happened to be Grell Sutcliffe. "And Prom is the designated role of peacekeeper. So he is unlikely to become a causality. Not with An's motherly nature."

"Damn it Johnny!" An screamed.

"Like you're one to talk." Johnny added with a mocking tone.

Fifteen minutes went by and the two were still at it, Class-E and their teachers watched in a combination of awe and horror that they were still fighting. Although they were more at awe when the rest of the occupants went on their day as if there wasn't a screaming match behind them. Gakushu was chewing on pancakes sprinkled in with strawberries and blueberries. Gretel continued her conversation with Arthur to the best that she could under the noise level. Prom tried his best to calm the situation but the two persisted.

The only one who wasn't so used to this was Ren as he watched on uncomfortably, unknowing what to do to best calm the situation as the rest of the class and their three teachers. Although Karma was
happily eating up the scene as he ate some popcorn.

'Is that being passed around?' Yada thought to herself as she saw the large bowl being passed to each occupant that she assumed was familiar with the shouting pair.

"Immature!? I was drunk!" An screamed. Kurahashi turned her head the yelling female.

"Immature enough that you were drinking straight vodka from the bottle." Johnny yelled back and butting heads with the smaller female. Takebayashi turned back to raging blonde.

Korosensei was amazed at Gakushu's friends and their drinking tolerance, whenever he drunk any alcohol, he always becomes a puddle after just one sip of beer. Even Irina was amazed.

"Oh I'm sorry that I was clinging onto you!" She taunted with a playful sheer that was similar to Ikeda's teasing. She crossed her arms and one brow rose as she eyed to the dirty-blonde male. Chiba turned back and through from Johnny and An.

"You were wearing that virgin killer sweater! You look like what?! Twelve?! Are you trying to be jailbait?" Johnny furiously and with a maddening blush yelled back. He hated how he was slightly warm as she had the smile of triumph before contorted into a blushing mess.

"Sorry that my pathetic 'average' chest was rubbing on your back!" And Karasuma choked on his coffee.

"At least I have the decency to invite someone whenever I go out for a drink." Johnny retorted with a smug look as he wiped off that smirk. "Not like you have a chest to behind with."

"You were the one that said you had shift that night!" An messly blurted as she went to cover her chest with her arms while madly blushing.

"You could have at least save me a glass!"

"The vodka cruisers were mine!"

"You mean your candy drinks!?"

"Dickless!" An yelled.

"Prude!" Johnny jeered back.

"At least it is only a shouting match." Feli said with smile and a weak chuckle. Johnny shouted back his taunts, An scowled at the dirty haired blonde man with slightly tanned skin who had a slight blush across his face.

"They really do look like a couple that has been married for 50 years." Ren added in hopes to lighten up the situation. "But I imagine those nicknames will get dull very soon."

Johnny then threw lukewarm coffee into her chest.

"... Oh fuck nuggets." Gakushu swore under his breath, his jaw wide open with some pancake falling off. The class was too surprised by the scene in front of them that they didn't even register that Gakushu Asano just colourfully and creatively swore.

"... I spoke too soon." Feli voiced, his smile wavered. Gakushu dropped his fork. Arthur's mouth was wide open as it poured out tea, even the Gretel was surprised as she gasped. Prom was slowly stepping back with his hands up in surrender. Class-E felt like choking, many of the students were
internally screaming 'Abort! Abort! Abort!'

Korosensei was looking for any escape routes. Karma was merely enjoying the show, if only he had more of that bowl of popcorn to snack on. Irina did wonder why Karasuma was sharing the same look as that Ikeda fellow.

An blankly stared at Johnnny and his face as it slowly turned into horror. The class felt that they were choking underneath this pressure, Nagisa felt something sinister brewing beside him and he turned around. He almost flinched when he saw Ikeda with a dark sneer, leg over the other and hand resting on his cheek, his intensifying look was directed at a certain male with dirty blonde hair.

"Is that normal?" Nagis asked Gakushu as he glanced at Ikeda. Kayano too looked over and quickly turned away, his dark sneer was making her insides screamed. That wasn't a normal reaction for someone seems mundane.

Karma rather thought that the male was missing a white scarf essential to any Italian movie mob leader. That and a set of bodyguards cladded in black behind him.

"Yeah, anyone who demeans An would either get glared to death, usually from him or another guy. Luckily for Johnny over there, the other guy is away out in the country on work." Gakushu whispered to Nagisa. The strawberry blonde could see the anger brewing within the light haired man, Ikeda looked so pissed and it was worse than yesterday.

Brown chocolate eyes narrowed as the shock wore off. "And you said I'm immature." An whispered, her hands clenched.

"An- I'm so-!"

An grabbed Hoshino's cereal bowl and smash It onto Johnny's head, his dirty blonde hair now covered in milk and cereal with drips of the liquid falling onto his clothes. Suddenly Ren's bowl of cornflakes looks less appetizing.

"……" The entire room was silent as they watched the scene unfolded. Rio had her jaws wide opened, Nagisa's blue eyes widened like saucers, Rinka gasped, Fuwa turned deadly paled. Karma meanwhile was struggling not to laugh his ass off.

"Oh it is on!" Johnny screamed as he drenched the girl in maple syrup. An squealed as it may or may not drip down her chest as it struck on. Johnny, Ikeda and Karasuma may or may not blushed and feeling uncomfortably tight.

"You're the one that started it!" An screamed back as she threw toast at his face and butter slide off his face. "And it wasn't even good coffee!"

"I said I was sorry!" Yet Johnny threw a crepe filled with whip cream towards her. An threw back a plate of eggs and bacon. A bowl of baked beans was thrown, hash-browns, anything they could get their hands one. Eventually there was a bystander causality. Gilbert had a splash of porridge staining his white tank-top.

The German leaped onto the table, with both a handful of white rice as he yelled. "Food fight!" Hell was unleashed in the dining room as it hit West, right in the face. Class-E, the teachers, Gakushu, Ren, Gretel, Arthur, Ignis, Noct and other reapers took cover underneath the tables.

"It has gotten worse, more so than yesterday." Gakushu sighed as he finished his last bite of his pancakes. "It only left with Johnny leaving and slamming the door behind him. And the door was unbroken."
"Tell me again why they are not a thing?" Gakushu asked over to Gretel who shrugged.

"Too be honest, I have some new plans to end in a threesome. It is impossible considering the devotion Ikeda-kun holds for her, so I need to find a way to have An agree with this type of relationship." Gretel said with some cheek, Gakushu blushed from such a comment. "We may even get a foursome."

"Why do you act as this is normal though!?" Much of his classmates thought. Korosensei sulked in the background, he wanted to be the matchmaker in this group. He could do anything, he was Korosensei after all, why was this girl he barely met criticising him over his methods?

"Just imagine the hate sex between-"

"I rather not hear that." Gakushu quickly interrupted the girl's speech, his face impossibly turned into a deeper shade of red.

"Says the strawberry who hid 18+ doujinshis under his bed." Gakushu flinched from Gretel's words. "As much as you are very innocent, I know for the fact that you probably were blushing the shade of Karma-kun's hair as you read about egg-"

"Shut up! Shut-up! Shut-up!" Gakushu went in a rush to cover the girl's mouth but he was stopped in favour of remaining composed. And he was embarrassed for letting out another outburst in front of the class and Ren.

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" The reapers outside cheered as they wasted some more food.

"Such is the usual antics of La Morton." Gretel chuckled as she kneeled and sipped her Earl Grey tea with a spoonful of sugar. She set down her tea-cup and took out her phone.

Gakushu just watched as Hoshino slam dunked a jam filled piece of toast to Ben's face. He, Ren and Karma watched in wonderment from such a move. That and combined of how everyone seemingly recovered from drowning in alcohol last night.

Feli gasped when a plate of pasta was in the air. He leaped up and save the plate of pasta. "Pasta!"

"Food fight bitch!" Gilbert roared as he swung a plate of bacon to West's face while madly let out his evil laughter. "Take that little brother!"

"You know, we should totally have a food fight once we get back to class." Karma cheekily suggested and he was quickly slammed on the back of the head by Okuda. He quickly got the answer.

"I think we should go out now." Gakushu muttered and then a plated smashed just near the boy. "Oh~ close." Gakushu hissed as he jolted back.

"Dickless!"

"Prune!"

The fight escalated with now cutlery being thrown about; spoons, knives and butter knives was thrown. Some even stuck to the walls. Ikeda meanwhile was gracefully seating by at the table, reading his paper and somehow avoiding the carnage of the fight.

Karasuma came out from the tables and had just about enough of this childish fight. It was a shame that he didn't follow the advice of Gakushu given to Korosensei. Karma watched in amusement as
his stoic teacher walked through the battlefield, somehow dodging food at his way that was thrown by reapers.

Gakushu phone went off with a chime, 'A text?' He looked down to his phone, greeted with the face of ice-skater Viktor Nikiforov and a notification. It was a text from Gretel.

'But she is right next to me... What does she want?' Gakushu couldn't help but feel a sense of dread.

'Distract Noct-kun and Iggy. Today will be the big day.' He looked up to her and she flashed a cheeky smile as she placed her hand over it. 'Operation Night and Fire. I came up the name on the spot, catchy right? Night almost sounds like ice.'

'… Oh no.' Gakushu thought. For some reason, Ren couldn't help but feel something cold going down his spine.

"Go Karasuma-sensei!" Terasaka cheered on and snapped Gakushu back up. He cursed himself as he tried to grab the man back. Unlike William who could easily break Gakushu and Ikeda's usual antics, Karasuma was only human. Keyword 'human', a human trying to separate two well experienced reapers with 20 years of experience.

'That idiot!' Gakushu panicked. 'Get back here!'

He turned back his hiding place when a load of food and plates crashed in front of him, that and he was pulled back by Ren and Nagisa.

Karasuma knew that he needed to stop the main force of the fight, Johnny and An was still throwing food at each other. He stood in front of them and just as he thought, no response or even a glance at the newcomer. He pulled out his arms and stepped in.

"Stop this childish fight at once-" He yelled at the top of his lungs as he pushed the two apart, however he didn't have enough time to dodge the plate of pancakes or a bowl of salted scrambled eggs that was supposed to be aimed at each of the respective reaper. Instead the two smashed onto Karasuma's head and shattered upon impact.

"..." Terasake jaws went wide opened. 'How much strength does these two have!?'

'That hurts…' Karasuma had the best self-control and he didn't jolted or screamed in pain.

"..."

"...

"...

The fight paused and everyone stared at Karasuma now drenched in maple syrup and eggs. The man hated the feeling of silences that surrounded him, and the feeling of syrup made his hair stick to his forehead. The shards broken on the floor as everyone's jaws gaped opened.

"Karasuma-sensei!" The class yelled and Irina panicked.

Some of the reapers that surrounded the scene had some of the most hilarious reactions. Ikeda whistled in awe, he settled his folded newspaper on his lap and legs folded. "Damn Kuma. I'm surprised you are even still staying."

"I don't know if he was either very brave, or if he was very stupid." Ignis commented as he spoon-
feed Noct with some eggs benedict. "Noct, eat your vegetables as well."

"Why not both?" Feli added after swallowing a forkful of pasta.

Soon the motherly instincts of An started to kick in. "Karasuma-san! Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" She panicked, she acted as if the world had come to an end as she checked over his injuries on her tiptoes. Irina wondered why is he blushing over this person?

"We must get a first-aid kit." An exclaimed as she checked for any signs of blood. It was a good thing that she and Johnny down-leveled their strength when they were surrounded by Gakushu's human classmates. Or else the most likely scenario to had happened was Karasuma being dead.

"I got one." Prom said.

"… Prom, why you do have a kit on your lap?"

"Worse-case scenario. Let's go a staffroom." The blonde male said as he stood up with the kit in hand. "… I think he's bleeding a bit. There is a bit on the side." An jolted and quickly checked over to the side from where Prom sat, there was a bit of blood from a small cut on his temple.

"We must hurry!" An yelled with panic.

"You guys can continue on now." Prom waved off the group. The other reapers shrugged as the three left the room and resume back to their playful fight. It was less chaotic and mainly consist of people flicker cereal everything.

" At least the fighting stopped." Korosensei casually laughed. Class-E, except for Gakushu wondered why their yellow alien teacher didn't stepped in to stop the fight.

"Johnny!" Ikeda yelled, the other turned and a fist was landed to his cheek.

'Oh come on!' Korosensei internally yelled. It was one fight after another.

'Why am I not surprised.' Gakushu thought to himself. 'Given Ikeda's protective ness over An, it was a wonder that he didn't dive in to beat him up as soon as Johnny threw coffee at her… but then again he was probably not trying to fight in front of her.'

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" The males chanted and cheered for a fight. They all roared as they started to surround the fighting. And also while throwing white plastic spoons, at the fighting and wrestling pair.

"Abort! Abort!" Feli whispered as he flipped out his white flag and waved it around.

"To the windows." Gakushu led the class. He opened the windows and leaned over into the outside world.

"Does that happen every often?" Isogai asked after complete the first step from escaping the growing drama inside.

"The fights?" Feli voiced.

"And the fist fight?" Maehere added.

"Definitely, especially between those two. I didn't expect the food fight though." Feli said. "That was really stupid of him. Thank god that the two weren't going through with their full strength."
"Or else Karasuma would had been hospitalised." Gakushu said bluntly. His back turned on the class as he and Ren watched from the window Ikeda and Johnny fought. Ikeda landed a clean upper-cut to the dirty blonde's jaw but then Ikeda was gifted a harsh elbow to the other's stomach.

'They can't be that strong... right?' The class thought and memories quickly flashed back.

An pressing a pocket knife to Nagisa's cheek, Karma held back by the strong grip of Antonio, Nagisa almost having his head kicked off by Gretel and or using a pen against the same boy by the same girl. Gretel having Akari admitted to hospital for fractured ribs, or her torturing one of Gakushu's kidnappers.

And a thought from Nagisa that remained silent to the rest of the class, Gakushu Asano punching down a tree. He had forgotten all about it because he was caught 'stalking' the strawberry blonde as the other chased off before rolling down the stairs after slipping his foot. He had forgotten the severity of the situation when Gakushu ranted about his father or when he finally cried in front of Nagisa. Those words spoke true from Gakushu's heart, about his father and it gave Nagisa a sense of how vulnerable their youngest classmate was.

'But people don't normally punch down trees... unless they were like Itona at the beginning.' Nagisa thought to himself as he watched Gakushu talked with Ren. Worry brewed in the pit of his stomach. He knew that those who were vulnerable just as Itona was, they would seek out power just like Itona had.

He knew beforehand that was not who he seemed, and he knew that he was holding back on his strength. Then came the true side of Gakushu, as his friends called it as his 'cinnamon self' and all of those thoughts were put aside. He was right that Gakushu wasn't who he seemed to be as he was merely acting emotionless and cold towards Class-E for his father.

'I'm just different' Gakushu's words echoed in Nagisa's mind, he had thought it was about Gakushu's truest self but now he remembered his strength. He could only hoped that he was only overthinking but the thought of Gakushu crying because of his father never left his mind.

When the class left, they thought they heard the sound of multiple chimes going off.

'It has begun.' Gakushu gloomily thought.
cold shiver going down his spine. "She found out my crush last week." He was quickly comforted by
the understanding Gakushu and Ren with backs on the back.

"She can't be that good." Korosensei huffed. Ren questioned why this strange teacher was
accompanying them and received the reasonable answer of how it was a teacher's responsibility to
ensure their student's safety. Ren still wasn't all that trusting to the teacher though, he thought of
asking Jones to do a bit of digging around this teacher who only appeared barely a year ago.

"There is a rule in La Morton, you know that she used to go there right?" Gakushu asked, replacing
the Department with La Morton although the two were kind of the same. He continued his speech
when she received nods. "Never hide your feelings, she will find it as if you are showing it on your
sleeves."

"She will find out sooner or later, she even found out that a couple was together before they even
announced it. Everyone else only found out when Gretel already made that only bet in the couple's
contest on Valentine's Day that they will get together." Feli recounted the story.

"She was quite dedicated for her game in matchmaker that it wasn't even funny." Gakushu added.
Ren didn't say anything but he agreed with his words. Korosensei was dealing with blow after blow
from a girl who even wasn't doing anything to thing.

"Then, what are we going to do?" Kayano asked.

"Like she asked for, distract them." Gakushu gestured to Ignis and Noct behind him before turning
back to his classmates. "So, what do you want to do?"

"What do you think they are talking about?" Noct innocently asked as he watched Gakushu
whispered to his classmates.

Ignis fixed up his glasses. "Something about Gretel and her matchmaking antics." For some reason,
that left an odd flavour on his tongue, Gretel was definitely up to something, after being with the
reaper for almost 150 years, he knew well enough of the cheeky and playful blonde.

"Makes sense." Noct shrugged as he licked his ice-scream. "I heard the rumors how Gretel found out
about Feli's crush."

"Ah, that does makes sense." Ignis nodded and silently gave his sympathies to the Italian reaper.

"Gakushu-san did say he was here to help group here." Korosensei recounted of what Karasuma told
him when Gakushu decided to go off with his group of friends. "I'm not judging you, or pointing
fingers but was it true?"

"It's true." Gakushu quickly answered, not exactly being trustworthy to the class. The strawberry
blonde sighed seeing that Karma and Nagisa truly believed him. "Okay, as such as you want my to
be my 'true self'." He gestured around 'true self'.

"I want to take my own pace, so I won't warm up as quickly with everyone as with Nagisa and
Karma here." Gakushu sets his terms, Karma and Nagisa couldn't help but feel butterflies when the
strawberry blonde acknowledged his friendship to the pair. "You will know eventually, will that be
fine?" He asked of Korosensei.

"Yep! Yep! It's fine, I was here worrying that you would struggle to make new friends at Class-E." Korosensei chirped as he wiggled his arms around. "Now I hate myself for believing in such a stupid
thing. The only thing I need to worry about is you getting out of your makeshift shell. You are
making it very cute through."
"Alright, let's go." Gakushu led the way as he scowled from his teacher's statement. Terasake grumbled of how the other assumed into the leadership role before dealing a blow to his stomach by Karma. Gretel would had been proud.

"So, what do you think Is it too much for the play or it is a good little titbit?" Vella asked of Gakushu as the other went through the script. Meanwhile Feli was providing early cater and Ren helping with moving the set pieces. Class-E watched in fascination as they wandered around the theatre room of La Morton's east-side.

'Even the main building doesn't have this kind of budget.'

The building looked clean and modern, it had a futuristic style with glass walls, many windows and corridors. Like from the high-end city of Mitakihara.

"Back when the days were old, of the Might and of Tears. Heroes of legend rose throughout the ages. They fight in the name of the Gods." Gakushu muttered under his breath.

"To give their bleeding voice for the prayers. For their legs to turn to dust for the will." He thought it was rather fitting for the role Noct will act in this play. "Their sight withered into darkness so light may be brought back."

"For love, to reunite the moon with her sun, a kingdom burns under the stars. Their tears shed so the people can be spared. Then the flora may yield once more"

"A storm brews, one was washed with blood. The wind blows, the ember burns, the ice freezes and the thunder strikes on these heroes. Accepting of their sad fate for other's happiness. And life seeped away, banishing away the darkening as blood flows through."

"As a sacrifice, as a lamb, they gave away their young lives to the land."

Gakushu paused for a bit before going to read through the very short story once more. "This… this is really good Vella. Of course you should add this in the play." He gasped over to the small blonde reaper of the Swedish Branch. "Although you could removed the 'as a lamb' since the audience got a good idea what the line was trying to say."

"Did you write this?"

"No." Vella shook her head, she gestured over to Noct who was currently napping on one of the tree sets. North and Ignis were attempting to figure out a way to get the 180 year old reaper down safely. "Noct was the one who wrote it."

"Ha, it did had Noct's hands all over it, like wither into dust or bleeding voice." Gakushu went though the short story once again for the third time. 'Damn, this is good. I need to get a copy.'

"There is this one as well, it's not a part of the play but I want some comments on it as well." Vella took out her phone and passed it to Gakushu. "I only wrote the ending first because they are usually the fun parts."

"I see."

"What's you doing there Strawberry?" Karma rested his head over Gakushu's shoulder. For a moment, Gakushu thought that Ikeda was there and almost punched the redhead in the face. He slowly turned around and faced with Karma's cheeky devilish grin.
His eyes twitched and it wasn't because of his contacts. "S-Strawberry?" He knew that he was making a face but he was bewildered that Karma used one of his many nicknames.

"What, it is a very cute name for a cute one here?" Karma pouted as he poked the cheeks of Gakushu's betrayed face. He had to admitted but his cheeks was soft and bouncy, almost like pudding. The red-head couldn't help but feel a piercing glare from hazel brown eyes aimed to his head.

'We should really get Ren in Class-E, I could see him scare Korosensei in a puddle.' Karma devilishly thought to himself.

"If you want to know." Gakushu slapped Karma's hand away, Karma didn't comment on how Gakushu's cheeks were now the colour of cherry blossoms. " I'm reviewing a scene. It's not for the play but Vella asked me."

"Can I see too?" Karma singfully asked, he battered his eyes and pouted his lips as if he was about to take a kiss.

Gakushu turned to Vella. "I don't mind, the more the merrier." Vella agreed to Karma's request and then an idea flashed through her yellow-turquoise eyes.

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Gakushu didn't knew how he ended up sitting on a chair with Class-E sitting around him as if he was a kindergartener teacher.

Vella clapped her hands. "Okay, the basic plot is that there is a prince who is the heir to the throne. Stuff happened, the king is dead, there is a disease called the Darkening where it turns those it infects into demons."

"Where have I heard this story before?" Terasake whispered and snickered to his friend. He felt something tapped to his shoulder, so he turned around and was met with North's face. Terasake didn't knew this but all those from the Department has enhanced hearing. North always had his eyes closed but something to his expression was dark as the boy with oak brown hair loomed over.

North placed a finger over his own lips, Terasake knew that he needed to shut up.

"The prince has an advisor and the love is mutual between the two, but not acted about because traditions." Vella continued to explain. "Prince went on a journey to find a cure with his father's blade in hand and when he came back… he was met nothing but a battlefield. His lover was consumed by the Darkening, twitching eyes that cried out black goo, a sign of being taken away by the Darkening and transformed into a creature of malice."

"Prince was forced to kill his lover and, dawn returned."

Korosensei was already tearing up, the story although near it's ending was too sad.

"What names should we have?" Gakushu asked as he reviewed that scene.

"Hmmmmm… how about Iggy and Noct, they play the tragedy couple very well."

"We are not a couple." Ignis answered back, missing the gesture from Noct as he flinched from his words.

"Well I wrote that the prince would had black hair and the advisor with almond dusty hair. To two fit the bill very nicely." Vella scoffed.
"Alright." Gakushu turned back, he mentally spoke to his friend that the two will be a couple, Gretel called for it and he too knew that the pair make a good couple as much as the almond haired male denies.

"You're…"

The shell of darkness withered from the armour and it brought more images to Noct as it brought more familiarity. As more of the dark mist that painted the man's armour settled, it only send a chill to Noct's soul.

He almost choked and everything around him seemed to slow down. Blue eyes as the deep ocean filled with despair and grief widened as he stared what was in front of him. The figure trembled, after the mist disappeared that he could hear the strange sounds more clearly. A pain filled groan, it grinded as he sobbed from his helmet.

Noct could not help but trembled under this figure and of his true colours. Yes, he knew who stood before him. Then the helmet split in half.

Hair that was dusty, almost sandy, almond blonde, twitching eyes that cried out black goo, a sign of being taken by the Darkening and transformed into a creature of malice. He stuttered forward to the young prince and other stood there unmoving. He couldn't run, his knees felt weak as he was consumed to helplessness. As if chains came to drag him down where he stood.

"Why? How could this happen-"

How he wished that this could not be, how he convinced himself that it was somebody else. Now, he knew as reality stuck him like a blade to his chest. And more importantly, to his heart.

A face Noct knew and loved, ever since he was a small child, when his blue eyes once shone innocence to even now as he lost that shine. When was he weakened to have finally been taken by the Darkening?

Noct looked up at the figure, he could feel the tears slowly started to form and pickled his eyes. He couldn't afford to blink and avert his eyes away. "Was this my fault?"

Ignis only gave a look that best resembled a crazed animal, at lost a demon.

"Forcing yourself to love me because of my name! Were you burdened of my title... has this caused you madness!!?"

"Answer me Ignis!"

Ignis lunged and Noct finally found the strength to move, or rather his instincts cried out, kicking and screaming from his body. The almond haired male let out the most animalistic scream that Noct ever heard of.

Their swords clashed and Noct winced in pain, Ignis' strength was multiplied by the curses of malice that courses through his body.

"Gck!" Ignis landed another blow that send the prince into the air before being beaten time and time again.

His sword rusted, even so it could faced full-force against a sword held by a great king before Noct. He couldn't see clearly as his tears shielded his sapphire eyes, he could barely block the harsh attacks by the other.
"Are you in pain?"

Ignis... His friend. To have been chosen as Noct's advisor at such a young age, for his once green forest eyes to meet with deep ocean deep when he was five. To have formally met when he was eight, as he took the prince's hand as he offered. Noct brightly smiled at the boy that day for the prospect of a friend.

"Are you burdened?" Noct yelled as he blocked another attack.

Once innocent they were, when Ignis sneaked him out under the blanket of darkness in the dead of night to see the stars above.

"Are you filled with regret!?"

But Ignis didn't gave a coherent answer but another scream for Noct's blood. Before Noct gave into his grief, he grasped at the last ounce of reasoning he thought had lost and he blocked the swore that fell heavily down. He drew in more strength to scream.

He missed the days when he could rest on his friend's shoulder and be embraced by his kind and gentle warmth without a care in the world.

"I beg of you! Please tell me!"

But Ignis was unhearing as he swung once more, Noct jumped back to avoid the attack. He could barely see that this man was once Ignis. He bared his teeth out, biting down his lip and drawing blood as if to signal to Noct. It was as if, there was a small piece of humanity still left and only now have unsurfaced.

"Noct-" Ignis gasped, the pain and suffered painted on his scuffled voice.

"... Is that what you wished for?" Noct muttered, he tripped his grip around his weapon. He had to do this, he owned it to Ignis, for everything, after all these years.

And the two clashed once more, with their swords in hand.

Tears.

Blood.

Crimson red blood. Blood seeped down and stained his blade.

This was Ignis' blood, and more spilled and spilled as Noct took out his father's blade enhanced by whatever magic he had left from his chest. Noct felt no more strength left within him, nor did Ignis as he slumped over Noct. The two slowly sank down and dropped to the bloodied battlefield.

Noct's chest drowned in his friend's blood but he never let go as he sat there. He watched as Ignis started to fade away. The young male grasped tightly, begging him not to leave him in this cruel world. And again, his prayer was left unheard as he could no longer feel the other's weight or his warm blood. Even Ignis' blood evaporated away and left behind was only his armour and a single necklace.

Noct blankly stared at the armour, watching his reflection on the armour, he couldn't help but think that he looked very small. So vulnerable, so tired... So weak…

'Is this who I am? Someone who chains others down?'
He didn't know how long he sat there nor he cared. He felt so numbed, he couldn't feel the coldness of the harsh wind that stabbed into his skin. Yet he was not numb enough to not feel the despair and grief that bottled up in his stomach.

"Scene break here." Vella called out. Gakushu nodded and he continued to read

"The wind blows and it carries its silences with it as it flew over the dull landscape. He walked endlessly as he wandered about with no clear direction or goal. He just walked until his legs bruised beyond and he almost collapsed from exhaustion.

He stopped on top of a hill where he oversee the carnage around him, which he already saw with the corpses of men that laid as he journeyed through without direction. The hill of corpses and swords he sat atop, he sank to the blood soaked ground as he watched, dropping his father's regal sword.

The wind blew once more, looming over the young prince.

"Dawn is coming." He said as he saw light finally pierced through the sea of darkness and the clouds. But he could not feel its' warmth, there was so sensation, how could he when he believed that he feels no right to do so?

"I..." Noct slowly took in the scenery that surrounded him, as he tiredly looked up to the sky blanketed by grey clouds. Tears slowly dripped down, down his chest-plate. He couldn't blame Ignis, even after they exchange the final blows, even after Noct plunged his father's sword through his chest, even as he watched Ignis disappeared into nothing with a smile on his face.

"This was his only salvation, to be free from the chains of my burden." Noct explained to himself and as expected, no answer came to him to agree or disagree with him.

"... Everyone." Noct whispered to himself and only to one-self, who else was there to talk with, nobody who could talk back when they were dead. His sullen blue eyes could see endless fields of corpses, nameless faces he couldn't remember, leaving behind their swords and armoury behind as there as a sign they once existed on this land he stood.

He veered tiredly over to his father's sword.

"Father." He whimpered, his heart twisted and shrieked. How he longed to see his face once more, to see him unburdened by the duties of kingship, as he once saw when he was but a mere child.

But his father's prayers went unheard and so had to accept the reality, the fate bestowed to his son when he was only but five years old. He cradled the pendant in his bloodied hands, the only thing that was left undamaged in this sea of carnage. The green skull that once worn by a man, someone who was meant to be his trusted advisor after he brought a miracle the world asked and puppeteer by the cruel gods that forced him into this role of a lamb.

He was never given a choice in all of this suffering, the gods never gave him that, no help nor a prayer.

"I..." He choked. His body shook and trembled, his throat felt parched as his face contorted with despair before letting out a cry. His armour shook and chinked as he jolted his head upwards. And tears rained freely down from his deep blue eyes, unmoving to rub them or to hide them away.

Who else was there to see and hear his cries of sorrow? As he couldn't stop himself any longer as he sobbed. He couldn't stop the tears he shed for the fallen, for his Ignis. The black haired male painfully sobbed, clenching his teeth before screaming once more. His heart wrapped by sharp thorns as it pieced into him.
He kneeled to the ground, his hands rested on the ground as he begged for forgiveness. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." His roughly clenched and gripped onto his hair with both hands, he repeatedly apologized. "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

'Was this what it meant to be king?'

"If this is meant to be King." He whispered to himself, gasping out more cries as he spoke and more warm tears fell. "To allow themselves to sacrifices senselessly, for the sake of my kingdom, for my statue, on my behalf... because of my blood."

He gasped before containing himself. Choking on his words to the point he couldn't speak, grasping out for air for another word.

"Then..." He looked to the lifeless sky once more as it loomed over the lone figure.

"I will never be King.""

Gakushu finished and he looked up over to Class-E, "Well? What do you think?"

"It's too sad!" Much of the class and Korosensei cried. Korosensei was affected the most as he was a sobbing messeng as he rolled back and forth on the floor.

"Well that is the idea." Vella said with a deadpan expression.

"It does give me a new poem idea however." Ren said to himself with a hand under his chin. Gakushu couldn't help but giggled at his friend's passion for the arts.

'Of course.'

"Gakushu, we are done. What are we going to do?" Vella whispered only to Gakushu's ear. He now knew that Vella was too a part of Gretel's operations. "Gretel hasn't called in yet."

"We have nothing else to do." And Vella was right. Gakushu got his Oracle costume done through the help of Ren who surprisingly offered the perfect design for the strawberry reaper. It was as if from a past life that Ren knew an Oracle. The script was drafted, the songs finalised and they had enough practice. He even read a scene that was not a part of the play.

"I should cook some more pasta." Feli said out loud as he looked down on his empty plate of pasta. In the background, Gakushu could see Nagisa and Kayano sampling some of Feli's famous dish and was crying. It was the same for Korosensei who had a party in his mouth as he cried tears of happiness.

"It's so good."

'That gives me an idea.' Gakushu thought.

"Good thing I have some connections." Gakushu said proudly to himself as he eyed at his workstation. The group were currently in another area of La Morton's Institute and were using one of the many home economics classrooms.

"Welcome to Feli's cooking class!" Feli cheered as he bubbly smiled and was dressed for the occasion. The white apron, white chef hat and all.

"Do you guys seriously don't have any school?" One Class-E student innocently asked.
"I have a free period." Feli answered as he twirled and bubbly sang.

'That doesn't explain anything.' The whole class thought. Honestly, La Morton was just another operational base for the Department but Class-E and everyone else didn't know that.

Cooking lessons abruptly ended when Noct set fire to his station, he was attempting to boil pasta while forgetting that he was also cooking the sauce. Iggy was on the job as he sprayed with the fire extinguisher.

"I wanted to multi-task…" Noct turned to Ignis and he could see tears started to form around the corner of his blue ocean eyes.

"I know Noct, I know." Ignis comforted the boy. The class internally squealed at the soon to be cute couple.

Karma made an interesting meal, in which reapers were dropping like flies when they tried out their food. Gilbert called it an Englishman's cooking before retching at a nearby sink. Karma took offense to that, he only added a tube of wasabi into the batch.

Gakushu forgot what Feli wanted so he instead baked a cake. A three layered cake, topped with strawberries of course. Ren helped by allowing Gakushu to sit on his shoulders as he decorated with icing, chocolate and more strawberries.

It was a a all around mess the 'class' was. There were other pots and pans that were used in the sink and has yet to be clean. The white tiled floor was laced with flour, on one of the workshop benches were failed cracked eggs and a bag of exploded flour. The flour was on Gakushu's part, he was so excited that he ripped the bag and doused himself in the white powder as it exploded.

Kayano was happy that Gakushu also made a patch of pudding when they waited for the cake to bake.

Feli was just happy that he gotta eat some more pasta.

"Maybe we should go check on Karasuma-sensei?" Irina finally asked.

"They are the cafe." Gakushu popped, he boredly looked down his phone. "Prom just texted in, currently being smoldered by the motherness that is An."

"You guys go head for the ice-rink, I need to check on them." Gakushu curtly said as he walked off.

"Wait! Gakushu-" Nagisa called out but by the time they did turned around, the strawberry blonde disappeared.

"I guess he is still shy." Feli noted casually.

"Yeah." Noct agreed as he nodded, next to the black haired reaper was a certain blue haired boy with two pigtails nodding as well.

"It was very obvious." Karma casually noted as he sipped away from his strawberry milk carton.

No matter how many times Terasake or Megu, or many other Class-E students, they could never get used to it.

Gakushu had to objectives when he entered the cafe; buy cake and find Karasuma. He did brought
that cake, it was a full carrot cake but he quickly had to change the second task when he saw a depressed Ikeda.

"An gave us a lecture." Ikeda sunk, he hid his face in his knees and started to sob. He sunk into the sofa and also into a pit of misery. "She hates me. She found out that me and Johnny fought"

"No she doesn't." It was Gakushu's turn to comfort Ikeda. This was very rare as it was not often in Ikeda's cheeky nature to get distressed, it was too the point that Gakushu didn't knew what to do. He patted the man's head awkwardly. "She still very much loves you."

Clearly Ikeda didn't take in his words and sobbed some more. Gakushu looked around the cafe as he internally panicked and to his surprise, there was no An in sight. It was only Prom at the counter.

"An went to get some groceries. That Karasuma guy was insisted to help her after she patched him up." Prom answered and Gakushu let out an 'o' sound.

"Come on pudding thief bastard." Gakushu ushered the man back to his annoying self but he wasn't budging. Ikeda looked up and warily smiled to the strawberry blonde. Now Gakushu was desperate for any other reaction that wasn't like now.

"What are you looking at Johnny?" Ikeda darkly muttered but he quickly found out that he wasn't gaping

"Gakushu! Why are you here?" An gasped, the bell chimed as she opened the door. Gakushu turned around to find An, she carried a bag in her arms looking at the youngest reaper along with Karasuma next to her with two paper brown bags.

"I was here to buy some…" Violet eyes met with Karasuma's before he let out a sigh. His cheeks started to flush a faint blush of pink. "... Some cake and I need to check in Karasuma-sensei."

An blinked for a moment before she let out that familiar motherly smile that reminded him of Rilliane. "Gakushu, I have a little secret for you." She whispered as she leaned forward with a hand over her cheek.

"Karasuma-san here has the biggest sweet tooth, just like you." An said, Karasuma next to her had his eyes bulged out.

"Really?" Gakushu gasped. Ikeda and Johnny looked on with surprised, as the three stared Karasuma as he felt his face became hot.

"It's true." An chirped. "When Karasuma-san drank coffee here, he secretly or so he thought put 12 teaspoons of sugar into his black coffee."

'I was found out!?' Karasuma swore that he was being discrete.

"I never would had guessed." Ikeda was in awed. He always imagined the man he nicknamed as 'Kuma' that he always like to take his coffee straight black and not have a sweet-tooth like Shu.

"And he was adorable when he was sampling many of the pastries and cakes I made." An casually added as she smiled one. Karasuma did his darndest to keep a stoic face, it almost reminded Gakushu back when he first arrived in Class-E.

"And I won't judge either of the both of you." An reminded the boy. "Do you understand?"

"... Yes An." Gakushu affirmed. He turned to Karasuma and gestured his shoulders, he nudged his
head to An. Karasuma was caught under the gazes of Ikeda and Johnny as they stared at him and waited for his move.

"Yes Miss An." Karasuma said.


"Y-Yes!!" The two stuttered.

"I do not hate you Ikeda, nor do I hate you too Johnny." She said and then she slightly turned away from them. "I don't know what I do if you two get hurt because of me."

Ikeda's face lit up as if it was Christmas and Johnny let out a sigh of relief.

"Where is everyone else?" An asked the strawberry blonde, she swore that he went with his class along with a handful of reapers to buy some time for Gretel. "I could had sworn you were with your class?"

"They are at the ice rink." Gakushu dutifully answered.

"I will drive." Ikeda chirped up and back to his old cheeky self. "Let's go!" He grabbed Gakushu and Karasuma by the back of their collars and dragged them out of the cafe.

"Ikeda! You bastard!" Gakushu yelled as he was dragged off and Ikeda only laughed away. "Damn you! Take in my moment of weakness!"

"Hahahahahahahaha! You are only carrying cake, can I have some?"

"No!"

Karasuma was surprised by how much strength this 20-something year old had, enough that he could easily drag two people as if they weighed nothing. But another surprise came when he stood in front of Ikeda's car.

He ignored the shouting match from Gakushu as he yelled to the laughing Ikeda. He looked over the blue car, he knew that this looked expensive.

"Kuma, it won't eat you." Ikeda called out and snapped Karasuma from his thoughts. He saw that Gakushu scowled as he went to sit at the front.

"What car is this? I never seen this look before." Karasuma asked.

"It's a Jaguar XKR-S model. I'm thinking of getting Mercedes Benz Maybach Exelero soon." Ikeda mused to himself with a hand under his chin as he looked up in thought.

"Really Ikeda, you are buying an 8 million dollar car?" Gakushu scoffed.

"I didn't get to buy that gold-plated Ferrari..." Ikeda lightly chuckled. "Ended that Dubai holiday earlier and had to come back here, remember?"

"How much money do you have?" Karasuma questioned the spending habits of the man. He heard of stories from his teachers of how he got Gakushu a toothbrush that costed $4200 dollars. 'Why would a toothbrush cost over four grand?'

"Crap, I forgot that sport cars are usually a two seater." Ikeda slammed a hand to his face, he pouted but he quickly had his smile returned as he threw the keys to the teacher.
"A gift from me Kuma. Have a nice drive." Ikeda waved off and then he went back into the cafe.

"..." Karasuma stared down at the set of keys he was just given.

"Accept it Karasuma-sensei, believe me. This is barely a drop in his account."

Eventually they reached to the ice-rink and the student and teacher walked into the building. Karasuma was as stiff as a rock as he drove.

"Hey Strawberry!" Karma waved to the boy as he entered, he waved crazily to the strawberry blonde and Gakushu trying to get use to the redhead's usage of one of his many nicknames. But he couldn't focus that right now because of what Arthur was doing.

The male with hair golden blonde and short clung onto Karma as if he was his life support, he looked so terrified and so shakened. "Arthur is going to puke Karma." Gakushu mentioned but the red-head clearly didn't heard him.

Arthur screamed in terror once more as he was forced to spun with Karma Akabane. "AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!"

"Finally, we are done." Maehara whined as he dropped down to the sand, he flinched back up as he coughed up sand. Isogai sighed at his antics. The class spend the whole day doing various activities from visiting La Morton, cooking, ice-skating and some more until the sky became dusk. Gretel had finally allowed them to come for the final act.

The class was now by at the beach, as they took in the cool breeze and beautiful sunset. The warm colours of golden orange and fiery red, then at the far distance came the approaching gentle ilac purple.

"..."

'Now what?' The class thought in unison.

"Welcome everyone!" Gretel burst into the scene, with a crate of glass bottles. Arthur always seemed to be glued by her side also carried several more crates.

"Time to write a wish." She cheered as she started to hand out the glass bottles along with a piece of paper and pencil.

"Why?" Rio asked.

"Oh little one, let me tell you." Gretel said as she performed a curtsy. She cleared up her voice first, then she sang a special tune.

"There is a tradition from a long time ago,

It is a legend passed on about the sea.

Write down a wish on a piece of paper and place it in a glass bottle.

If you let it flow along with the waves of the seas.

If you let it grow, if you let it drag away with the waters.
Then someday, one day that your wish will come true.

Float away my prayer, may you grow and prosper.

May the waves float away, may you go with the sea.

Into the far horizon as it disappears.

Quietly becoming with the waters.

The wishes that glass bottle held, may it one day be granted.

Float away is a little glass bottle, float away my wish.

To the ocean, to the sea, my wish to the waters.

When the sky is blue, to when the far red horizon stretches, to the night above.

May I wish you luck, the glass bottle containing my prayer.

That one day… that the heavens answer my prayer."

"That was beautiful." Okuda said, she started to clap and the class followed. Ren and Gakushu joined, the strawberry blonde smiled warmly. He knew where that song came from.

"You should thank Iggy over there, he was the one who came up with it. For Noct." Gretel giggled, as she placed a hand over her smile.

"I suggest for you not to spread such rumours." The almond haired male stoically said as he fixed his glasses. Class-E jolted from his sudden appearance, it was like the man teleported. Gakushu almost snorted, Ren definately didn't miss that.

Gretel gasped. "Oh my, you didn't deny it through."

"Unbelievable." He muttered, his annoyance was ignored by the senior reaper of the English Branch.

"And Noct loves you too."

"In a platonic way."

"Didn't deny his passionate love for Noct however." Gretel puffed out her cheeks as she crossed her arms in defiance.

Karma smiled at Gretel, the class couldn't help but think that the two shared the same exact look whenever they planned something. She was like a female Karma. 'Now if only she had red hair.'

'I'm so screwed.' Ren thought however. He just remembered the conversation on the train the other day.

"Don't think that I'm going to drop this conversation Ren-kun."

A certain reaper with almond blonde hair watched Class-E as they wrote their wishes before he turned back to the sea. It reminded him the day where he threw Noct's bottle and his wish to the sea after his suicide.

It was a shocker when he found out that his beloved friend committed suicide and that it wasn't a
murder. It was the same for Noct who cried when he saw him after 30 years. He was saddened yet he felt happy, happy that he could be with Noct again.

He buried that sinful thought to the back of his mind. He did anything to distract himself from such dark and selfish thoughts, he then found a single glass bottle washed up by his feet. It was clearly not from Gakushu's class that came back, it was very old and dirty.

He picked it up and took off the cork. He shook it around and could make that there was some metallic object inside. He tried to extracted it but he instead took out a note. It was aged and stained but to Ignis' intelligent mind, he was curious to read it's contents.

The writing was very cursive, reminisced of the his days of the past and it further deepened the nostalgia as it was in German.

"My wish to the sea as it floats away, it grows as my love blooms.

My world was but a golden cage, as I was closed off because of my illness of the lungs. Protected by my father, my brothers and sister. I love them so much, they were a treasure, more than riches or gold but I wish for more. It was selfish for me I know.

How I wished to spend time with my love freely. To have my wings spread high as we fly in the blue sky.

For another life, without the burden of this body, without status so we can view one another as equals... As lovers.

For my life to be with my dearest friend, how I wish I could tell you that I love you, my passion for you as that as a red rose.

Hair like the sand of my dreams, eyes of the forest and shone like emeralds. How I love you, your warm touches as you comforted me, your kind heart as you held me, your voice as it carried me to bliss as you sang.

How I wished, to stand on my two feet, side by side with you, as I pronounce my love, under the sunset as we kiss. In the next life.

My dear Ignis.

From Noct, Nova 'Noctis' Lucius Callum."

'That... there's is no way...' Ignis knew that handwriting but he couldn't believe himself, his heart was pounding at the mere suggestion of it. He quickly remembered that there was one more object inside of the bottle and he quickly tried to fish it out.

It was a musical hair pin... 'It is him.'

"Ignis! Have you done yet?" A familiar voice called out but it didn't snapped from Ignis' train of thought.

'It was mutual along?'

"You haven't thrown it yet."Noctis pouted. Ignis slowly turned to his lifelong friend and love, blue eyes deep as the ocean of the past looked up to him. "Iggy?"

Noct stared at him and at his blushing face. He slowly trailed down to what was in the other's hand;
an opened note and a musical pin. He quickly connected the dots and to the days of the past before the Department.

"Please don't tell me you read the note." Noctis whispered, Ignis only stared back at him and gave no worded response.

"You..." Ignis said, he was still doubting that this was reality. "-like me?"

He read the note.

"I-I..." Noct had no idea what to say, as much as he wanted to tell him, what came afterwards he had no idea what to do. Ignis should probably do something about this, but he only came out with a poor wording choice.

"Me?"

"You like me?" Ignis repeated himself.

"Of course I do!" Noct yelled over, his face was bright red that he was almost glowing and brighter than the sun that was setting in the back.

"Why?"

Noct didn't expect that. He stared at Ignis.

"Why me?" Ignis couldn't help but asked. If Noct saw him in that light, long before the two joined the Department, it didn't make sense to him. Back then he was a lower-class boy, he had nothing to offer but only in his friendship.

"I-I mean. You are my first and closest friend. You are kind, you have always helped me and was there in my darkest times. Who wouldn't-"

Noct would had finished that sentence if Ignis hadn't rushed in to wrap his arms around his waist and roughly pulled in for a kiss. Their mouths and teeth clashed, it was clear to the both of them that they had no experiences and yet their lips fitted perfectly and it felt so sweet.

Ignis slowly pulled away, with passionate lit bright in his green eyes and met with Noct's blushing face. "I feel the same way, I have always since I met you-"

Gretel was checking her nails as she sat the rock formation. "It all went to plan. It is a good thing that I came across that glass bottle when I was doing my rounds in Denmark."

'I found it a month after Noct joined the Department.' Gretel remembered of Noct telling her the legend of the sea and how if you place a wish in a glass bottle and throw it into the sea then it would eventually come true. He wondered if Ignis followed along with the story if he had ever discovered that bottle in his room. Gretel had to carefully extract the note before putting it back in the bottle as if it was never touched.

'She must be a rich girl.' Karma thought about her overseas trips.

Noct and Igni looked around and realised that they had an audience. Class-E looked to them with smiles, some gave thumbs up and some other characters gave sexual gestures. Gakushu and Ren waved at the pair, the strawberry blonde sweetly smiled and had his phone out the entire time. Around them reapers from today's food fight, and yesterday's drinking session.
'Crap…' The two thought in unison.

"When did you knew?" Ignis asked and almost stuttered in his words. He was sure that he knew his feelings for him. But the other way around, he was still exploding by the fact that Noct 'loved' him in that way.

"The moment Noct-kun became my junior." Gretel sang as she leaped from the rock, landing gracefully to the white sand below. "Noct, you spoke of his name when you were sleeping. Especially about other things." Noct's face was as red as a tomato. "Iggy, Iggy, Iggy, don't go." She teased.

Noct was burying his face in his hands. He was so close on copying Gakushu's habit of hiding under people's shirts. "And Iggy, you get so possessive and jealous so easily over him. Thank you Ikeda."

"You're welcome!" Ikeda yelled in the background. He ignore the intense glare from the almond haired male as he gave a thumbs up. "If you need another instrument! I got a flute on hold!"

"For goodness sake, you were jealous over a coconut." That line had almost everyone laughing, Ren twitched up a smile with Gakushu beside him doing his best to stifle his giggles. The almond haired male also got the Ikeda treatment, with the light haired man rolling in the dry sand as he laughed away. "And you didn't even try to deny it."

Ignis turned away, the way his ears turned red was so tempting to pinch at.

"You were stubborn and Noct believed that his feelings were unrequited. Poor guy." Gretel sighed once more as she crossed her arms. "Not only that but you had the servant mentality. You didn't believe that you deserved Noct, your canary, your 'quote on quote' angel as you once said when you were drunk on Ivan's stash."

"Never again." Ignis muttered under his breath.

Karma whispered over to Rio, "Damn, she is good." Poor Korosensei was sulking, sticking into the sand with a stick he found. Chiba could easily see through his long fringe of how their teacher was sinking deep into the sand in despair.

"It was only last year that he finally admitted his feelings towards you to me. But of course I already knew from the start." Gretel said as her blew on her nails. "I like to believe in the concept of the red-string, but for these two. It is more golden, a type of bond or slash love that is unbreakable. Even after decades of waiting."

'You know, you don't have to be that dramatic.' Much of Class-E thought on Gretel's speech.

"After all Ignis." She side-glanced to the almond haired male. She eerily smiled at him as she curled her hand over her lips. "Didn't you joined us in attempts to reunite with Noct sooner?"

Ignis stayed quiet. Gretel knew that she struck gold.

"She got him there." Gilbert snickered to West.

And then Gretel let out a sigh. "You gave me some trouble. If you never joined than Noct wouldn't have anyone. If you joined then I had to fix both Noct's and your mindset. Took me a while, I had to make sure that you two are together at almost all times. It was only mere luck that you were Arthur's junior. Rare because you were a German citizen while me, Arthur and technically Noct were British. Either way, I could had find some other way for all of it to work."
The reapers that gathered around the group, as they shuffled along and tried to pretend they weren't just earlier eavesdropping this conversation. 'Yeah, she would.' They all felt a shiver going down their spine.

"But it has been fun." Gretel clapped her hands and started to giggle. "You think you could hide your feelings from me. This is me you're talking about."

"The matchmaker master. Anyone who think they could hide their true feelings for one another are stupid. Now if you could excuse, I got my next couple to deal with."

'Crap…' Gakushu and Ren thought in unison, both were internally screaming. Ren despaired by the fact that Gretel knew of his feelings for the strawberry blonde while Gakushu internally cried as he prayed for the heavens not to have Gretel find out his feelings for the hazel haired boy.

'Please let it be Feli.' Gakushu prayed.

"Go on, kiss him. I miss take this moment on picture" Gretel ushered the pair, poor Noct was dying from embarrassment and Iggy was blushing like hell.

"Kiss, kiss, kiss." The reapers chanted. Arthur prepared the camera.

"Hey Iggy! Lets go get some sea-shells."

"Let, don't try beach sex! It's not worth it! Believe me!" Ikeda yelled over to the new couple.

"Shut up Ikeda!" The two screamed.

The reapers there laughed, and Class-E followed along. Nagisa however was on Kayano's lap after witnessing Gakushu laugh.

'Thank-you Gretel.' Nagisa thought was the same as the rest of Class-E.

'And thank you Gakushu.' Kayano thought as she went though Nagisa's soft blue hair.

Gakushu was in awe as he stared at the packets of fireworks and firecrackers. He should had noticed of a certain man creeping up to the boy with a handful of wet sand. He continued with sparkly eyes as he wished that it was night-time already, Nagisa awed. He felt a harsh tug on his hood as it was pulled down and before he could react, he jolted from the wet and grainy feel that touched the nape of his neck and soon going down his spin.

"Ack!" He squealed, he tried get foreign object that was contacting with his skin out to only go deeper down his body. It was stuck underneath his skin-tight black shirt and eventually most of the sand dropped back down where it belongs.

"Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled to the man who was laughing and rolling on the sand. He fought the urge to go and break all of the man's bones, not when Class-E was around. "Again!?"

"What!? I wanted water but I can't hold onto it with my hands enough. So sand had to do!" Ikeda was clutching his stomach as he laughed his ass off.

"Ikeda!" He lunged for the man.

"Not again." Feli let out a tired sigh.

"I think Ikeda just wants to get his ribs snapped by Cutie-pie." Hoshino added as she finished up her
watermelon slice. "At least he hadn't stole anything sweet from the cutie."

"I think it their way of showing their friendship." An said with a big smile. The others sighed. She mindset forever set to adoration for her little juniors.

"And there goes your fiery temper." Ikeda boomed in laughter.

"I do not have a temper!" Gakushu screamed at the top of his lungs.

"Aw~ He is so comfortable with you guys that he starts chasing Ikeda." Gretel sang to Karma. "He's going up so fast." Gretel took out a handkerchief to wipe off that imaginary tear.

"I will go get him." An chuckled as she sat back up and walked over to separate the two. It wasn't a good idea to have Korosensei deal with two real-life reapers.

"You staying here?" Karma asked.

"I will be fine, I have some company." Gretel shifted her head back and Karma could see Arthur looming over the two.

The red-head felt something as he looked to Arthur and then back to Gretel. He pushed that feeling aside. Karma went after Nagisa and Kayano.

Gretel sat there on the sandy hill, her wide smile lessened as she watched the sun slowly goes done. The wind blew and her clothes ruffled along, she felt numb to the cool breeze however.

"You know Arthur, he looked a bit like… Gakushu." She whispered. "I think fate is cruel, looking like him and yet his hair is dyed crimson red."

"I hate that colour."

The blonde reaper watched as Karma started to chase around Terasake with firecrackers and Korosensei lecturing on about safety.

"Gretel, it's about Gakushu and Ikeda." Arthur softly muttered, he shredded his jacket off and placed it over her small shoulders. The two turned over to Gakushu and Ikeda, the young boy was being held back by Ren while the other was dying from laughter. Ikeda was adoring An, hugging her as she patted his head.

"No, don't tell them…" Gretel softly spoke, the two watched the sunset as it turns from brilliant orange to dusky blues.

"It as the saying goes, ignorance is a bliss." She looked down on her phone, opening it up to her messages, one was sent by Ivan.

"Let them live in ignorance." Gretel added another secret into the box that she kept hidden from the strawberry blonde.

The photo on her phone was an old one, it was when Gakushu was only five years old. He and his father were smiling as wide as they could, along with three other students. One student bared a familiar face. Pinkish eyes and dirty blonde hair, if you dyed his hair to platinum gold then you would almost have a complete match.

"It is for the best, it doesn't change anything. The dead remain dead, no matter what, no matter what path we drew for ourselves. Whether if we died from an accident, through illness or by our own
hands. Gakuhou Asano still carved a path for his son that led him to our doors."

"Isn't that right Van? Isn't that what you told him? Or something like that." Gretel asked to no-one in particular.

"To live happily in a lie, or what else what happiness we can be given." Arthur said as he looked to the sky, now purple and the orange gone along with the sun. "We should at least tell them the truth."

"Do you want to tell them? That he may or may not had dug the first seed of Death for Gakushu. Unlike with Gakushu and Karasuma, he did not lay the first brick for his sweet Anna."

Gretel asked, her green eyes never left the playful scene in front of her. "To Gakushu Asano…. And…"

"Ikeda Rikuto."

"Hello?" Gakushu whispered groggily as he placed the phone on his ear. He heard a female's voice from his phone. "Lucia? Is that you?" She sounded as if she was crying.

"Lucia, why are you… crying?"

"Gakushu…. " Lucia choked on her sobbing. "… It's Wolfie."

And then Gakushu snapped out from his bed. He crushed out of the room, running his way to staff rooms. When he burst into the room, all the reapers that stayed at the inn sat there, looking grim. An especially looked to be on her breaking point, her face buried by her hands. Johnny and Ikeda sat by her side.

"Tell me this is only a joke." Gakushu pleaded before he weakly chuckled. "Tell me that it is only a cruel joke, right Ikeda? You sick bastard, you're in this."

Ikeda couldn't muster his cheeky look, he tiredly looked up to the strawberry blonde before going back to comforting An. Gretel remained quiet as she leaned on the wall. Arthur stood still beside her. Roman sat by at the table, waiting for his phone to ring. Joining him were Ben, Hoshino, Feli, Gilbert and West. Vella and North sorrowfully looked up to Gakushu.

"They could never-"

An looked up to Gakushu, in a hopeless look. "Gakushu… It has been almost a week since anyone has heard of them."

"But."

"Wolfie and Tae-sik… They have become… seceders."
Short Story: Department Feud

Chapter Summary

One of the rounds for the Tournament.

Department Feud

The stage was set with lights and excitement, spotlights dazzle as the audience applauded and the music played. The cameras rolled and broadcasted on every device any Department member would own or watch from. The giant TV in Central Building was switched over to the channel with a familiar catchy tune and an exact replica of the set from Family Feud.

"Welcome back to our show! It is time to play Department Feud!" The voice blasted on a reaper's phone as she watched while she and her partner was one shift in the Red-Light District. The two sat by the building's edge as they waited for their next soul to die. It was going to be a while so they could go watch as the Tournament proceeds on.

"Today's first set are; Team 2, otherwise they call themselves as T2!" On the right, the platform lit up and revealed five members as they posed for the camera. On the team was James, Mark, Johnny, Hoshino and Gilbert dressed in the uniforms they would wear whenever on shift.

James and Hoshino wearing the standard reaper uniform of a black suit set with few customisations. Mark and Gilbert both wore black camouflage military cargo pants; Mark with a black bomber jacket and Gilbert with a black tactical military shirt.

Johnny was the odd one out of the sausage party with his whole look befitting to the title of 'bad' boy. Ripped jeans, ripped black shirt and bomber vest.

They eventually stepped behind to their stand as they clapped and cheered along with the audience.

"What can I say? I just like tea." Mark remarked.

"Oh... Rilliane. Am I that stupid that I didn't realise that it was a reference to that expensive tea-shop?" Thomas asked Rilliane as the two watched during the 'Meeting' that no reaper took seriously as another pair of angels and demons argued over. That and he had to stop his partner from drinking her 30th cup.

"And Team Salad!" On the left, the platform lit up to reveal its members as they cutely posed for the camera. However, there were only two, Gakushu Asano and Noct. They eventually walked to their stands as they clapped with the audience. They too were wearing the familiar and usual reaper uniforms.

Gakushu with the black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up. It was only buttoned to the waist down, underneath was some military-styled white cargo pants. Matching this were some black boots tucked in.

Noct wore a similar coat to Shu with buttons on both sides and two smaller slits as well. It's shorter, but has longer sleeves to compensate. Accompanied with loose thigh length shorts and matched with
black thigh high stocking, to add the finishing piece of knee high boots.

Much of the audience squealed at the cuteness the two portrayed, Gretel although on shift was watching on top of Tokyo's skyscrapers along with Arthur. She gave herself some praise for designing these uniforms. 'There is like another hour before our next soul. Games like this usually finishes in around 20 minutes.'

"I feel so dirty with that name." Noct uttered under his breath as he hugged himself. His words were heard and it gave a good chuckle to the audience for his picky eating.

"Just imagine that it is a fruit salad." Gakushu whispered to his black-haired friend that was 180 years his senior even though he had a body of a teenager and sometimes the mind of one.

"With your host, give it up for Benny Steven!" Benny walked on stage with coolness as he took centre-stage. The audience and both teams clapped as he strutted.

"Welcome! Welcome to the Department Feud show, a rip off Family Feud but enough about that as much as I'm digging Harvey's moustache." He said as the audience laughed. "I'm Benny Steven of the American Branch, today's special episode and the next couple of ones will be hosting the round of our annual Tournament!"

The audience roared. "Tournament arc! Tournament arc!"

"And for today's special guests!" Ben's voice called out as he builds up the excitement. The audience off-screen were drum rolling on their laps. "They're members of the Salad Team!"

He pointed up, and behind him a large screen lit up to reveal three faces.

"Ignis!"

"An."

"Ikeda!"

"Okay, that was a bad one." Ben laughed as he gave himself a pat on the back. "What can I say, bad puns are what I do."

"I call bullshit on that!" Ikeda yelled from backstage which resulted laughter in the audience, Ikeda was known rather infamously for his pun humour.

He and Ignis walked out on stage wearing not their usual reaper uniform, Ikeda wore a costume of Darth Vader without the famous helmet of course. While the other had to wear a suit that Gretel knew too well of, the yellow and sparkly texture of his jacket, the pale tea green and his red polka dotted tie. The pink slacks, it was an exact replica of what William wore on his assignment to the Noah's Ark Circus.

"Looking smashing." Ikeda playfully flirted.

"I wasn't aiming to please you." Ignis glared as he fixed up his glasses. For this moment, he was happy that Noct slept as he stood and won't be witnessing this ridiculous moment.

"Maybe I should had said that in Nigel Thornberry's voice." Ikeda playful smirked as he wrapped his arm around the man's shoulder to which he grumbled.

"... Where's An?" Ben asked, he leaned back to backstage see if the female reaper was coming.
"Seriously you guys!" An cried out from the background and off-screen. "You want me wearing something! We just did one for the first round!" It was clear that she hadn't gone into her costume yet.

"This call for a montage! Roll the tape!" Ben yelled and the audience cheered. Although they weren't as excited as Benny would had wanted, but then again Ikeda was smiling at the crowd. Not the playful or smug smile, the 'I fucking dare you' smile.

"This isn't too bad." An said as she finally came out and straightened her jacket, donned in Ikeda's usual reaper uniform. Ikeda looked like his brain was having fireworks and that Christmas has came. "What did I miss?"

"They're doing a montage of the times you dressed up!" Gakushu yelled from his stand.

"What! Why!?!" An looked up at the screen to see photos of the time she was a playboy bunny girl… she was drinking that time.

"Besides me and Noct, you are Gretel's favourite model!"

An was doing her best not to blush like a bright red tomato as the tape rolled of the times she dressed up as a princess, a cat, a maid and other themes of cosplay. Who was sober enough to take photos those times!?

All the while Gretel gave Arthur the thumbs up as they waited for their soon to be collected soul. Ikeda however was conflicted, he was going to go ask if he could get some copies and to punch the guy who took all those photos. Unless it was a non-rival, like James.

"As you can see folks, there are only two on the bench for Team Salad; Gakushu Asano and Noct 'Nova'! Unfair you say? Two against five?" Ben gestured to the pair. "Welp! Even if they lose this round, they can still proceed to the next round without any consequences! But if they do win this round, they secure a BIG advantage for the next game!"

Benny walked up to the team on the right, he rested his arm over the table. "How're you doing Mark?"

"Fine, fine." Mark smiled as he shrugged. "Another day on surviving the Tournament, the usual."

As Benny was making some small talk with the other team, on the left was Gakushu and Noct thinking to themselves. Noct wasn't taking the game seriously, even if they did lose they would still proceed to the next round of whatever the Department throws at them. So, he was drawing on his glasses, leaving Gakushu to overthink on the potential questions they might land on.

Gakushu was very competitive, especially in games like these, he will smash the other team by a landslide. And Ikeda would be buying him lunch at Serendipity 3, he promised that if he thrashed Johnny hard that he'll get the sweet-tooth obsess boy that famous Golden Opulence Sundae.

Although Gakushu could just buy it himself, Ikeda added the extra bonus of no stealing his sweet for a week. He could taste the Tahitian vanilla bean ice-cream with the specks of Amedei Porcelana, he always wanted to know what does dessert caviar taste like.

He came to the pair and quickly noticed that one certain boy with a halo of raven black hair was fast asleep.

"Noct?" Ben called out, but he got no response. He poked at his cheeks, although not like Gakushu's they were still very soft and squishy. Noct had to be very talented to be sleeping while still standing
at the same time... Actually he shouldn't be surprised at all.

"Noct?" He called out again, and again no response. The American reaper and presenter turned to the boy next to Noct.

"So Noct's sleeping again? You think you could awake him up?" Ben politely asked.

"Noct, he's calling for you." Gakushu gently jabbed his elbow to the other boy's ribs. It roused him from his sleep, he whined as he rubbed the sleepiness out from his eyes and let out a long yawn.

"Come one Noct, you can get your nap afterwards." Benny chuckled as he ruffled the boy's soft raven black hair. Gretel and Arthur definitely didn't miss of how Ignis threw a quick glare at the American host.

"Alright! Let's get this game started. Shu! Johnny! Come up to the stand." And so, they did what Ben instructed.

"I got top five answers on the board." Ben announced and the giant TV screen behind him flipped to the disclosed answers.

Gakushu braced himself as he took in a deep breath, his hand flat on the surface of the stand and prepared his fast reflexes for the red button. His opponent on the opposition side did the same.

'You got this Shu.'

Ben read his first question card. "Name something that a doctor would take out from a patient-" And Johnny went straight for his button first as it buzzed.

"Crap!' Gakushu berated himself as he quickly paled at his lost. 'I should had pressed it quicker.'

"A Gerbil." Johnny blurted out with no hesitation. However, he quickly regretted his answer as he flinched and shook his head.

Gakushu and Ben blankly stared at him. Ben's face was hilarious, the look of shock, bewilderment and mouth gaped opened like a goldfish. He dropped his cue card.

"..." There was an awkward pause before Gakushu loomed back as he burst into laughter.

"Hahahahahahahahahahahahahah!" He crouched over on the platform. He laughed along with the booming audience.

"Hahahahahahahahahahahah!" Gakushu could barely contain himself, he laughed to the point his lungs started to burn as he banged on the stand.

Ikeda rolled on the floor, he clutched onto his stomach and in tears as he laughed away. Noct could barely contain himself, Ignis gave a slight chuckle and the rest of Team 2 was laughed their heads off at their friend's answer.

"Johnny, as much as I want to say that I want to keep this show running... for another season" Ben leaned over the stand as he looked over to the man. "This isn't family feud and thereby is not PG rates, so fuck it! Give me gerbil!"

"Buzz!" And a big 'X' flashed over the screen.

"Come on you guys! You had the best answer!" Ben cried to all of those who answered the survey.
At the end of the show, it was already clear from the moment Team Salad, or more specially Gakushu Asano was going to win by a landslide. Although it felt too lopsided as Gakushu and Noct kept scoring all the questions with no mistake and barely although the other team any ounce of points. After Johnny's blunder, Gakushu gave the boring answer of 'baby' and the rest was history.

Not that anyone from either win was too angry about, they would still have had to proceed to the next round if they win or not.

Gakushu got his free ice-cream sundae decked out in edible 24-karat gold leaf that cost a grand from Ikeda although it won't break the man's bank. The man was even more nicer and generous when he gave the strawberry blonde an extra gift of a giant plushie for his room that was strawberry scented.

Gakushu and Noct who occasionally helped completely and utterly destroyed Team 2.
Short Story: Back in the day (IV)

Chapter Summary

Gretel's earlier days in the Department.

Early Days

Back in the day, before An met her first lover she once dubbed as her 'beloved Edward' in primary school on his dashing white horse came to her rescue. She was such a sweet and naïve child then, as well as gullible. It didn't that her Edward saved her from the mean teasing boys, she was often teased, unknowing the fact that one of the leaders had a crush on her. Even after Edward forgot about their dates many times, as she stood alone, in the rain or in the blazing sun, she forgave him,

She forgave him when he took her money without asking. She forgave him when he gave her a bite-mark on her shoulder without consent. She forgave him when he apologised after hitting her during his drunken rage and pleaded her to stay with him. She was far too forgiving as her three older brothers noted as she grew up.

Poor An, it would eventually lead her to her death. It was a shame that her anchor that was an eight-year-old boy from Japan couldn't stay.

Long before the time that Noct would ever let out his first song or Ignis carrying his friend's wish to the sea for it to grow. Before it could finally reach to the hands of Ignis. Long before Kim Tae-sik walked into the sea. Before the day Wolfgang took that step, in front of a car.

This one was starting in the ranks of the Department at 16. Hair that was golden blonde like the sun and eyes once green like the English Plains. She once came from a family filled with sons and her as the only daughter. Her truest friend that wasn't any of her brothers or relatives was a servant who she picked up when she heard his music in the orphanage. She laid rested in white in a white room, beautiful as she slept, like Sleeping Beauty.

And by her bedside was a man cladded in black.

He bared a cold and aloof look, however that wasn't directed to the girl. If anything, William felt sorry that she had to be surrounded by such idiocy that was from a creature cladded in red. The other's attire consisted of a bright crimson red suit jacket and pants, vest, gloves, a ribbon around his neck and adding to his height with high-heeled ankle boots. Long dark-red hair that William wanted to slash away, shark-like teeth he wanted to kick his heel in.

Why for such a negative reaction around the man named Grell Sutcliffe? For many reasons that William could take years to list off, but also that the man managed to screw up two days' worth of paperwork last week.

"Leave Sutcliffe." The man said in an annoyed yet professional tone. He sat by the girl's bed with his legs over the other. He was a rather tall man with short and neatly combed dark brown hair. "Your disruptive behaviour will wake the new trainees up."

"Who cares. I don't get why we have to look after these newbies, just like them go the way we did
and they figure it out on their own." Grell acted dismissive as he had usually had, especially around the Grim Reaper Principles and the new programs the Department wanted to introduce for newcomers. "We have classes you know, we shouldn't baby them."

While there were classes, not everyone learns the same. And it was a safety measure as well, with the new disturbing reports and studies found that those first starting in the Department have the highest risk of being admitted to the Ward for periodic episodes, before those could reach their 50-year mark were 30 to 70% at risk depending on the individual.

Essentially, it painted a picture that the newly arrived reapers as ticking time-bombs, and that wasn't good when one had an episode set off when outside of the Department's halls. Although the rate will decrease as the years go by. The rumours where wrong surrounding the 50-year mark. If they reached their 50-year mark, the rate of risk will only be cut in half. There were stories of well-experienced seniors snapping and experiencing an episode for the first time with more to follow.

"Leave Sutcliffe, you have not signed up for the main senior program." William affirmed in a monotone as he pushed back his rectangular glasses.

"But William! My darling!" The dramatic red cladded reaper pouted, he impulsively leaped for the arms of the aloof reaper and was then met with a garden pruner to the face.

Finally, Grell left the Medical Ward, he was dragged away by the arms of two equally as annoyed workers of that Ward. William let out a tired sigh, he pinched the bridge of his nose before his eyes started to trail at the girl before him as she laid. She looked very peaceful in her sleep, unknowing of the fate she decided to take her life. She clearly fitted the image of a noblewoman, with a presence of a princess as she slept. Undisturbed by the noise earlier on part of Grell.

Gretel Milord, the only daughter between Alfred Milord and Marie Milord, twin of Hansel Milord and the youngest child from the family of sons. Living in France for a time while her twin brother was studying at Weston College under the house of the Green Lion, visiting back to English whenever he was on a break. Died from hanging at 16.

The book of a 'Main Senior' said to slowly guide their latest recruit into their new lives as Grim Reapers of the Department. William went through his guidebook for the fifth time. "If the new recruitment has no memories of their past human lives, gently introduce yourself and tell them where they are. Even with no memories, leftover humanistic traits will stay such as fear."

"Where am I?" A raspy voice called out. William took his eyes off from his book over to the petite blonde girl who slowly opened her eyes. She forced herself to close her eyes from the harsh bright lighting as she only got up. She winced and attempted to ease the pain by rubbing and covering her eyes.

"You're at the Department's Medical Ward." The stoic William calmly answered.

"Medical Ward?" Gretel almost whimpered. She swore that she made sure that her death was fool-proof. "But- How? How can I still be alive?"

"...Truth be told, you have died." He said, he wasn't angered that the young girl couldn't understand the meaning of his words when he placed himself in her position. Being able to touch and see, even with the horrible and infamous near-sightlessness all reapers hold after waking up from an assumed eternal slumber. Perhaps this main senior program was for the best.

"I am dead? Is this heaven?" The blonde girl winced as she clutched to her head and rubbed her
eyes. "Everything looked is so white... so blurry." She whispered that last word.

William berated himself, he almost forgot to give her starter glasses. "My apologies, I was supposed to give you your glasses." William took the circular glasses, he gently placed them over the bridge of her nose and slowly pushed them. Her eyes closed and her back straightened, her hands posed over the blanket on her lap elegantly.

"Are they fitted well?" He asked as he went back down to his seat. Gretel nodded, she squinted for a few short seconds as she touched the cold frames of her new glasses.

She slowly opened her eyes, her new eyes of chartreuse phosphorescent. "I don't remember my vision to be this awful."

"Sadly, it is something all reapers have." William let out a tired sigh as he gestured to his own customised glasses. "I am the same, everyone is."

"Reaper?" Gretel muttered in confusion.

"You see..." William took a pause after been taking back by the fear that festered behind her new neon eyes of chartreuse phosphorescent. He wasn't really that prepared as he thought. "Humans who commit suicide are reborn as Grim Reapers as punishment."

"Punishment?" Gretel clenched her bed-sheets, William definitely didn't miss that move. She was a smart he noted, 'Very bright."

He could see that she deduced that she was forever away from the gates of Heavens. He knew why she did the deed, it was told to him as he will be her main senior in his report.

"Yes, killing one's self is considered as an unforgiveable in the eyes of God."

"I'm this Grim Reaper? Not human?" The blonde girl questioned of her new identity.

"That is correct."

Gretel looked up to the white ceiling, she took in a deep breath through her nose. William made no comment of how her lips were quivering, the way she bit her lower lip as she looked back down to her lap. The world crashed around her, not once but twice. The first was the moment Hansel's beautiful golden blonde hair was painted in his red, the second time was the realisation that she was separated from her mirror in hopes to reunite with him.

"Am I barred from the heavens? That I would never be with my family again?" She asked so softly. William couldn't help but feel sympathy for her, he found that feeling in him strange.

"Not unless one of your family members commit the same act... Or you work for your forgiveness so that you could be human once more." William answered and Gretel remained silent for the next few minutes.

"How long will it take then?"

"The last one, it took them almost 2000 years and even then, they were quicker than usual." William slowly said, watching the emotions that went through the young, small blonde-haired girl.

"... Can you give me one moment please?" She asked as her shoulders shook. "I need some time to gather up my thought. To think over this..."
"Of course." William agreed to his request. He stood up from his seat and went outside, he pulled the bed-screen behind him.

"..."

"... Hansel." She whimpered and not before long cold tears began streamed down her face. She hunched over and pulled her knees close to her body. Tears dripped down to her white hospital gown.

"Why... All I ever wanted was to see him again." The young girl explained her reasoning to no-one in particular as she looked up to the white ceiling like she was talking to the heavens. No answer came to her, she knew the answer all along.

"Was that too much to ask for?"

"Hansel..." She whispered to her twin. "Clarence... Aston..." She spoke of her two older brothers.

She would never see the day Aston would graduate from Weston College, she would never be able to see the ceremony of when he passed on his perfect title to another student. She would never have that feeling of excitement whenever Clarence came back from the royal secret intelligence and how he spoiled her with affection and teased her older twin. She would never be there for the nephews or nieces the two would create. She could never feel the comfort of her parents anymore.

"Arthur..." She whispered the name of her servant and friend. She knew that she would never have these moments the moment she tied the noose, but it didn't mean that it didn't hurt.

William stood there in silence as he waited, he internally sighed to himself.

'I'm not really good at this...' He committed about his cold personality, although he knew that wasn't the fault for her cries.

Twenty minutes passed as Gretel sobbed until she could collect herself. She dried off the remainder of her tears and she waited for the man to returned. She straightened her posture when the hospital bed-screen was swiped open and the same man from before came back.

This time he had a small box in hand, without a word he handed over the small white cardboard container. She looked up, and he gestured down to the box as if he had mentally told her to open it already.

With hesitation she slowly opened the box and was pleasantly surprised to find a set of six colourful macaroons insides. She looked up and felt her face going warm, she bowed and stuttered a thank-you.

"My apologies, I haven't introduced myself. I am William T. Spears, I am a reaper of the English Branch and I work in the Management Division." William introduced himself and Gretel found it odd that he hadn't take back his seat.

"I am Gretel Milord." She introduced herself. Although he already knew her name and her details, he noted that it was nice for her to introduce herself. It was good to be polite.

"I will take you around the Department for a tour." William stated as he fixed his glasses. "There is a café we can attend to after the tour. There we can have some tea."

"That sounds rather lovely." Gretel softly giggled, the man offered her a hand as she made her way
"Please, allow me." William said as he took the small white box from her hands as she was led down the Medical Ward. Before Gretel could even ask about her shoe problem, that being she had no shoes, William took out a pair of white shoes for her fit.

After she slipped into her shoes and that problem crossed off her mental list, another came at top as she started to walk down the medical bay alongside with her new main senior. Gretel couldn't believe her eyes, at first, she thought that her newly acquired glasses were faultily, then another though came was that there were many people with short blonde hair.

He had short neat blonde hair, a sharp jawline and the shape of his eyes that gave her the sense of familiarity. He wore a simple white shirt, buttoned but his collar was left opened.

"Arthur?" Gretel whispered as she took a step forward. The male looked up in shock at the sound of her voice, his breath hitched and neon-green eyes widened. No longer were his eyes the colours of the English plains.

'No.' Gretel could only pray that it was just another male with blonde hair and facial structure that was alike to her dear and still alive friend.

"Milady?" A familiar voice spoke that tore her heart into shreds. "Is that you? Young Lady Milford?"

'No, it can't be.'

"Why?" She whispered. Questions quickly flashed through her head, emotions of grief and despair filled her heart. She berated herself for feeling even a hint of happiness for seeing that her friend was there with her. She hated herself for that disgusting thought and yet, someone she knew was her, in this limbo.

"Why Arthur?" She hiccupped. She quickly interrupted whatever response Arthur was about to say.

"Why? Why did you follow me!?!" But Gretel knew the answer as much as she so wanted to deny it. Arthur was loyal, too loyal to Gretel, both as a servant and as a friend. The type of loyal she read in fiction and in fairy tales, that the young lady thought she was unworthy of.

"I made a promise to you, remember." A promise Arthur would detail in his song for Gretel in the future. He lowered his head down and practically growled as he clenched his fist over his white blanket. "That I will always be by your side... That I would never leave you alone, but I failed that in my old life when I didn't realise how deep your despair was."

"That's why... I anew my promise, I won't fail again in this new life!"

Gretel hovered her hands over her mouth, she struggled to keep her tears unshed but she cried for a second time as she ran to his bed.

"Y-You... You idiot!" Gretel failed to hold up on her tears, not that she wanted to hide them in the first place as she lunged into Arthur's arms and cried into his chest.

The person cladded in black who sat by Arthur's bedside stood up and walked away, gesturing William to come and leave the two in their privacy as he closed the bed-screen.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry." Arthur whispered into her ear, he could feel her soft delicate hair pressed against his cheek. "Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry."


They stayed in that position for who knows how long, comfortable in each other's arms, no longer as servant and master.

"Side by side." Gretel whispered, Arthur could faintly feel her smile as she buried herself in his broad chest soaked earlier by her tears. Arthur hummed as he wrapped his arms protectively around her.

"I will be with you." He said so warmly and lovely that it made Gretel's heart flutter.

"Our new promise." Gretel muttered but loud enough for Arthur's ears. Arthur slowly pulled away from the blonde girl and cupped her face wet with tears. Eyes no longer green as the English plains and yet Gretel found that Arthur still had that flame in the usual cold eyes of green chartreuse phosphorescent eyes.

"Until the day we are forgiven." She whispered, shrugged up her shoulders as she weakly chucked and she buried into his warm chest once more.

"I will be with you, as long as it takes." He rested his chin gently on top of her head.

"You will be there, on other side, as human once more?"

"Yes, side by side, hand in hand."

William stood on the other side of the closed hospital bed-sheet as he listened in their conversation, silently and still.

"You really think this is a good idea?" A male's voice said before he downed himself with some sandwiches. He mumbled something that Gretel couldn't make out of.

"I have to do something Markus..." Gretel exclaimed as she finishes up the last set of stitches for a men sized suit jacket. She glanced up from her work on her lap. "And you mustn't talk with your mouth full." The male shrugged as he continued to stuff his face with the sandwiches more than he could chew.

"Do you think that he hates me?"

"Who, Willie? Nah he's always like that since he came to the Department." Markus waved off her claims. Markus was a reaper from the English Branch for over 70 years, he worked in the Ward. He had dark brown hair that was combed over for that slick and clean look. Although he was dressed in the typical uniform of a back suit, he always added a white lab coat.

"Are you sure?" Gretel hesitantly asked

"Don't worry about it, he's cold to anyone." Markus affirmed but it didn't calm the girl's worries. Gretel met this senior reaper when she was waiting for Arthur to pick their dinner one of the various at the cafeteria areas. It was only by chance that Gretel spotted the man while Markus caught the girl staring at him, or more specially the doll he was assembling in his hands.

"If anything, he is being really nice to you. I think it the first for him." He hummed and licked his
"Didn't think he would have the heart. So, what if you fainted after your first soul? You've collected the soul and then you fainted."

"That doesn't excuse my actions." Gretel curtly replied but Markus scoffed.

"Gretel, you are a junior. Give yourself some leeway." Markus assured the blonde girl. Before she could retort, a voice called out from behind.

"Milady." Arthur's voice called out not too far from where the pair sat. "We have a shift with William next hour."

"I have to go now, duty calls." She nodded to the older male as she got herself up, the jacket was neatly and carefully folded then wrapped over her arm.

"And the doll looks lovely today." She commented, she then grabbed 500ml bottle.

"Tell me what you think of the dye, it's a new recipe." Markus said. Gretel gracefully got up from her seat and walked over to Arthur. The two walked to the English Apartment complex area, Arthur said that he left the soul collection book by his bed.

'Arthur would never forget such a thing,' Gretel knew what the male was doing.

"Arthur, there is no shift today. Is there?" Gretel voiced casually, she knew that she hit a spot the way Arthur slightly flinched. "Is there a problem?"

"Nothing is wrong Milady." Arthur calmly although hastily replied.

"Arthur." Gretel voiced laced with disappointment. She stopped at the hallway, Arthur took a few steps forward before stopping and turning to face the petite young reaper.

"What is it Milady? Are you tired?"

"I told you to call me Gretel, we have been over this." She huffed, her arms crossed over her chest and even then, she was careful of the jacket.

"But-" And as expected, Gretel cut off on whatever excuse Arthur would give.

"There is no social class here, we are one the same stand, not nobles nor servants." Gretel chimed, she turned her face to face away from her former servant. "We. Are. Equals."

"Okay Mil-" He hold back on his tongue, he took a short second of silences as he slowly drew out the next word. "... Gretel."

"Wonderful." She twisted around, she beamed to her friend with a smile and a clap. "So, tell me. What was that scene back there?"

"..." Arthur stayed silent again, but Gretel knew that it wasn't to hide the truth but neither to find a way to portray them in words. His eyes shifted away before looking back to Gretel. "It is just a feeling."

"Feeling?"

"I don't know, I just don't get a good feeling from him. But it wasn't like Hansel, it felt something more."

"Like a sixth sense?"
"I suppose so."

"Wasn't that Spear's gift?" Arthur pointed to the suit jack draped and fold over her right arm. "I remember you said you were going to give it to him today."

"It was, until after I fainted from my first collection that I found out Grell was jesting me and accidently ripped up my gift." Gretel darkly explained, Arthur could hear how the heels of her shoes clacked harder as they walked.

"Sutcliffe." Arthur growled under his teeth.

"What's done is done." Gretel said, as angered as she was, she couldn't do anything about it, as much as her dark mind urged for some ounce of vengeance. 'No, I am going to be mature and a reasonable lady.'

"I will be a reasonable adult."

"But, legally here in the Department, it is only when you're eighteen." Arthur reminded.

"And clearly Mr Sutcliffe is not acting like a responsible adult. Which means I won."

'You reverted back to his formal name.' Arthur quietly noted. He was learning more and more of Gretel personality if she never had the restrains or was bound by the social rules of a 'lady'.

'Although you are being cute, finding ways to out-best Grell…' He mentally noted at his lady's pettiness. And a random bit of information came racing back to his mind, his main senior was complaining of Grell's beauty nap when he was supposed to be at his shift at the Office. Although he was conflicted about this, on the one hand Grell was avoiding work but on the other, he wasn't creating more work for the others.

"Damn that Sutcliffe, always avoiding this day, every bloody time." Arthur's main senior darkly muttered under his breath as he placed another file on the completed pile.

And it just so happened that they just walked past Grell's door. Along with Gretel's sewing equipment to be used as a make-shift key picking equipment.

"M-Gretel, I will be on look out." Gretel was surprised of Arthur's out of nowhere comment. They stopped but Arthur was back trailing.

"What are you trying to say?" Gretel asked in confusion. She slowly walked up to him and followed where his eye was, to a gaudy red door.

'Grell.' Her mind growled.

"Grell always have an afternoon beauty nap at this time. I heard that Grell dislikes the colour of green." Arthur casually said, the two intently stared at Grell's door. "Didn't Markus give you some dye?"

"It's material dye." Gretel asked. "How did you know it's green?"

"Because you were talking about needing some dark jade-green cloth last well. And we can experiment of what effect it can do on hair." Arthur hinted, he could see the cheeky glint in her eyes behind her glasses. The same glint whenever Hansel laced his enemies' food with vast amounts of hot chili paste.
Gretel knew that the relationship between Arthur and Hansel wasn't exactly as warm, since Hansel was the older twin and was only naturally to be overprotective to his younger twin sister.

What she didn't know was that Arthur always relayed information of any potential suitors to Hansel and the other will go out to lace that suitors' food. It was a shame that Hansel couldn't do the same for Arthur, because he would have a tick in his eye whenever his food was laced and even so, he could handle the spice.

His less than glamorous life before the days of being a servant to milady gave him the habit to never waste food. Although Hansel was kind enough to lace the foods those who insulted the then servant.

It seemed that Gretel was becoming more like her other twin, either to compensate or because the lack of the restraining duty as a lady, Arthur wouldn't know. He guessed it was a bit of both. Either way, she has his permission today and with no witness around either.

"Gladly." Gretel growled as she gave a dark sneer.

William T. Spears walked in the English Branch's apartment complex area, more specifically to Gretel's room with a box of Mary Berry's Victoria sponge cake. It was mainly to stop her and her friend from baking, the two can be over-the-top when making their cakes, it was their time in France that made them that way.

It wasn't William's fault that he stereotypically hated the French, he was an Englishman of course. Not that anyone knew about that.

The well-dressed man was at a lost, while he was usually professional around other reapers, he could never make an exception for his junior. He almost had a panic attack when she fainted even she collected the soul of a man being ran over by a carriage.

It wasn't like William experienced, back when he had to collect the soul of Thomas Wallis before he graduated in 1775. Contrary to everyone's belief, he hadn't stayed in the Department for every long. Thomas Wallis' body was left in the middle of the street to be bleed out, the inspiring author reached to his manuscript and nobody came to help the young man.

What Gretel saw was worse, at least what he considered, it was gruesome for her first collection. The man she saw died bleed out in the streets, the bone of his right arm was sticking out of his body, his chest crushed in as he gasped for air as blood quickly came to flood into his lungs. He let out the most painful and horrid sounds as he drowned in his blood, all the while she helplessly waited for him to finally die, the dying man looked to the girl as if he could see her, pleading for help.

Just after she collected his soul, her skin paled, the small beginning Death Scythe, the gardening scythe in her shaking hands. After reviewing and a 'complete' stamp on the dead man's profile, she ran to the alleys, William quickly followed in pursuit and silently watched as she violently vomited the contents of her stomach before fainting in his arms.

Arthur was vivid when the man came back with his friend over William's shoulders carried like a sack of potatoes. William would say hypocrite when Arthur did the same to prevent her from ripping Grell's head off, not that he could complain, he could see the difference between him and the other.

Arthur did it in a way when her face was next to his face, and not her other side. And he only did it when she was conscious, even so it was so rarely.

It didn't help his poor heart that she was helpful, quickly picking up the ways of the Department, especially in the Office. She and Arthur graduated in record time, under four months and became a
full-fledged reaper in the next month. She was efficient in her paperwork and that was always a plus.

He was acting distance, but he couldn't help it. As to everyone's conflicting views, he wasn't emotionless, he was merely professional and have enough control over his emotions so that it wouldn't cloud his judgement.

It didn't help that he could act protective over his junior, especially with she was with that Arthur boy… yes Arthur. Arthur and Gretel were always together, like a dog following his master. He told himself that he was becoming more like an overly protective father.

As he walked, it came to a halt when he heard a too familiar scream resonate within the hall. 'What has happened now?'

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! No! My beautiful hair!" Grell shrieked, as he turned and twist in despair he caught a certain stoic and usually cold reaper with slink black hair. "Oh William! My darling! Comfort me!"

He ran up for the arms of William T. Spear but was characteristically met with the end of the man's pruner once again. Even William was keeping in his laughter at the sight for the person before him, who wailed and mourned for his hair. He could tell that the dye was used wasn't even specify for hair, which damaged the man's hair.

He would applaud to the person or persons who had committed this act, however he had to go for some tea at Gretel's room. He knocked on the door, and as he predicted, Arthur opened the door.

"Good day Mr William, you came for some tea?"

"Why yes." William hovered his eyes inside of the room, Gretel.

There was some green underneath her fingernails, before they were hidden away by her black gloves. 'Why I be damned.' He could feel the bits of pride brewing for his junior.

'Of course.' He could already see what the pair had did, Arthur acted as the watch-dog while Gretel had her way done. He had heard from Markus when he was collecting reports from the Ward that Grell accidently ripped the girl's jacket and was already agitated when he jested of her fainting episode.

"Next time, you can have experiment with hairstyles in his sleep. You have my permission.” He wanted to laugh when the two paled in seconds of being caught.

"Do you two want to have some cake?" He offered up the box.

"That would be lovely." Gretel smiled up.

"I will get the brew ready." Arthur nodded.

William could see that he could make an exception in his little make-shift family. He just to ask Gretel who was becoming more like his daughter.

It was humorous to see Grell obviously death-glaring at Gretel behind their backs. He knew it wasn't just because of his new hair-style.

Next time on Until the day I'm forgiven. [Man it has been a while since I done this].

"How, how did I lose all of my money?"
"Don't try to understand why they became seceders."

"Ren… when I'm gone… will we still be friends?"

"In the end, he just ended up repeating the past."

Chapter: Forward
Chapter Summary

The end of the vacation and a new promise made.
Strive forward.

Forward

"How, how did I lose all of my money?"

A man clutched into his short wavy green hair with both hands, he sat in front of a white table with his arms on its surface. He checked into his account to find that everything was gone and with no trace to track back to the one responsible for his loss. All of his bank accounts were frozen and shut off with no way for him to reopen.

"How can I have my revenge. Not yet, not yet." He darkly muttered to himself. "I will get him back, he was the one who did this."

"Not until I get that so-called God of Death-"

"It was because you were stupid enough to attack someone in the middle of the day and in front of the school." A voice called out to the man cladded in white.

The man shot up and looked up with his teal eyes. "You're..."

"I come back from work to find that you lost all of your funding, because you acted too fast." The voice taunted at the man cladded in white as it clicked its tongue. "Just because I gave you some materials that boost up your minion's abilities above that of the average human doesn't mean you should rush things."

"Haven't you learned? All good things come to those who are patience."

"You said that it is almost impossible, just like Korosen-"

"Have you forgotten that a certain Organisation's presence in that town has grown stronger in these past few months?" The voice said as they waved their finger around. "They will find out on what you are doing, they are smarter than you and have reasons to act now and not then. When that day comes, I have cut my ties."

"You attempted to attack a student who was a part of this End Assassination program numerous times and it brought you more suspicion. You have attracted eyes from the big fishes, the Department is involved and your times is up when you are faced against you." The voice chuckled. "And have you forgotten that Miss Jona-Zwier's fiancée was around the area, looks like you have made another terrified enemy."

"You might as well hope that maybe it was the yellow blob that stole all of your money." The person smugly chuckled. "You have two new possibilities in your hand, and neither of them are pretty."

"What are you talking about?" The white cladded person asked.
"The son of a high-ranked general from America was around town on his usual check-ups. With his links in government, he probably made the connection of your involvement and told his very talented associate." The other playfully sang. "It shouldn't be too hard for them to find your real name, if the government knows than they will definitely as well. I mean the operation they had done after what they considered to be the most chaotic period in their lives."

"...." The man below was confused.

"Do you understand what I'm saying? Do you need some context and background information on that?"

"If this other party is not the Department, I can simply deal with it without any trouble." The man snapped back but the other smiled. Yes, he may have promised to protect this pathetic man from the Department to some extent, but this white robbed man had to deal the rest of his enemies himself.

"You do know that this other entity was the reason why America chose not to invest into your pet project. This entity concluded that the Anti-matter project was impractical and convinced the American government not to take it, thus causing a ripple effect where it caused much of the Western world to remain uninterested." The person mused and smirked as the man below and of his temper.

"It would had been interesting to see the battle between the genius who easily convinced the Western world through their opinion alone, or the so-called genius who is dressing up like a snowman."

"I wouldn't have minded, since I wondered how you would try to escape from that 'hand' until I found out that you tried to attack La Morton. And even without me seeing the reports, I already knew that you would fail." The man dropped piles of papers to the floor below. "Go ahead, pick them up. I gave you a select few. Sorry that I have to black out some of the information, they were very weird details, maybe it's a Department language thing."

The man cladded in white below slowly and warily picked up one piece from the pile, it was a profile of… Gakushu Asano. It was a bust shot with the young boy looking forward to the camera, it was before he had his haircut and he assumed it was taken at the beginning of the year. He was dressed in a black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood settled down his back. He had a dull expression, but his eyes weren't violet purple but that inhumane colour of chartreuse phosphorescent behind his black-framed glasses.

"La Morton and the Department are one of the same, it is just another base."

Gakushu Asano of the Japanese Branch, worked in the Retrieval Division. At his introduction to the Department, it only took the then 10-year-old a month to become a full-fledged 'reaper'. The man realised what he had done, when he only thought that the boy would be inexperienced when compared to Class-E when in reality, Gakushu worked for the Department for the past four years.

'Ikeda' of the Japanese Branch, worked in the Retrieval, Intel, Intelligence Divisions and in specialised dispatches. Currently he was working as a mole in the Kungigaoko Police force. It was no wonder why the men he sent to catch the boy disappeared and no news broke out to the public.

"..." The man in white robes remained silent, he couldn't dare to look up that the voice's eyes that always scared him.

"But I am still interested of what you are going to do?" The voice playfully sang and it dropped a huge briefcase down at the man's feet with a loud thud. "I will provide you with another safe-house, no need to thank me. I want to see how all of this end."
"Try not to spend it all in one place. And please do not interrupt, I have some new work to do."

"Gakushu, have a safe trip." Noct hugged his friend. It was now the early morning and the class was at the train station. Noct visited his young friend to say goodbyes, the only times he would be seeing the strawberry blonde was when he was in shift or by luck in the halls of the Department before his next visit. "I will see you again when we visit your school again soon."

"Have a nice time with Iggy, tell me some stories." Gakushu smiled as he broke away from the hug to Noct who lightly blushed.

"And tell me about An's situation with Johnny and Ikeda." Noct laughed back.

The strawberry blonde said nothing as his classmates chattered amongst each other, he knew that he worried them when he didn't bother to reply back when they spoke with him. Especially Nagisa and Karma. He felt awful about it but he didn't have the strength after crying into his sleep.

He felt even more worse when he ignored Ren's words, it broke his heart to see Ren's hurtful expression. He wanted to hide away and so he did.

Gakushu didn't talked to anyone when he entered the train and went off to a carriage for an equally empty room. He ignored the worried looks from his teachers and more from his fellow classmates as they wondered they reverted back to stage one. He slides the door opened, he propped his travel bag down and he sank into his seat.

Lucia broke down after the news, that her beloved Wolfie and Tae-sik were officially branded by the Department as seceders. Otherwise known as deserters. He heard the news that Lucia later had an episode and currently resided in the Ward until further notice.

But he couldn't do anything about it, he must now act as if nothing has happened and continued on with the two. For the sake of his young heart and for his assignment in Class-E as he was told by Gretel last night.

He decided to sleep, and couldn't help but wonder why did the two left, against Gretel's advice.

Korosensei noticed but Gakushu went missing for over an hour. He, Karasuma and Irina were about to do a search party when Korosensei commented that he couldn't feel his presence inside the building. They were about to split up as they exited when they saw a lone woman sitting at the bench.

An knew of Gakushu Asano and so Korosensei thought it was a good idea to ask her if she knew where the strawberry-blonde boy was. When the octopus teacher was about asked if she had seen the strawberry blonde teacher. Karasuma was outside of the inn when he spotted a girl with bangs that covered her forehead and curled to the right, she only wore sleep wear and was bare feet; a black tank top and shorts.

An sat there alone on a wooden bench and not noticing of their presence. He somewhat panicked when he saw how blotched her brown eyes were, tears still running down her cheeks as she blankly stared on. For that moment, he felt rage against the man known as Johnny. He didn't know why but he couldn't let this assumption out from his mouth.

"Miss An! What is the matter?" Karasuma rushed by with worry as he quickly took off his jacket to cover the girl. The three stood in front of the black-haired girl, her hair wasn't typed in her usual ponytail but it was let free into the cold wind.
An felt something warm around her shoulders, she flinched when she felt the jacket wrapped around her. "Ah!" She gasped as she glanced up at the usual stoic teacher who was usually his emotions of worry and hurt on his sleeves.

"Kara-

Karasuma couldn't help but break a little inside at that old nickname of his, it didn't help that this person in front of them looked exactly like her from 20 years ago. He knew that she was only choking in her sobs and couldn't bring to say his name fully. But the hurt was still there.

"K-" An chocked before she quickly bended over as if she wanted to curl into a ball. She bit her lip, her face contorted her visible distress but she couldn't let it down any longer, and she let out the most heart-wrenching sob he has ever heard. She cried and cried as she clutched the jacket given to her closer and tighter.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" She cried as the tears fall.

Korosensei was in full panic model as he half-hazard waved his arms around that carried chocolate and soft plushies, as if it could make her feel better. Irina had no idea what to do or how to even comfort a person in this scenario, Karasuma was clueless as well.

It didn't help his heart that this person looked just like Anna. Like it was 'Anna' crying. He also ignored the annoying voice in his heard. 'This is your chance, you have been waiting for 20 years.'

"What happened?" Karasuma attempted his best soothing voice, he kneeled down with one knee so he could meet at eye-level with her.

"He's gone." An whispered under her breathe. "Gone..."

"Who's gone?" The teachers pray that it wasn't Gakushu.

"Why did you go Tae-"

"-There you are An... I was looking for you." A voice called out. The teachers turned to find Ikeda standing in front of them. He approached them but they knew that he was only there for An.

"Come on, let's go inside." Ikeda gently whispered. He kneels down and gently gasped at her hands

"Arthur set up some hot chocolate."

"Do you know where Asano-kun is?" Korosensei asked the blonde-haired man. The three teachers knew by the look on the man's face that he perfectly knew where the student was. However, the answer he gave wasn't the one they were looking for.

"Shu needs his space..." Ikeda walked between them. "Something really bad has happened to one of us, like really bad, trust me... You can't interfere, just give him some time, it's too personal."

From the cries of An and Ikeda's words, they made their conclusions. The person An cried over was gone and that someone was Gakushu's friend. Someone who was very close. It was true but not in the way they expected.

When Gakushu came back, he was more reserved than he ever was back when he was in the main building. 'I'm going back to bed." He said to the worried teachers as he dragged himself in the warm confides of his bed.

No-one commented of how red his eyes were.
Gakushu was dragged into the staff-rooms and into the hallways of the Department by Gretel through the use of the Door in the late of night. Reapers passed by with a second glance, as they continued onto their work, their assignments, their shifts or usual respective routine. It was as if Wolfie or Tae-sik hadn't ever disappeared in the first place.

He wanted to lash out, crying out that Wolfie or Tae-sik was gone and nobody batted an eyelash. His heart was in a raging war, tugging through so much emotions. Despair, anguish, anger, sadness, bitterness.

Gretel decided for the pair to head to her bedroom for better privacy. No words were spoken to each other as they walked, no words spoken when he entered into her room.

"Gakushu, I know this is your first time. Believe me, I know it hurts so much... I felt the same way when a dear friend of mine deserted us." Gretel softly said as she closed the door behind her, Gakushu was shocked for the second time tonight, he never had even heard of this story from any of the reapers.

"You probably would had never heard of him, he vanished a month into when I became a main senior for Noct."

"Eventually, he was forgotten by the Department because of the messes we had to clean up because of the Undertaker..." Gretel weakly smiled as she dived back into the past. It was big news then but no-one seemed to care, why should they?

"Even back then he didn't have much of a presence. He mostly talked to me." She leaned her back on the door, her arms crossed over her chest and she shrugged her shoulders. "Honestly, I had forgotten about him, I couldn't even remember his name anymore... I remembered this particular memory because I found out you would had experienced the same as I did then."

'Liar.' Gretel's inside voice said back.

"It's the same for An, she lost a mentor and a brother, I think he was named Peter something of the American Branch. Cute guy, kind-hearted like An. It broke her heart 16 years ago when he suddenly disappeared without question." Gretel commented. Gakushu couldn't help but be even more shocked, An, Johnny, Mark nor James never talked about any of this. The girl slowly walked to her kitchen, she took out a small orange box that said T2 at the front, a plain teapot and two china cups.

"The other one, his name was Yuzu. He disappeared two years before Peter."

'So it wasn't a single person…' Gakushu grimly thought.

"Ivan knew a girl as well, Anka from the Polish Branch you ever wonder why he never picked up a junior?" Gretel asked as she filled the kettle with water.

'Not particular… it never crossed my mind…' Gakushu thought.

"She deserted from the Department, it was roughly 37 years ago that she suddenly disappeared. He was her main senior." And with that, Gakushu immediately felt guilt-ridden.

"It was the opposite for James, he lost his main senior 15 years ago."

"Is this… common? How much did I missed?" Gakushu shakily asked. He though back, how he found out about the existence of the Mental Ward when a friend of his screamed for a child that never existed. He realised of how little he really knew of some of his friends.
"That was partly our fault, we wanted to give you some resemblance of a childhood and slowly introduce to you more of our ways of the Department." Gretel poured the tea-leaves into the pot. "But eventually, it comes back, reminding us, that it will always be there, no matter how much you hide it."

"But cases like this aren't uncommon, you must remember that. You will hear a case pop up occasionally here and there. Throughout my years, I have seen well over a hundred desertions, I probably missed another hundred more." She sadly smiled as she heated up the kettle.

"You just don't bother counting anymore…" She watched the small flames. The Undertaker was the most infamous case of all in our history since the creation of the Department." The short haired blonde reaper explained, it reminded the strawberry blonde of the day when he first found out the purpose of the Ward was for. The normalcy of it all, like how everyone just accepted it as a part of life in the Department. And it will always will be.

"What are you trying to say?" Gakushu asked. He heard the tea-leaves shifting around from her spoon into the teapot.

"Strive forward." She stated, she didn't turn to face the strawberry blonde boy. "This has always been in the Department, we continued forward and continuously worked for our forgiveness."

"Don't try to understand why they became seceders. That is the job tasked to those assigned to find out and to search for them. If they come back, you can ask them then."

"Why do you think we never talked about their experiences?" She asked a question that Gakushu couldn't answer.

"Gretel, has those deserted been caught by the Department?" Gakushu asked, almost solemnly.

"For many yes, but for the Undertaker, for the very few... They were never found." Gretel paused, as if to find the correct words to say next. "They... I guess they never wanted to be human again. That is the reason why I stayed in the Department, as for everyone else."

And the kettle hissed. Gakushu cried as emotions forced their way out.

"This has always been in the Department, we continued forward and continuously worked for our forgiveness." Gretel words echoed on as Gakushu sat alone, blankly staring by at the passing scenery. He woke up from relieving a memory from yesterday.

He felt something warm lay on him. It felt comforting, especially during this time of pain, he fluttered his eyes opened to see a familiar person over him. Hazel brown hair, brown eyes warm like the comforting rays of the sun stood over him.

"… Ren?" Gakushu whispered as he slowly drew out from his sleepiness. "Is that you?"

"H-Hey." His hazel haired friend stuttered, he reconciled a bit in panic and before he took a step back, Gakushu grabbed his wrist. It was out of mere instinct, some form of contact, anything to comfort him. One of those contacts was Ren, his mere presence had brought Gakushu smiles and warmth.

Gakushu knew that he was being selfish, that he was being clingy, but couldn't he allow this one moment before it will be taken away from him. Running away from him like Wolfie, or by going in the other path when Ren will eventually die that Gakushu couldn't walk to.
'Just this one moment…. Please…' He told himself. They told in silence, Gakushu unmoving with an unreadable expression and Ren with unsureness.

"Gakushu?"

Gakushu blinked, with a blank stare he looked up to Ren's brown eyes and took in the uncomfortable look on the other's face.

"I…” The words Ren managed to chock. He hoped to the heavens that he wasn't having the face of a bright red tomato.

'Please don't go…' Gakushu thought to himself but he hated seeing his friend uncomfortable at this gesture.

'You're doing this.' A voice called out to only Gakushu.

'… I'm doing this.' The strawberry blonde berated himself, cursing himself for making his friend feel so uncomfortable.

He flinched and Ren felt the hand around his wrist started to shake before it gradually loosened. "Sorry…” The boy whispered, he lowered his head down as if he was trying to hide the shame he felt. For reaching out, for some comfort, some form of help. He clung the blanket around him more tightly, and drew his arms closer to his chest.

'No, that isn't right.' Ren thought and berated himself for allowing Gakushu to misread the situation.

"Do you mind if I sit next to you?" In other scenarios, Ren would had exploding and asking himself that he should had gotten his feelings in check. However, in this case Gakushu looked so small, so vulnerable and it reminded the older male in the room of his younger self.

"Okay." Gakushu softly worded.

Ren shuffled over to sit by the strawberry blonde, he helped himself with the blanket as the two were now covered by it, from just below of their heads and draped over their laps. They sat in a somewhat comfortable silence, the two waited for the other to speak first. The scenery by the window rushed by in a blur.

Ren decided that he might as well walked the plank and started the conversation first. "You're alright?"

"Yeah, maybe I just need some days to clear my head." Gakushu answered. "Can we talk about something else? Something distracting?"

"Sure, what do you want to talk about?"

Gakushu pondered for a moment, for any innocent question. "Why do you like poetry? What got you started?" He had always wondered, he wanted to know how Ren received that passion in his soft and warm hazel-brown eyes that lightens whenever he spoke a passage from Brecht or from the Prussian Memoir.

"I… I always had an interest since I was young, but I only took it seriously when I was seven. After I got the second-hand book of the Prussian Memoir.” Ren explained. "Maybe it's because of interest, or maybe it's some form for redemption for me."

Ren paused as he mentally trailed back on his words, he thought hard on those words and knew how
much it spoke volumes about him. And he knew how deductive Gakushu was.

"... you lost someone." At Gakushu's tone, it sounded more like he was asking a question. Ren couldn't help but gently smiled at the smaller boy.

'Sharper…'

"Yeah, I have." Ren shared that one secret he had hidden away since he came to Kungigaoko town. He might as well give him this, it was only fair after Gakushu opened up to him. "She was like a mother to me. I even called her mum once when she picked me up from school."

"I'm so sorry." Gakushu felt so emotional today, it was reasonable after going through the emotional rollercoaster last night. He wanted to cry. But he also wanted to cry and apologise to the hazel haired boy, for making him remember such a horrible memory.

"I'm sorry." He felt some tears began to well up in his eyes, he drove closer to his friend and drawn by his warmth. This comfort that speaks to Gakushu's desire for this same warmth from his father.

Although Ren beat him to the punch and attempted to remove his worries. "Nah, don't worry about it. It has been eight years."

"Still, it must had hurt." Gakushu muttered.

"Not as much as before." Ren shrugged, yeah it hurt especially when you had to take anti-depressant pills to help cope with the loss. But he felt completed now, whenever he was with Gakushu, even when there was an underlining sense of guilt for using him this way.

Gakushu froze when Ren used his hand to wipe away a single stray tear, he glanced up and violet orbs were met with hazel ones. He looked to Gakushu with a kind but yet sad expression,

"You can grieve, you are allowed to do so, take from me. Call me when you want to talk."

'Sharper.' Gakushu slightly smiled and Ren felt that he had won something.

"I will try." Gakushu whispered.

Gakushu slowly moved in and leaned over Ren's shoulder, Ren froze and became rigid. He burned like a thousand suns when he felt Gakushu hand creeping into his own. "... Ren, do you know what you were my first friend... at least around my age."

"... I am?" Ren was pleasantly surprised. "But what about everyone from La Morton?"

Gakushu smiled. 'You would be surprised of how much older everyone was.' He shook his head. "You were the first."

"You were the first friend I made when I moved to Kungigaoko Town. If ever, you're the first friend I made ever, that was at least around my age."

"Actually, before I met you... I only had three friends. All older than me." Ren awkwardly laughed as he nervously scratched the back of his neck.

"Ren... I will be leaving soon." Gakushu said. The first will be when he heads off for Weston College, the final will be in next couple of decades. 'You deserve so much more…'

'Ren deserves so much more.' A voice rang, whispering close to only Gakushu's ears.
"Yeah, Gretel told me about it."

'What?'

"Told me that you would be suited in the Sapphire Owls, something about of the blue bring out your eyes." Ren laughed.

'Oh, that makes sense."

"Although I imagine that you would go to Russia." Ren thought out loud.

"Why?" Gakushu asked with confusion splashed on his face.

"It is a country dominating in ice-skating." Ren answered as if it was the most obvious thing.

"It's more of a hobby." Gakushu laughed, his laughter was infectious as Ren was caught along with it as well. "That likes me going to France because I like to bake."

And Gakushu grasped at Ren's hand more tightly. The train ride felt too quick in that moment. "Then do you mind waiting for me?"

Ren leaned more to Gakushu, their heads touched together. "Of course, I will! Even if we won't see each other, we will always be friends." Ren passionately declared.

"I will wait for decades to come." Ren said before he yawned.

"One poem before we go to sleep?" Gakushu asked.

"Give me a moment to process my mind-bank. What about Brecht?"

"Rin likes him." Gaksuhu offhandedly said. He like the Ren's chest went up and down as he took a moment to breathe before he spoke.

"On a certain day in the blue-moon month of September

Beneath a young plum tree, quietly

I held her there, my quiet, pale beloved

In my arms just like a graceful dream.

And over us in the beautiful summer sky

There was a cloud on which my gaze rested

It was very white and so immensely high

And when I looked up, it had disappeared..."

Gakushu chuckled, he hid his face in his friend's shoulder. "You cheat, that was exactly from the Lives of Others movie. You didn't even say it in German." He glanced up to catch the cheekiness in those brown eyes.

"A poem is a poem, still count." Ren said before he let out another yawn.

And the two peacefully slept in that position. Nagisa thought that they shouldn't be disturbed when he and Karma passed by. Of course, not without taking a photo for keepsake.
"So, you are meaning to tell me that man wasn't always the heartless bastard we all know about."
Mark repeated Antonio's words, he thought he misheard or misunderstood everything of what the Spaniard just explained.

"Yes, it is as you said." Antonio muttered with a sad sigh. "Everything he kept of Gakushu, photos and trinkets was kept was locked under his desk. In good mint condition as well too."

The tanned Spaniard showed a copy of a photo of Gakushu when he was a baby, the small babe was held so affectionately by Gakuhou who was crying tears of happiness.

Mark looked like he was slapped, Rilliane almost dropped her coffee mug, James whispered 'Jesus' under his breath and An sat by at the table quietly and looked to burst into tears once more. Gretel was uncharacteristically quiet and Arthur was as usual by her side.

"I have also interview these two, they were former students before he created his current school." Ivan placed two photos on the table, a man and a woman, with writing underneath, Nakai and Mori. Then he slowly placed down another photo that sent shock to the entire room, aside from Arthur and Gretel.

The third photo was five persons; Gakushu when he was five years old, Gakuhou back when his dark brown hair was unkempt and a face of a father as he happily carried his son in his arm, he and his father were smiled as wide as they could. The other two were the younger Nakai and Mori. And finally, the last person; pinkish eyes and dirty blonde hair, Ikeda.

The black-haired Russian, whose hair resembled a bird's nest took a pause to allow everyone in the room to process this new-found data. An slowly picked up the photo of the young Ikeda and she traced her finger where her junior was.

"From what the two had told me, Gakuhou Asano taught Ikeda to be kind back when he was only a teacher in a cram school." Ivan explained further as he flipped though his notes. "It was a more reasonable teaching, very good-hearted and almost a complete replica of that Korosensei fellow's teachings."

"Ikeda was often bullied in high-school by members of his basketball club and couldn't defend himself due to being too kind, three years into high-school he committed suicide." Ivan read out the information at the time only An knew, she only followed of what Ikeda asked when he first woke up in the Medical Ward. That he started anew with only his name, and even then he discarded his last name, Rikuto.

"From what we concluded." From what Ivan and Antonio deduced, the Russian concluded. "It led to him to believed that he raised his students the wrong way and decided to raise them to become 'strong' instead of 'good'."

"He was too nice to his bully, he couldn't fight back therefore-"

"It was weird to think that five-year-old Gakushu is almost like reaper Gakushu. His habit of hiding under people's shirts when he was scared, his sweet-tooth, and the shyness." James whispered as he went through a copy of Ivan's findings.

"And how even after his death and losing all of his human memories, Ikeda have some walks around the school for some alone time and still retain his interest in basketball. Possibly a left-over trait?"
"Yes, now that we are talking about him. What about Ikeda?" An spoke up but she did not dare to lift her eyes up from her lap.

"Yeah, it would be a shock for him, I mean being a student to the man we thought we should be hating for the past four years when in fact he loved his son and went through a really wrong way of protecting."

The Australian reaper gently shook her head. "No, look even deeper than that."

An was met with silence and confusion. She eyed to the quiet Gretel, she knew that the blonde reaper knew of what she was talking about. However, it seemed that the Australian reaper would had to explain it to the group.

"Okay think of it in this way, why did Gakushu Asano commit suicide?"

And with that, An's words made everything clear as crystal. As the revelations came to their heads, dread came and filled their mind. That was easily shown in their faces, especially on Rilliane. The mix of dread and despair contorted her expression as he gasped.

"Fuck." Antonio whispered to himself as he slowly sank into his chair and covered his eyes with the back of his palm. "He did so to escape for an 'unloving' father, he couldn't take it anymore so he ran away where that his father couldn't catch him. From the emptiness in his life…"

"But by going with this new narrative, Gakuhou mentally snapped when his student committed suicide and he blamed himself… As you would expect, nobody in their right mind would want to go through that experience ever again."

"And imagine this." An softly said and yet she tightly cupped around her mug. "Your son, your only son who was barely five at the time of Ikeda's suicide."

She choked for a moment before she forced herself to finish her sentence. "Little Gakushu who was described to be a ball of sunshine, so innocent and so happy. You can see how much the man loved him with how Gakuhou cried when he first held him."

"If I did this to Ikeda, this could happen to Gakushu as well. Dear god, this could happen to Gakushu…” Ivan continued with her trail of thought.

"So he change his ideas for his son… his meaning behind being strong, was to be able to face that harsh reality because Ikeda suffered and eventually snapped from the bullying." Rilliane gasped. "If I treat my son the same way I did with Ikeda, he'll end up like Ikeda."

"Oh my god, from a loving kind-hearted man to the emotionless rock of today. He only wanted to prevent another Ikeda incident." James whispered as he leaned behind the wall, his knees felt like they were turned to jelly.

"Losing him would had paralysed him." Mark added. "I wouldn't know what I would had done in his shoes."

"But instead of saving him, he had Gakushu turned to the Department's doors." Gretel finally spoke out and reminded what Gakuhou accomplished in the end. "Gakushu Asano committed suicide because of his father. A father who only wanted to protect and save his son, he only pushed Gakushu to his unforgiveable sin that fateful day four years ago under the brilliant orange as the sunset."

"In the end, he just ended up repeating the past."
"This is fucked up." Mark fists on his of his sides clenched. He felt the bile in his throat that threatened to spill over, he quickly and urgently covered his mouth. "This is so screwed up."

Arthur remained silent in this entire conversation, his face however told a different story of how it was contorted with despair.

"And imagine if Ikeda or Gakushu finds out about this?" An asked to no-one in particular.

"Ikeda in some ways…” An didn't stopped the tears from falling down, she didn't bother to wipe them, as she lost her strength since yesterday.

"Became the catalyst to Gakushu's suicide."

Dressed in black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up, buttoned to the waist down, underneath was some military-styled white cargo pants. Matching this were some black boots tucked in and black leather gloves. As Gakushu was doing his rounds as he surveyed his hometown for souls, he stopped to look up at the house he once lived in for the past 15 years.

He stood there in silence, unmoving as he stared to the house. He didn't know what to think of it, he had almost forgotten that this house existed for a split second.

"Hey Shu!" Ikeda came from nowhere as he dug his gloved hand to that strawberry blonde mop of hair and he definitely heard Gakushu yelped. His smirk deepened. "Finished your work as per usual?"

"Goddamn it Ikeda! It's Shu!" Gakushu yelled as he tried to pull away from the man's hand. Ikeda couldn't help but smile as he helped to distract the strawberry blonde from what happened earlier.

"He must be working late again…” Gakushu muttered to himself as he looked up to where the Chairman's office was, it was still lit even in this time of the night.

"Want to go egg his house?" Ikeda chirped with hands on his hips. "I'm sure Hoshino can give me a discount on eggs. She might give them for free since this is that man's house." Gakushu shook his head.

"Ikeda, I need to get onto my shift." He whispered, Ikeda hoped that Gakuhou better gave his thanks to his son after the strawberry blonde save the house from being covered in eggs.

"Well alright." Ikeda mused and sighed, he leaned a bit back as he combed through his own hair. "I thought you would have already finished, you usually finish around this time."

"I have a double shift." Gakushu muttered as he walked around from the once he called home on a technical sense. "I need to do some catch-up work."

Gakushu didn't like the look on the man's face, that infamous cheeky shit-eating grin. And then there was a small black booklet in his hand. Ikeda was skimming over the pages, Gakushu checked his pockets. "You got to stop doing that!"

"Hey, you didn't kick me in the ribs." Ikeda laughed as he chucked back the collection booklet. "That's an improvement."

"You didn't steal my sweets. Consider that as your get-out-ticket to a one-way stop to the Medical Ward with broken ribs."
"Gretel is having a meeting over at the Lyrics place, so she asked if I could come over to your house." Gakushu grumbled. He wasn't happy that he had to stay over with Ikeda for the night, he would go to his room in the Department but after two certain desertions from two close friends, An, Rilliane and Gretel collectively agreed for Gakushu to be looked after by Ikeda for a time-being.

"Pfff, that's not a problem for my little Shu." Ikeda waved him.

"I'm not little!" The strawberry blonde yelled into the man's ear. "And my name is Gakushu!"

"Remember that time in the train back in the Department, you used my arm as support when there weren't any seats left and you couldn't reach up for the straps?"

"I was 10 that time!"

"So, what's the meeting about? I got kicked out too." Ikeda asked as he swung his police baton that was his reaper weapon over his shoulder.

"Honestly, I don't know too, maybe it's about Wolfie? If it was about Tae-sik, maybe you could had been in there." Gakushu shrugged his shoulders before he wall-jumped to the roof of a building. Ikeda effortlessly performed the same. "Or maybe it is one of Gretel's matchmaking sessions."

"Probably." Ikeda worded as he stood beside Gakushu, the strawberry blonde sat by at the ledge of the building with his legs casually kicking into the hair. The boy took out his collection booklet, skimming through the profiles with complete stamps and finally to one yet collected. On his right hand was a black smartphone that which acted as the boy's light source.

"Wouldn't that mean that they are talking about one of us?" Ikeda asked, "Or worse the two of us."

"Yeah, because your advances to Ana are very subtle." Gakushu sarcastically droned. He smirked at the man and Ikeda looked as if he knew what to say next to wipe off that smirk.

"Yeah, like your crushing on the Poet kid." Gakushu chocked on some air at Ikeda's words. No, it couldn't be… "His name is Ren right? Nice guy, I can see why you have the hots for him."

'He knows, dear god he knows!' Gakushu internally screamed. "I have no idea what you are watching about. Have you forgotten that we are just friends" He huffed and went to pretended to focus on his booklet… Why did his right hand feel so empty? He gasped at it and there was nothing…

"Explain to me why you have a picture of him sleeping as your phone background?" Ikeda hummed and whistled as he went through the boy's phone. "I got to admit, it is a good photo."

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! You got to stop doing that!" Gakushu yelled in a madding blush as he leaped up and tried to reach out for his phone. The strawberry blonde cursed his height and Ikeda's towering height, the other man laughed into the night as he put the boy's phone just high enough from his reach.

He would had kicked the man ribs, but there was a chance that Ikeda could go and tell Gretel. "I beg of you! Don't tell Gretel!"

"What! Of course, I'm not going to tell Gretel! I'm not that evil!" Ikeda yelled. Gakushu sighed in relief, one for getting his phone back and the other was for Ikeda's good deed of the day.

"So, tell me the story of about the picture?" Ikeda loomed over. "I definitely know that the other side doesn't know about the existence of this photo. Shu you can tell me."
Gakushu puffed up his cheeks as he turned around. Everyone around him had been saying that it wasn't healthy to bottle up his emotions and he should go talk about whatever he was feeling about. And as much as he hated to admit, he did trust Ikeda when he shared his secrets. The man had been his direct line whenever he wanted to talk about something personal. He didn't know why, but something about Ikeda felt comforting.

"Near the beginning of the year. After a few weeks since school began." The strawberry blonde started. "Ren was overworking, he was drinking a black in the morning and his coffee intake reminded me a bit of Rilliane's."

"Shu, nothing can be of the likes of Rilliane." Ikeda shuddered at that time when he was suffering through a 'meeting'. "One time when I was struck in one of those meetings, she drank 40 Cuban coffees… 40… do you know how strong those little kickers are?"

"Gakushu, that's why I said it reminded me, not 'it was like Rilliane.' Gakushu corrected. "Then when I found him napping the library, I couldn't help but… poke at his cheeks." He felt his face going red but Ikeda listened intently, as if urging him to continue on.

"Makes sense, a lot of people come to pinch your cheeks so you decided what it feels like under their shoes."

"Something was on my finger, like make-up, so I gently rubbed a bit under his eyes and there he had the dark circles. Turns out he had only two to four eyes of sleep." And Ikeda whistled in awe.

"And I thought he was cute- wait, handsome. Um, he was handsome. But! -The way he was napping was c-cute." Gakushu started to shyly stutter. His face quickly became hot as he erupted.

"Like cute-handsome? Handsome in general, but adorable when he does something considered 'cute'?" Ikeda tried to explain Gakushu's words. He was so tempted to pinch those hot cheeks.

"I guess that works. I thought it was adorable when he was usually up with his flirting persona, so I took a photo." Gakushu explained, he scratched at the back of his neck and diverted his eye away from the older man. "Then I waited for him to wake up so I could give him a lecture of how he should look after himself.

"So, since when did you liked him?" Ikeda went straight for the kill.

"Since I first met him, but the feelings had grown much, ten-fold since I joined Class-E." Gakushu admitted in a nanosecond. Silence rained down to the pair, Ikeda watched as Gakushu's face slowly morphed into embarrassment and shock of what he just confessed. To his surprise however, Ikeda didn't take this as a chance for some light-hearted blackmail.

"Shu, you have to be very careful. As much as I want to encourage because you don't have much friends your age nor the strength of a friendship as you have with Ren." Ikeda looked to Gakushu's eyes, Ikeda's chartreuse phosphorescent eyes looking deep into his eyes.

"You have to be extremely careful." Ikeda softly spoken. "I would had been happy for you at the start of the year, but now… my head has cleared up."

"I know." Gakushu knew, the two were very different beings, each with completely different lifespans. "That's why… I will be content on seeing him be happy, that will just be enough for me."

"Good, although I was looking forward of having the big brother talk."

"… What?"
"You know, the 'how do you know that he won't betray you?' talk." Ikeda explained and Gakushu laughed.

"I trust him Ikeda, he has always been by my side."

"Well, to me it seems like he's a lady-killer. In just a few moments he can seduce anyone, and soon enough he'll run off." Ikeda worded his worries. "And it is you said, he has a flirting persona."

"I'll prove it to you then. That he won't betray me." Gakushu couldn't help but laugh as he played along with Ikeda's antics.

"Don't say I didn't warn you."

The two watched as another woman got dragged into the back alley before being strangled to death by the Kungigaoko serial killer with bored expressions. At best, Gakushu popped a pink candy into mouth as he went back to his sitting spot and Ikeda looked over to his watch.

"Should be over soon."

As she struggled to breath, the hands around her neck gasped tightly as she fought for breath. Ikeda and Gakushu had a conversation about what they should do for the Christmas holidays and how they should help Gakushu on hiding his crush from Gretel.

"It's a cloudy night." Gakushu commented as he looked up to the dark skies.

"Yeah." Ikeda worded as he looked up to the night sky blanketed by the grey clouds.

It was another night for those in the Department.

Gakuhou stared down at his phone, Korosensei send him some photos of Gakushu, who wasn't smiling towards the camera but at Ren. A photo of the pair laughing together, a photo of the two ice-skating together and performing a well-made routine. He could easily see how much the pair care for each other, the blush on Ren's face as he sat close with Gakushu as they ate at a café. The passion and also a hint of shyness in his son's violet eyes as he glanced to Ren when the other wasn't looking.

Gakushu was a shy boy in the past, he could see that Gakushu still had a great liken to his sweets, just as when a young child. He still carried the habit of his eyes sparkling whenever he dove into his sweets, or whenever he was excited or extremely happy. Before that fateful that changed everything.

A picture of Gakushu in awe and waiting in anticipation as he stared down at a package of fireworks and firecrackers. A picture of Gakushu chasing after the man that bore a striking resemblance to a past and long deceased student.

He didn't miss the hate in that man's eyes the day when La Morton visited his school, the hatred in their students when he came into their view. The young lady in fashionable clothing and short bouncy blonde hair death glared him before Gakushu had to stopped her from attacking his father. He could easier see that the young lady had no qualms from doing so.

He remembered the policeman's words that day and he remembered the students of the visiting school snickered. "I recommend changing your education system a bit. I don't want any more dead kids being filed in."

They just don't understand, they don't understand why his system was necessary. Although he
should feel anger, instead he felt more tired than ever as he lay on top of his office desk and blankly stared at photos of his son he saved over the years. When Gakushu won a tournament, or scored full marks for every subject, he took photos when the other wasn't looking.

'It was all worth it.' The man told himself. Even after Gakushu left his home, even after Gakushu was trying to cut ties with him and even through the hateful looks of his peers when they listened through his experiences.

'Even if nobody understands, even if you don't understand, it doesn't matter.'

'Even if you don't see me as a father, even if you had forgotten those days when I held in my arms and how I wanted to cry tears of happiness for this gift.' His eyes felt heavy as the clock ticked by.

'Even if you will hate me… I don't care, as long as you are safe.'

He slept over on that desk. He has been doing that a lot since Gakushu unofficially left home for another, of how his friends from La Morton sneered and jeered at him on behalf of him or how Ren berated him over his teachings. He didn't care, Gakushu had other people to turn to and he needed to make sure that he was strong so that he… he won't be… so that wouldn't ever happen again.

That night, he dreamt of a field of daisies. He was back before the days of Ikeda's suicide, dressed in more casual clothes and his arm spread wide. He embraced a much younger Gakushu, one when he was three as he leaped into his father's embrace. On top of his soft strawberry blonde hair back when he described it as a bird's nest was a flower crown made up entirely of daisies.

"Daddy!" The three-year-old Gakushu cheered as he gave his father the most heart-warming smile as he offered up an offering of daisies. The man had always loved daises, they meant of innocence and purity, how fitting for his adorable son.

When he first held him when he was only a babe, he cried tears of happiness. Gakushu was the most beautiful being he had ever held in his arms. After his mother left for a younger and richer man, she didn't even try to fight for custody of their child, he didn't care as long Gakushu was happy as he danced when Gakuhou gave him his favourite slice of strawberry shortcake.

After Ikeda's death, it hurt him when the household was Gakushu crying out for his father only to learn to regress all his past memories when he realised his father wasn't the same man as before. How it broke his heart when Gakushu forgot how to smile truthfully. As his child got rid of the kind and adored father imagine he built in those precious five years, so instead he would be his teacher than a paternal figure.

He knew in that first year. He didn't comment as he stood outside of Gakushu's room as he was enclosed by the four walls and surrounded by textbooks and exercise-books. He did nothing as Gakushu silently cried as he went through his work. And the lifeful and innocent in his violet eyes diminished and replaced with the sullenness of grey. Replaced in his son's eyes was hatred, but also longing to him.

How he missed those days when Gakushu followed him to work without him noticing, it was a surprise to him one day and his three students when he suddenly appeared sitting beside of the young Ikeda during cram school.

"Daddy!"

Gakuhou embraced his son tighter in his arms, as if he was going to disappear if he let go.

A single tear escaped as he slept and yet there was a smile on this man's face.
A distant but loving memory of the past.
Short Story: Uniform

Chapter Summary

Awesome big brother Ikeda being awesome big brother.
And that time when he walked up to the Canadian border just to get some maple syrup.

Chapter Notes

Check out: http://sommerannie.tumblr.com/ got my art. I upload art for 'Until the day I'm Forgiven' over there.

Uniform

When a reaper first enters the workforce, they first receive their junior circular-glasses, a simple ill-fitted black and white suit with the standard junior weapon of a small garden sickle. It was only then when one becomes a full-fledged character is that they would be able to change their given essentials of a Grim Reaper.

A smaller and younger Gakushu stared up to Ikeda, with the expression of why' written all over his face. The young boy wore the standard and simple black and white suit, on his back was his backpack which carried all his essentials; his death Scythe, his contacts when he goes back into the mundane world, his phone and soon his collection booklet for his night shift. He was about to get his booklet before Rilliane sadly informed that she couldn't attend to Gakushu's nightly shifts because a new conference came out of the blue. Grell accidently misfiled the conference, writing down that the date was next week when it was supposed to be today.

Gretel and Arthur were struck cleaning up Grell's mess at the Office, An was teaching lessons at the gym with the guys acting as her assistants, Ivan was conducting a tutorial on how to wire a house, Lucia was on her rare honeymoon breaks with Wolfie.

"Behave Ikeda." Rilliane signed and feared of what would happen the moment she walked away.

It was three months into Gakushu's record as a full-fledged reaper and school break was nearing. Gakuhou was on another business trip so it felt his son left on his own devices, and Gakushu decided to spend more time at the Department. And Ikeda just so happened to volunteer to watch over him while everyone else had to their respective jobs.

'… This can't end well.' Rilliane thought to herself. Just last week, Ikeda stole Gakushu's cupcake that resulted in the pair chasing one after the other all over the Department. The strawberry blonde even used the chandelier for support and to add momentum, he grabbed onto it as he jumped off the balcony and swinging it before jumping on Ikeda for a touchdown. Ikeda spend the day in bed sleeping off his three broken ribs.

"Rilliane, as you sure there is no-one else? What about Van?" Gakushu suggested and his main senior shook her head.
"Sorry Gakushu, he is on an assignment in Sydney." Rilliane patted his head.

Gakushu pouted and mustered the best set of puppy-dog eyes he has in his disposal. "Anyone else? Or maybe I could do it alone."

Since Rilliane was practically already a mother before her death, with her experiences with her young brother Allen, she was immune to Gakushu pleading eyes. "No can do, the Department still rather you be partnered up when you are out on shift. You have only been a full-fledged for three months." Rilliane explained and Gakushu still had his eye-game one.

"The Department finalised the orders and Ikeda just so conveniently was their nearest option. I can't change it." Eventually, Gakushu dropped his puppy-dog eyes when he realised that there was nothing he could do to help his situation. And that it had no effect on his main senior.

"I expect you to have all of your ribs still intact." Rilliane affirmed.

"Yeap-yeap!" Ikeda chirped, he gave a salute to Rilliane before he was off and carrying the strawberry blonde princess-style.

"Let's go Shu!" And he leaped into action.

"Get me down!" Gakushu screamed as he attempted to free himself from Ikeda's hold. He was kicking and pushing Ikeda's face upwards. "And it's Gakushu, cake-thief bastard!"

Rilliane prayed to the heavens that Gakushu's temper won't get the best of him. She watched as Ikeda carried away the boy in his arms as he whistled, as he played with the fine-line of Gakushu's tolerance. And she went off to the nearest café to stock up on some coffee before going into her conference.

"So~ Full-fledged?" Ikeda playfully sang as he eventually settled Gakushu down when the two go in line to get the booklet. The boy was dying from embarrassment from the gazes and eyes that watched his interaction with the light-haired senior reaper. He was so close on readying his leg to the man's chest, he decided that the best move was to hide behind Ikeda's tall figure from glancing eyes. But eventually everyone else went through on their own business.

"Yes I am." Gakushu grumbled as he neatened up his simple suit. He didn't like how Ikeda was looking over the boy, the inhumane neon-green eyes on his suit. So what he didn't know how to change his appearance, he was still looking.

"How's school?" Ikeda casually asked.

"Fine." Gakushu let out a bored expressive.

"What's with the cold reception? I only haven't seen you in three months." Ike made a dramatic and over-the-top pose. "I thought we had a thing!" He swung his finger back and forth from him to the younger boy.

"Sadly, you couldn't stay away longer." Gakushu let out a sigh, he took a bon-bon candy from his pockets to help calm his nerves.

"But Shu~" Ikeda whined with fake tears in his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes behind his brand glasses. Thank the heavens above that Ikeda received the booklet before he had to the Medical Ward where there was a bed already reserved for him since Gakushu's introduction.

Gakushu droned Ikeda's manly and childish whines from his head as he unwrapped his candy. He
ignored Ikeda's lecture of how he was being rude and that he was talking here as the strawberry blonde popped the candy into his mouth. He also ignored the man's comment about the boy's sweet-tooth obsession. He was too in the zone, mentally commenting the taste that Ikeda somehow already got the collection booklet for the night and started to drag him by the arm towards the door.

"Give me the booklet." Gakushu demanded with his hand out while he yacked the other out from Ikeda's hold.

"Nope." Ikeda pouted as he walked over to the doors, with Gakushu tailing behind him. "I think you are too easily distracted." Ikeda retorted with a smirk, and Gakushu glared at the man's back as if it would set on fire.

They exited through the store, through the staffroom and out of a Team Mart store, with a cheeky but also sulking Ikeda and a Gakushu who was getting closer and closer to kicking the man's ribs out of commission.

"Lets go on top, it will be faster that way." Ikeda commented as he started to flipped over to the first page of the booklet and allow Gakushu to look over. "First soul will be Ike Haruhiko."

Right now, they stood on top of a building and waited for the first soul of the shift to pass on. Gakushu settled his bag down to get out his Death Scythe, he was already mentally preparing himself of the backlash from Ikeda for not already changing his weapon.

Ikeda was looking down, he stood by the edge of the building where he could see the road where Ike will later died in a car-crash. Gakushu was in a dark moon, in his head he was mentally criticising the man of how he looked with the the designer dark suit with the turquoise-blue vest and how attractive he looks. He hated how Ikeda was sure of himself, of what he already knew about himself, the way his clothes was crafted and how it told more of his playful personality.

'Curse you, cake-thief! Curse you and your good looks.' Gakushu grumbled as he fumbled through his bag and chomping down on his sweets. 'Curse you and your toned muscles!' He was deep in his thoughts of cursing himself for admitting that Ikeda was attractive and handsome.

"You alright Shu, you need some help?" Ikeda called out but Gakushu was still entrenched of his thoughts.

'Curse you and your reasonably perfect height.' He grumbled as he took out the small garden sickle and wrapped the cloth so it's dull blade could reflect the moonlight.

"Shu, did you forget something?"

'Curse you and your stupid sexy smile.' He harshly zipped his bag closed and strapped it back to his back, as he turned back to the man with wild hairstyle that completely matched with the man's wild personality. The way it was layered, how it curls and then a sudden thought came to the strawberry blonde's mind.

'I wonder if it is as soft as it looks.'

"Earth to Shu." Ikeda suddenly came into frame, he waved to his face and Gakushu swore that the man could feel how hot his face was due to the close proximity. Gakushu almost screamed and fell back before he was caught when Ikeda wrapped his arm around his waist.

"Careful there." Ikeda lightly laughed as he ground the boy. "I don't want you falling off the edge. Or, you pulling me down as a pact."
"We are already dead." Gakushu whispered, he didn't realise that he was tightly grasping at the man's coat.

"Too soon?" Ikeda let out a toothy grin to the strawberry blonde in a teasing manner. "Either way, I couldn't have you in the Medical Ward. Rilliane would be drowning in coffee as she goes and dopes on you, while drawing up plans to give me my second death."

Ikeda then leaned down to pick out the garden sickle, Gakushu now realised that he dropped his Death Scythe in the moment of panic. He didn't like how Ikeda stared at the dull curved blade, he didn't like the silences it brought as Ikeda looked at his reflection illuminated by the half-moon above.

"What?" Gakushu darkly spat out, although that tone of voice didn't exactly fit with his madly blushing as he snatched back the weapon. He was hoping that Ikeda would say something so that it would give him a reason to kick the man in the ribs.

"Struck?" Ikeda asked. And Gakushu immediately felt the atmosphere changed.

Before Gakushu could retort, or yell into the man's ear. Ikeda let out a soft smile as he held his Death Scythe close to his chest. The black police long stun baton, with its stripe around his wrist.

"If it makes you feel any better, it took me months to decide on my weapon after I graduated." Ikeda smiled before he let out a booming laugh, and he was playful swinging out his police stun baton. Gakushu was left shock however, he thought that Ikeda would take this chance to make fun of him. He looked up to Ikeda and for a moment, he had respect and admiration for the man, the way how his eyes lit up in passion.

Gakushu always admired a trait like that, as Ren and Rilliane had passion for poetry and for the arts, An whenever she would sew a bear, Gretel for her music and her skills as a tailor, Arthur for his tea. Although he couldn't see why Ikeda held himself with the baton, but he could tell that he was proud of the work that led him to this moment.

That and the slight blush on Ikeda's cheeks as he was engrossed in his memory made Gakushu thought that the man was adorable. It was like the man knew what to say, how to comfort the boy, Gakushu felt a sense of nostalgia.

And then they heard the sounds of a car crashing into the pole, alcohol was a scary substance.

"Looks like you're staying with me." And Ikeda had to drag the boy away before he lunged for Grell's blood. Although Ikeda couldn't say for the other patrons who were currently chasing the redhead down, one was even using the man's chainsaw against him.

'Wait… is that… no, oh yeah. I forgot that Hitler was around.'

When Gakushu and Ikeda returned from their soul collecting in the mundane world, and the two handing in the booklet, the strawberry blonde was about to relax with a nice mug of hot chocolate.

The area of where his dorm was, it was closed off. For some reason, probably because God hates him, Grell decided to build a device to turn the whole world bright crimson red. At least, on a smaller scale when the device exploded, flooding the entire area in red paint. It was so bad in fact that it screwed up with the locks of the dorm-rooms, so it has left Gakushu having sleep in at Ikeda's room.

"Good thing that my room wasn't trashed." Ikeda responded with laughter at the situation.
"Yeah, such a good thing." Gakushu sarcastically uttered. Ikeda whistled as he ignored Gakushu's mocks. He unlocked the door to his dorm room, Ikeda head in first to brightened up the room and when he did so, Gakushu spent his time gaping of what he saw.

 Everywhere Gakushu looked, everything he saw looked to have cost an arm and a leg each. A regal black leather couches, an antique-looking mahogany coffee table with olive ash banding and bevelled glass, above bow-end serving table was a flat-screen smart TV attached to the wall.

 "You can leave the bag by the couch." Ikeda voiced as he took off his suit-jacket and hanged it on the coat-rack. He then headed to his kitchen which looked to have costed several kidneys although the boy should more correctly describe it more as the man's personal bar. With his collection of expensive liquor behind the glass cabinet, the long bar-table and finished up with black-leather barstools.

 Gakushu numbly nodded as he made his way to the lounge area, he shredded his bag off and placed it down. The strawberry blonde then took a sit on the posh leather couch as he marvels at his surroundings. The dim and warm lighting Ikeda set added to its atmosphere of a posh-looking household.

 From dark green-emerald wallpaper, the marron rug, the green-glassed lamps, the showcase furniture that displays several trinkets, including a photo of a younger Ikeda.

 '… Is that Ikeda?' Gakushu stood up and walked over to the showcase for a closer inspection. There it was, a picture of Ikeda, An in her reaper uniform and a man with dark-blue hair that was slinked back looking towards the camera. He was guessing that Ikeda here was maybe roughly 16 or 17 in the photo. Ikeda was wearing his standard junior suit, but his glasses were customised. He couldn't say the same for the other guy, standard junior suit and glasses.

 There was another photo, with Ikeda in a blue militarist uniform giving a salute with a white hat under his other arm. He gave a salute to the camera with a toothy grin, his hair was unlike of his current style, it was less wild but he instead had a clean-shaved buzz cut, it felt wrong to Gakushu because it didn't fit in line of Ikeda's personality. Next to him was An dressed in normal clothing, a blue and white V-neck vintage dress to match with the formal occasion.

 Gakushu had to admit to himself, they looked like as if the two were a couple, exactly like how he saw between her and Johnny. That and because she mostly kept Ikeda in check whenever she was around, and she didn't even need to do anything. She just need to stand there and Ikeda would be running up for a hug.

 "Ohhhh~ I see you found my graduation photo." Ikeda popped out of nowhere and stood beside of the strawberry blonde, which broke his thinking process. The older male pointed to the first photo. "I finished rather quickly, maybe not within a month like upi, I think it was five months."

 "What about him?" Gakushu pointed over to the blue-haired man.

 "That's Tae-sik. He was another junior around the same time. He graduated after me, he came in late." Ikeda explained. "Poor guy was shy in the first couple of weeks, he was peeved off that his senior was technically younger than him while he was like, in his thirties. He works in the Medical Division now."

 "You can have two juniors?" Gakushu was slightly surprised, he only ever saw main seniors having one junior at a time.

 "Yeah. It's uncommon, but you can do it." Ikeda shrugged as he made his way back his leather
Gakushu saw that Ikeda left the two drinks on the coffee table as he made his way for his nice cup of hot-chocolate. Some silence went by, Ikeda staring up boringly at his ceiling and Gakushu flavouring his sweet beverage.

"Now what?" Ikeda asked, bored out of his mind.

"I don't know."

"How about a game?" Ikeda suggested.

"You do you." Gakushu shrugged. Ikeda went for his TV remote and setting up for his PlayStation 3. The man whistled to himself as he picked up his controller from under the coffee-table. The strawberry blonde watched as Ikeda started to choose his game.

"You want to play?" Ikeda offered up another controller, but Gakushu shook his head.

"Never played before, I rather watch." And Ikeda didn't push him to play with him. If Gakushu was content on watching, then he couldn't pressure him. Ikeda hummed as he finally picked on his game, a re-play of Kingdom Hearts 2.5, more specially Kingdom Hearts 2. He only did it to introduce Gakushu the beautiful world of Disney and Final Fantasy characters meshed together.

"Kingdom Hearts?" Gakushu worded as he listened to the soft and sad piano melody. He watched as Ikeda selected a new a game.

"It is a complex game.

Gakushu watched, he felt a connection to the character named Roxas.

"Another dream about him..." Gakushu had dreams about his father by the daisy meadows.

"No! My heart belongs to me!" He was his own person.

And the more he watched as Ikeda played, the more he sympathised with Roxas. Ikeda caught this easily and he lent Gakushu a Nintendo DS console with the game Kingdom Hears 365/2 days.

"What the heck does 365-slash-2 days or 365-over-2 days, whatever does it mean? What does it mean?!"

"Nobody knows Shu." Ikeda let out a high-pitched voice, as if he was badly mimicking Mickey Mouse. "No-one... knows."

"You're lucky. Looks like my summer vacation is... over." Roxas said before he vanished, losing his existence to his other half.

"My name is Gakushu."

Ikeda left for a six-month assignment to Russia, it was something about a weird set of male twins that appeared in the suburb of Salisbury, one with black hair and the other with white hair.

When the strawberry blonde asked why they had to send in a team to capture human twins, An expressed her limit of knowledge on the assignment. She encouraged the boy to go ask Ikeda once he was done.
There was a knock on her door. "Come in." Gretel called out as she lifted her eyes from her current commission. Came in was Gakushu Asano, in the flesh.

"Hi Gretel… I have an idea for my uniform." Gakushu shyly said, he pulled out his phone and showed the photo. "Can you take inspiration from this?"

"This is quite nice." "You got your design for your Death Scythe as well?"

"It's... kind of like in the picture." Gakushu answered. "I will be heading over to customise my weapon."

"I will get your uniform done within the week or two. Sorry, I would usually finish it within the day but I have a backlog of orders this time around." Gretel said as she drew up lines on the fabric, looking very apologetic to the young strawberry blonde reaper.

"It's fine, take your time." Gakushu answered and he made his way out of the door.

It left Gretel with her thoughts. 'Never knew that he was a Kingdom Hearts, or even Roxas fan.'

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**Spending habits I**

Gakushu wore a single black leather and double-breasted hooded coat with black gloves to match the colour of his clothing. It is only button down to his waist to allow flowing and easier movement Ikeda could see. The DS was in the boy's coat pocket, the light-haired man looked over to Gakushu after the boy knocked and opened the door.

The days went on, and Gakushu's days in school was only made more bearable with his friend Ren. And soon six months had passed.

"So, you got your look?" Ikeda said, he went straight to the point.

"Yeah." Gakushu awkwardly worded as he looked to the side. "Gretel said she mainly based it off from Ivan's uniform so it wouldn't look like cosplay, but she mainly designed my Death Scythe after the Oblivion Key.

"Hey Shu! Come over here mate! You wouldn't believe what you can get from Russia!" Ikeda cheered as he gestured the boy to come and sit beside him as he started to show off what he brought back. Gakushu placed the DS on the coffee table.

"I got an art book for Rilliane." He pulled out a Tretyakov Gallery Photo Album. "I got a Samovar for Arthur, that a heated metal container traditionally used to heat and boil water."

"I got some Russian honey in Rumela for An, did you know that not only she's into her coffee, although not like a manic like Rilliane but she also like honey too! Oh, and I got this cool Orenburg Shawls." He pulled out a white garment from the numerous of bags just dedicated to An alone. It was tender and as thin as a cobweb.

Gakushu mentally noted that it suited to her, it spoke of beauty, elegance, softness and warmth. While Gretel would later note that it suited An if she wore it with her black maxi winter dress with the long sleeves. What the strawberry blonde later found out when he was out on his nightly shift and started to randomly research items from Russia, he found that this particular gift as a sign of love and affection. He could barely contain himself from rolling around and covering his burning face of how 'cute' Ikeda was being.
"I got the usual vodka for Ivan, but I got him Tsarskaya Vodka, the stuff that went through a 24-carat gold filter."

"Where do you find these stuffs?" Gakushu questioned.

"An imperial porcelain coffee set for Rilliane. Some space food from a vending machine in VDNKh park for James. A tray from Zhostovo for Gretel whenever she has her tea with Arthur. I got a big stock on cigarettes for Viktor, it's no different from anywhere else but it was cheaper there."

"Some Russian chocolate for you, it is a bit more firm and bitter." And Ikeda gave Gakushu a bagful of the chocolate. Ikeda's words was true when Gakushu took a bite.

Then he started to list off more things he brought for An. A Faberge Easter Egg replica, sadly he couldn't pull an actual one because all the surviving ones are on display at the nine museums. Pendants in the style of Faberge, Ikeda also got Shu on that was turquoise green. A Lacquer box filled with Amber jewellery and a malachite jewellery box. At this point, Gakushu lost track of what he brought because Ikeda started to list off the things he brought from America before coming back to the Department.

"I got some good old Bourbon for the alcohol cabinet, but I also got an 1811 Chateau D'Yquem, a diamond Jubille, a Remy Martin's Black Pearl Louis XIII, a Sapphire Revelation, An Armand de Brignac Midas, a Dalmore 62, a Mendis Coconute Brandy VS, A Diva Vodka…-"

'Dear god, it never ends.' Gakushu thought in awe. 'Where does he store these?'

And what Gakushu later researched that each of the alcoholic beverages with the fancy names would buy an ordinary person a decent car or house, each. Especially the Coconut Brandy that boasted the price-tag of a million dollars.

'Oh boy.' Because Ikeda was showing some of the most random things. A life straw perfect for an outdoorsman, and several versions of the game 'Cards against humanity.' 'This is getting out of hand.' Gakushu severely underestimated of what the light-haired man can buy.

'Why does he find these things?'

"I got a cowboy hat for Mark." Ikeda popped the hat onto Gakushu's head. "And one for Wolfie."
And then he took Wolfie's hat and wore it.

"I got a Faribault wool scarf for you, it's going to be cold soon." Ikeda wrapped the scarf around the smaller boy. "Some maple syrup from you, had a walk up to Canada border."

'Yeah, because you just casually walked up to the border…. Why can I see it actually happening with you…?'

"And I got another couple of bags from France."

'I should really stop him… but I really want to see more.' Gakushu's curiously got the better of him.

"Some raw fabric in Basque country for Gretel, for obvious reasons." Gakushu gave Ikeda the 'no duh' face and an eye-roll that made Ikeda burst into laughter as he continued through his adventure.

"Some salt caramels in Brittany for you." Ikeda handed another package of candy that Gakushu happily took. The strawberry blonde took a taste, and loved how it was rich with cream and salted butter. Of course, he allowed Ikeda to take some as they continue to go through the gifts. He was feeling generous today, and it was… Gakushu eventually forced his mind to say it.
'It was fair since Ikeda brought it for me.' He felt ill just thinking of those words.

"Rose salt for Rilliane, Gretel, An and Lucia from Provence."

'Note to self, get some for myself when school holiday comes around.' Gakushu thought as he stare at the package that smelt of rose blossoms, as much as he loves his bubble baths, he need to try this out and restock on Lush products as well.

"A merci bracelet for Johnny." Ikeda darkly muttered as he carelessly held out the string.

'It's so bareboned.' The merci bracelet was basically a red cord with a pendant that says merci. The dark aura that surrounded Ikeda quickly switched to a happier and cheery one when he showed off several bottles of wine.

"And I got a Parfum de Rosine from Paris." Of course, it was for An. Gakushu should really need to start a bingo-game that focuses on what Ikeda buys for An on his next trip. Perfume, check.

"More chocolate from Bayonne." And he handed a huge basket filled with different types of chocolates to the boy with the sweet-tooth. Then he was handed another basket of chocolate. "Some Angelina chocolate."

Gakushu and Ikeda ate some madeleines the man pulled out and set on the coffee table that was littered in gifts. Ikeda decided that it would go well with some hot beverages, hot chocolate for Shu and black coffee for himself.

"You think that a French knife is suited to Tae-sik?"

"I think more of Van, he's more of a chef. It is the same for the bottles of pink salt and truffled salt you decided to randomly buy." Gakushu suggested as he took a sip of his sweet drink with its top sprayed with a mountain of cream.

"Alright then. Makes sense." Ikeda let out a laugh. "So, you want to do a movie marathon?"

"Why?"

"Because your friend Ren was busy." Ikeda bluntly answered. He let himself get comfortable in his couch, back laid down and legs over the end.

"How did you know!" Gakushu screamed.

"Gretel told me that you were sulking, it is not that hard to connect the dots." Ikeda gave a smug smile to the strawberry blonde.

"Before you start the movie, I need to ask you about something." Gakushu said which left Ikeda's finger just barely hovering over the button. Gakushu finally remembered the suggestion from An back months ago.

"Yeah?" Ikeda asked.

"Why did you go to find twins?"

"Rumours had them made out to be super-humans. We thought there might be another contract, so we surveyed for demonic activity. Got nothing, we went through camera footage, got nothing. We then came to the reasonable conclusion that they may had been seceders around the area." Ikeda explained as he went back to type in his password into his Netflix account. "After that conclusion,
we stayed a bit longer before, then when I was done, I went a shopping spree."

Today’s movie marathon was a 'feels theme'. Green Mile, Philadelphia, Schindler's List, the Impossible movie, Hachi, and many more films to induce the brotherly duo in tears. Gakushu and Ikeda crying together as they sat on the same seat, cocooning themselves with blankets and stuffing their mouths with the chocolates Ikeda brought.
Short Story: Revelations (II)

Chapter Summary

Ikeda being Ikeda, as per usual.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I actually have this sitting in my laptop for months now, mainly because it was a part of the stories on the spending habits of the Department members. But seeing that I haven’t uploaded in a month because I was getting ready for a convention, I could show you this piece with some minor changes. For a better foundation of the setting.

Ikeda and Gakushu's interactions give me joy. And it gives me an excuse to write more of Ikeda being Ikeda.

One passing moment

"Hey Shu!" A man's voice yelled into the poor boy's ears.

The boy had a bad night of drink last night, that being he was dragged. That being he was dragged into the annual Christmas drinking party game. Dragged by the legs under the handling a certain pair who happened to be Russian and German, who also just happened to have black hair resembling of a bird's nest and with long blonde hair as he clawed at the ground as he desperately tried to prolong the inevitable.

Their drinking games. He didn't even know how he was back in his room, in his nice warm bed as he was content as of now. He probably didn't even change out from the clothes, more specifically his costume from yesterday's endeavour. Alcohol was a scary thing.

"Five… more minutes." Gakushu sleepy and cutely replied, he weakly slapped the man off, though he missed but he was too tired to care. Not that it would had done much damage in the first place.

"Oh Shu~ Wake up." The touch on his shoulder was not gentle, it was rocking him side to side. Gakushu still affected by the alcohol and sleep, he couldn't hear the voice properly as it became distorted.

"I know that you have the week off." He swore that the voice sounded familiar, but he was more inclined to go back to sleep as much as it grated on his nerves.

"Go away."

"Come on, I even got a box of that expensive chocolate you like. Oh! And you got see my new car too!" There was only one person who buys a new fancy and expensive sports car every other month on a whim.

'…No.' Gakushu prayed to the heavens that it wasn't who he thinks it was.
"Shuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu~" The man droned on one of his many nicknames, a nickname more commonly used by one man. He blinked one eye opened like a hawk, he glanced up and there he was. Ikeda, his light layered hair, the designer black suits, and that shit-eating grin looming over him.

‘… Shit.’ Gakushu cursed back at the heavens for this betrayal.

"Go away Ikeda!" Gakushu grumbled, his voice muffled as he clutched to his blanket and he buried himself deep into the warm confides of his bed.

"Come on Shu!" Clearly Ikeda didn't hear his pleads as he shook him back and forth. The hang overed strawberry blonde could already imagine the man's fake crocodile tears and the wobble libs. He really wanted to punch his teeth in.

"It's Gakushu." He said through his fluffy pillow. "And how the fuck did you get into my room!?"

"Ah, you know that I got a key to your room."

"I need to get my lock changed." Gakushu grumbled expectedly.

"I know a guy who happens to be a locksmith." Ikeda casually mentioned. He held up his arms in surrender as he shrugged his shoulders. "Turns out he really likes barbie dolls, especially vintage ones. Cost me a bit to get those for Christmas but hey, I'm not judging."

"Come on! Spend some time with your awesome big brother!" Ikeda cried out with tears. He puckered up his lips to create a dramatic pout.

"You mean a very distance cousin." Gakushu corrected, as he clung to the warm of his bed that felt like a soft sea of clouds this morning. He would be kicking at the man but his legs were also still asleep. He also would be using his pillow to throw it at the man's handsome face, but it was his pillow.

"What am I doing! Talking out here! Today's a special day!" Ikeda let out an exaggerated gasp. He lightly slapped himself on the top of his head. "I even got the day off for it. I just got off my assignment from Mexico."

"I just drank last night!" Gakushu screamed as he hid himself under his blanket, his knees close to his chest and back turned away from the light-haired man.

"I'm impressed…?" The boy could already see the look of surprised on the man's face, almost worrying for the young reaper before him for acting out uncharacteristically. Usually the cinnamon roll that was Gakushu Asano would usually be kicking and screaming, running in terror to escape the drinking games of Ivan and Lucia. "Did you run Forrest?"

Gakushu scoffed. "Of course, I ran pudding thief. I don't want to be drowned in whiskey or bathing in gin and tonic. I just got caught… as usual."

Fun fact, in the rare instances Gakushu did managed to escape the clutches of the black-haired Russian and blonde-haired German, Ikeda would try to fend the two off as he escaped if he was around and free from assignments and shifts.

He would always scream "Run Forrest, run!" As if it would help the boy to run faster… It never worked, especially when you were up against two former secret police officers and their minds fuelled with the prospect of their drinking games and fun motto of 'the more, the merrier'.

"Can I bribe you with some chocolate? I left a box of Le Grand Louis XVI on your kitchen table~"
Ikeda playfully sang as he tapped into Gakushu inner sweet tooth. "I will need some help on buying some catch-up Christmas presents."

Gakushu almost leaped out of bed to rush for those chocolates, playing into Ikeda's offer but he also likes to call it as a bribery. Le grand Louis XVI by Debauve & Gallasi, that chocolate set cost $900 dollars. He could already taste the richness of the dark chocolate that boasted of 99% cocoa. The chocolate with a deep history, that had supplied to many French royals, such as the likes of Napoleon.

However, a piercing pain seared through the boy's head, clearly from last night's drunken adventures with a certain pair that he should be worried about for their livers. Alcohol is scary. He swore that his hair smelt like vodka. And the comforts of his bed were outweighing the immediate consumption of chocolate. He could have it for lunch instead.

'But… he would probably go steal it…' Gakushu grumble at such a thought, but he needed his sleep and he was drifting into slumber.

"Christmas has passed." Gakushu tiredly murmured. "Just let be have my sleep before I would go back to work."

"No, not that." Ikeda sang as he ripped off his beloved blanket. "Come on! We can't miss out on the Boxing day shopping spree."

The light from his ceiling came down and burns his eye-sockets. In this moment of weakness as he quickly covered his face with his arms, it left him defenceless to the likes of the pudding-thief-bastard. "And it's time to try out my new car! I got me a Bugatti Veyron!"

The Bugatti Veyron, one of the most seminal supercars of the 21st century. With only 270 examples of the original 16.4 Veyron variant were produced. It is one of the fastest and one of the most expensive cars in the world, $1.7 million dollars. He would have gone and brought it's the Mansory Vivere edition, but only two had ever been created and was already brought. Also, of course he would had easily threw that $3.4 million dollars out of the window for the car.

"At least give me a chance to shower!" Gakushu screamed at the top of his lungs as he was dragged away by legs.

"God damn it Ikeda! I'm still wearing a fucking sexy nurse's outfit!"

Gakushu could see nothing excitable on the man's front page. The two were seated at one of the most high-end cafés in New York City. He sat in front of the boy by the window, drinking in the scenery of the morning traffic of both the people and the road. Today's breakfast eggs benedict with black coffee. Gakushu decided for the vanilla cream French toast.

Outside was what he described as chaotic, with the Boxing Day shopping spree, the only reason when the café was not bursting with activity from consumers was that this café was more expensive than the average diner. Although Gakushu had to admit, albeit begrudgingly, this morning has been pleasant even when Ikeda dragged him out of the warm cocoon that was his strawberry printed blanket.

"Hey, Shu, is mayonnaise an instrument?" Ikeda blatantly asked, his head still glued his paper and no eye-contact made with the young strawberry blonde. However, Gakushu could see how Ikeda's gloved hand shook as he tightly grasped at the paper. He could imagine how Ikeda was biting on his lip.
"Spongebob season two, episode 15, Band Geeks." Gakushu simply replied, he didn't even look up from his breakfast as he worked to cut it in delicious smaller pieces with his fork and knife.

"No Patrick, mayonnaise is not an instrument."

Before Ikeda could utter a single word or pop his head out from his paper, Gakushu could feel the man's smug smirk and he decided to cut to the chase, "Horse-radish is not an instrument either."

"But you know, mayonnaise can be an instrument. Have you seen that video from-?"

"No, I haven't." The strawberry blonde reaper said bluntly. "I was busy on binge-watching Dining with Banish for some cooking inspiration. And it's Gakushu." He added that last part with a hint of open annoyance, clearly directed to the light-haired male

"Of course." Ikeda scoffed, Gakushu sadly knew it was to that request. He would go and break the man's rib but; A, they were in a public setting. B, both weren't wearing non-reaper uniforms and thereby re-enforcing A. And C, Ikeda brought him breakfast. That and he also brought him some chocolate to go along with his sugary breakfast.

'Curse you, pudding thief! And curse you for your good looks!' The boy grumbled, Ikeda presumed it was because the boy knew that he would be forever be called as 'Shu' by his awesome big brother. That was partly, but it was also Gakushu berating himself for even thinking that Ikeda was attractive. With that tailored-fitted black suit, his jacket was unbuttoned and underneath was a turquoise vest matched with a white tie-

'Stupid Shu! Stop thinking him as attractive!' Gakushu on the outside looked to be calm, as calm as he could be when Ikeda was acting civilly. However, on the inside there was a raging mental battle. 'But look at that broad chest, imagine how toned does muscles would be. Imagine him as a body pillow-

'That would be- Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!'

After the dating operation with Noctis failed to make Iggy jealous, Gakushu Asano had come to terms of his… preferences, but he didn't like that he was finding the pudding thief, the annoying distant 'cousin', fucking Ikeda as attractive. And god forbid Gretel finding this out about him, no she wasn't homophobic, she just get really excited when she was on her matchmaking business. Although he had doubts on that, and she was probably that she knew that fact by pretending to match-make with the other genders, she was probably doing that to add some female friends onto the friendship list.

Some silence went by as the two minded their own business, Ikeda skimming through his paper for any sort of interesting story and Gakushu quickly losing to his mental battles. "Hey Shu, I just realised something…" Ikeda spoke once more, as he popped his head out of his morning newspaper. "About Patrick Star."

"Of what?" Gakushu had no idea where this was going, this was one of the most random conversations he had with the light-haired attractive man- 'Damn you Ikeda!"

"Why he is like, you know? A bit dumb in the show."

"A bit dumb?"

"Okay, lots." Ikeda let out his annoying signature laugh, as he folded up his newspaper and setting it on the table besides his coffee with a hearable thub.
'This is too early in the morning.' Gakushu thought to himself as he massaged his temple to help ease the incoming headache.

Gakushu stabbed a piece of his French toast with his fork. "Enlighten me then." He adverted his eyes on the man in front of him with a bored expression. He didn't like of how Ikeda looked as if he had worked out the theory of relatively.

"Because he lives under a rock." Ikeda answere

"..."

Gakushu felt that the air was suck right out from his lungs, his words stolen and replaced instead with silence.

"..."

The strawberry blonde dropped his fork, for a moment forgetting his breakfast as he stared back at Ikeda's neon green eyes with shock and bewilderment. His mouth gaped opened like a goldfish, a cute goldfish Ikeda happily noted.

"..."

He tried to speak but he couldn't muster up the words, he opened and closed his mouth a few more times

"I know right! It's like the universe had finally gave me life answers."

I love these two.

Chapter End Notes

Check out: http://sommerannie.tumblr.com/ got my art. I upload art for 'Until the day I'm Forgiven' over there.
Short Story: Mind-blown

Chapter Summary

Mind-blown is different from revelations, as this is not that focused on Ikeda mind-blowing Gakushu's mind. That and many of these are based on true-life events, yes, especially the email scenario. That was me.

Some of these happened before Gakushu joined Class-E and some after, non-linear I know...

Mind-blown

"Holy shit! Guys! I finally cleaned through my emails!" James came bursting into scene out of breath, because of his natural snow-white pale skin, it more clearly showed the redness of his skin from his running. He held out his apple laptop to show off the email icon, there was a few dozens of emails. The group; Mark, Johnny and An started to clap for this achievement.

"Since when since your done that?" Johnny asked as he stole some chips from An. He easily ignored her, pushing her away with the palm of his hand as he ate the hot-chips sprinkled with some chicken-salt.

"Three years ago."

And Johnny dramatically dropped his chip, technically An's chip, as it stubbled down to the table. He didn't like where this was going, seeing that this was James they were talking about, the man who is subscribed to dozens of websites.

"And how many emails did you deleted?"

Mark was afraid to know the answer. Maybe it wasn't that many emails, how can one person gather up emails in about three years.

"Over 9500 emails."

An silently watched over the male with light-blonde hair, who was unaware of the bewildered looks from his best friends. She didn't know what to say, but someone did.

"Holy fuck nuggets." Gakushu muttered from a table behind.

Ikeda and Gakushu, in a rare moment in the history of the Department was having a civil conversation. Ikeda with a newspaper on his lap as he read about the stocks and a cup of extra-strong black coffee. Gakushu enjoying himself a slice of his favourite cake, strawberry shortcake and a drink of hot chocolate. A large factor to this civil conversation was Ikeda asking Gakushu on recipes for honey and coffee pastries and sweets, it was for An's birthday.

"Why don't you combine the two together?" Gakushu asked as he stabbed a strawberry with a fork.
On the other hand, he passed over his phone over to the male. "I found a recipe on Cardamom, Orange and Honey Coffee Cake."

"Yeah. Thing is, I don't know how to cook." Ikeda said and he passed back the phone. "The last time I tried that, I burned the entire kitchen down with Noct."

"You got Noct to cook with you?"

"Yeah, he was the one who told me that you were the best teacher. I mean, look at you and your sweet-tooth." Ikeda answered with a nervously chuckle as he scratched the back of his neck. Gakushu had his jaw dropped comically.

"Wait-wait, you had Noct cook together with you?!" Gakushu gasped, he almost jolted out of his seat as he slammed his hands on the table. "The last time I saw him cooking was before his Brussel's assignment, he set the pot on fire after trying to melt chocolate!"

"Yeah, not the best move on my part." Ikeda boasted as he laughed. "But man, the kid was cute as fuck. I could see why the 'Eggnoct' pairing is so popular. I'm surprised that Gretel hasn't done any moves yet. And the dating thing doesn't really count."

"Teach me how?"

"Don't steal my sweets for a week and take me out to eat." Gakushu laid out his requirements, he would have extended the duration for the man not to steal his food but he needed to make it guarantee. The man would get bored and go back to their usual routine of chase.

"Why not?" Ikeda shrugged his shoulders and accepted the deal. "Do you want to go to New York City? They have doesn't of places for people with a sweet-tooth, aka people like you."

"Such as?" Gakushu's eye lit up behind his glasses.

Ikeda began to list them off, counting with his fingers. "There's 10Below Ice-cream that serves rolled up ice-cream, you can have it in a taco-form. Du's Donuts and Coffee, good for the both of us, especially for you because they have cake doughnut."

"Five Pennies Creamery, ice-cream pie filled with browines or if you're really feeling it, they have a 36-scoop sundae." At this point, Gakushu's eyes were sparkling and he had sparkles surrounding him, it made him so adorable.

"Ample Hills Creamery has marshmallow ice-cream. At Sweet Moments, you can eat shaved-ice out of a watermelon bowl. Camacho's has churros crazy milkshakes, Ube Kitchen has vegan desserts, Project Brunch has crazy hot-chocolate with a new flavour every month."

"You would love IT'SUGER, you can buy giant-sized candy, you can buy giant lolli-pops." Gakushu must go now, it was the weekends after all and he could ask Gretel for a favour.

"But the one I really want to try out is -321 Ice-cream Shop, their ice-cream is made with liquid mitogen-"

"When can we go!?!"

"Guys! You wouldn't believe what I just found out!" Mark came dashing through the food-court, stopping at Ikeda and Gakushu's table. It was clear that he ran a marathon with the way how the black-haired male was about to collapse on the table.
Before Ikeda or Gakushu could answer, Mark continued. "You guys watched the Stuart Little movies?" And the two nodded.

"Guess what? It was screen-played by M. Night Shyamalan, yes that Shyamalan."

"..."

"..."

Ikeda and Gakushu slowly take in their respective drinks, taking a good gulp before they immediately jerked their heads to spat out their drinks in timing of their comedic effect. They harshly coughed with Mark waiting on the side-line.

"How-?!!" Gakushu asked as he wiped his mouth with his sleeve. Ikeda quickly went to his phone to see that this particular fact was true. It was very true.

"I don't know, An sent me this meme and I had to fact-check it." Mark showed from his photo a photo of a tired Squidward in bed, wide-awak and SpongeBob outside seen at the corner. Photoshopped onto the image were added text; Squidward representing, 'my friends' and SpongeBob representing, 'me constantly reminding them that M. Night Shyamalan wrote the screenplay for Stuart Little.

Gakushu took another bite of his strawberry shortcake as he digressed this new-founded information.

"Holy shit! You guys, the dad from the Stuart Little movies also played the drug-addict House!" Ikeda screamed when he further scrolled down the Wikipedia page.

Gakushu chocked on his cake.

In the last few months before Noct's departure to Brussels for a long assignment. He was attempting to melt some chocolates as he followed the recipe. He roughly chopped the dark-chocolate into small pieces and set them into heat-proof bowl before placing it over a pot of simmering water.

"Now stirs it... Okay then." Noct stirred the mixture with his spatula, it was slowly melting and Noct felt hope in this batch. He went to slowly open the package of icing-sugar for the icing and decoration.

"Noct! Guess what?!!" Grell came screaming into the kitchen. Noct for a split second flinched and ripped out the bag, the white powdery content exploded and he was dusted in the powder as it sprayed everywhere.

Noct turned out, almost death-glaring at the red-cladded reaper for this mess but Grell didn't caught this one.

"There is a Dead Duck Day! Because there was a case on that day where a male duck had sex with a corpse of a male duck!"

'... What the d-fuck?' Noct thought that he misheard, it was probably the icing-sugar that may have entered his ears.

"A duck?" There was a cute image of a yellow duckling following its mother in Noct's mind. He didn't notice the bitter smell from behind him.

"Yeah, and also they are notoriously known to be rapists in the animal kingdom."
"A duck?" There was still a cute and purer image of a yellow duckling swimming in the pond in Noct's mind. He hadn't looked back to see that the chocolate batch started to boil.

"That and ducks are at in that small percentage where birds has a penis."

"And their penises are in the shape of a corkscrew that can grow at ten-inches!" And the image was forever shattered, crushed, grinded and burned to a crisp.

"I must spread the news!" Grell yelled as he slammed the door shut. However instead of closing the door, he broke it and it dropped to the floor with a loud thud while Grell was off spreading the news.

"..."

"DUCKS ARE RAPISTS!"

"..."

Then another person screamed down the corridor, it was Mark's voice. "Guys! The Warren from Shawshank Redemption is Mr Krabs!"

Gakushu passed by and saw Noct covered in icing-sugar and in front of him, the pot was on fire... Again.

Viktor was finally let go from the Ward and he went back straight to work. He heard of the news on Wolfie and Tae-sik, it was sad yes but he couldn't dive himself too deep about it. Ikeda decided to visit his Bulgarian friend to mostly check on him.

The doors slide wide opened for the light-haired reaper and the smell of burning tobacco hit him. 'That is most probably Viktor.' And there he was, the man with messy black hair with blue tips in the middle of the room, he sat in his office chair and his legs rested on the table as he riddled with some piece of technology with a lit cigarette.

"Sup Viktor! I see you still have the computer girl." Ikeda mused as he looked up to Ritsu and waved to her. He saw that the man still hasn't settled down his bed-hair, likened to the black-blue haired man who never tidied himself. His desk was disorganised with reports, paperwork and all sort of things.

"By the way, here is that report on that piece of human technology you sent me." Viktor carelessly tossed the report over to the ten-year experience reaper, he caught it with ease.

"You got called into a meeting. Don't worry, you're with me." Ikeda said, as he patted on the man's back. He let out a sigh.

"Just give me a moment to check on my emails?" Viktor asked as he clicked on a new tab and pushed his cigarette onto the ash-tray.

"Go for it." Ikeda hovered over his shoulder, he watched as the man typed in R-mails, Reaper mails into the bar. Ikeda also listened in Viktor's conversation with Ritsu, that she will behave whilst he goes off to the meeting and blah, blah, blah.

And then Ikeda managed to catch on the number of emails the man had.

"How many emails do you have?!" Ikeda asked in bewilderment, he had heard from An about James' habit of not regularly cleaning his inbox. However, he never expected to witness such an
event firsthand. Viktor's inbox stood at 15000 emails.

"Yeah, I should get around to cleaning that inbox." Viktor said as he puffed out a smoke. "I think it has been four years."

"Fuck me side ways, you are worse than James."

'Should I say that much of them are just fanfiction notification?''

---

Rilliane was relaxing at the Department cafe, enjoying her fifth cup of the day, which she considered to be a good and relaxing day. No meetings, no paperwork setbacks because of a certain crimson-red cladded and haired reaper. The last one had her drink 15 cups in under an one hour time period.

She was watching videos to find anything to later binge-watch with a cup of black-coffee, no cream or sugar.

"You guys!" Feli came bursting into the cafe and all eyes turned on the chestnut-haired reaper who bounced with excitement.

"The actor who played Holden from Mindhunter, he's the same guy who voice acted Kristof from Frozen!"

Rilliane blankly stared at the World War One veteran. She slowly turned back to her phone, where she was watching the trailer where character Holden Ford interview the show's Ed Kemper.

Many thoughts went through the brown-haired reaper; she downed a cup of coffee to help calm the nerves, before inevitably she let out a scream.

"WHAT THE F-"

---

And the antics continue on.
Short Story: Traffic Jam

Chapter Summary

The antics between two brothers (as much as Gakushu likes to detain that they were brothers) stuck in traffic and trying to pass time.

Traffic Jam

"Why am I here again?" Gakushu asked as they drove through the State of Florida.

"Well, I thought it would be a great time for some bonding time Shu~" Ikeda said, not looking at the boy and kept his eyes on the road.

"It's Gakushu." He lost count of how many times that he had to correct the man. God, he hated when that man uses that nickname of his. He ignored the sounds of the male's annoying whines.

"Not my fault that the Department decided that I was there go-to-man whenever you have an assignment in the States." Ikeda pouted.

"You mean legal guardian." Gakushu's chartreuse phosphorescent eyes twitched with annoyance, he still wondered how in the fuck did Ikeda became his legal guardian near the start of the school year. It just didn't sound right, or feels right.

"And I think it is a great idea. Good work on the paperwork for that by the way." And Gakushu did do the legal documentation. There was a bitter aftertaste when the Department declared that Ikeda would that guardian. Of all people, it just had to be him. He swore that Karma somehow cursed him.

"Come one Shu, be nice. I have a long-term assignment after this break of yours."

The strawberry blonde crossed his arms. "Good riddance." Gakushu darkly grumbled. He should had brought ear-muffs to silence the sounds of the man's whines and fake-cries.

"At least we are not stuck at the Office. We had many adventures in the field of paper and dead trees." Ikeda sniffed as he wiped away the stray fake tear.

'Don't remind me.' Gakushu blanched from the many mishaps of Grell that the Department has to clean up, recently the red head reaper managed to misplace the whereabouts of demons. He had questions. How was that even possible? Demons, especially hibernating demons who didn't knew that the rules were changed in the past century would always be in a top-priority list.

It messed up Gakushu's school holiday. He was just having a wonderful time in Tokyo, he got to visit several cafes and dined in many sweets. He got to buy some décor to furnish his room back in the Department, he even went and see all the animal theme cafes. Cat Cafes, like Cat Café MOCHA, Bird café Asakusa, dog cafes such as Dog Heart, etc and etc.

He had a great time at the Kit-Kat Chocolatery. He was happy to know that after his battle over the skyscrapers of Tokyo against a high-level demon, that Grell had his ribs cracked by an angry horde of disgruntled Office workers, which included An and Antonio at their time during their shift. Ikeda would had been in the horde, if not for him heroically dashing and rushing out to Tokyo to help
Gakushu that was later called as the 'Tokyo incident'.

Gakushu decided to stay quiet for the duration of the car-ride. He would be best for him he figured after he just came out from the Medical Ward after getting his chest slashed by a Death Scythe. A moment for some down-time, and he also figured it was best for Ikeda's ribs. He watched the scenery as they drove by, he felt somewhat content with Ikeda humming and tapping to the steering wheel in the background.

He wasn't going to admit that he was going to miss Ikeda for months on end when the man eventually goes off. Ikeda wasn't going to let down on him for all of eternity.

"Ikeda, I'm bored. Absolutely down right bored." Of all times that Gakushu decided to low-key forget to charge his phone, the pair were struck in the most chaotic and heavy traffic jam Gakushu had ever laid witnessed upon. It would be uncharacteristic of him to forget such a task, but after just recovering from a slash to the chest by a Death Scythe wielded by a half-crazed human girl driven by vengeance. Or what much of the Department stationed around Tokyo and also Kungigaoko Town like to dub it as the 'Tokyo incident'.

"Same..." Ikeda said and then a smile came to him. "At least the car is not broken this time like that last time-"

"You mean the time where a portion of the Department, me and you included were infected by the flu which deduced us having human characteristics such as the lack of an enhanced reaper strength." Gakushu interrupted, and he continued on, not giving Ikeda a chance to speak.

"And so the Department decided to have all of the contestant members, because this was set during the annual tournament, to Puerto Rico. That was disguised as a recovery period."

"On the way to the beach, your shitty car you rented decided to break in the middle of the goddamn road. In the blazing heat, we; me, you, Noct, Johnny and the new junior on the block Sasuke had to push the car all the way to the beach with only human-like strength."

Ikeda whistled. "Man, if you put it that way."

And somewhat lit in Ikeda's eyes behind his sunglasses. "Maybe it could have passed the time, explaining it in full detail. It's a fun habit, adds some comical value to it. Me and Antonio do it all the time. It is the same for Rilliane too."

Gakushu hummed, the car had moved a metre forward. Or he should say, since he was in America a few feet forward... He missed the metric system always. "It worked somewhat."

"Do it again! And do the demon one after that!"

"That will be your turn."

"Where I left off? Oh right." And Gakushu continued with his story. "After some moments, like you internally fangirling over An's beach ware."

Ikeda interrupted. "Was I that obvious?"

"Very." Gakushu answered and he went back to his story. "Before we know it, the place we stayed at was owned and run by the Department was filled with Bizarre Dolls. Our team grouped up with Johnny along for the ride for the fifth game of the Tournament."
And a memory flashes back to that scene.

The team was coped up inside of a bar, Johnny and Ikeda collapsed onto the crouch face-first after boarding up the building. Outside were creatures living but without souls, Biarrza Dolls. They barely scraped through as they ran through town for the sake of the Reaper's tournament.

"They planned this, they fucking planned this." Johnny muttered through the coach's material. "They planned for all of us to get the flu to make us resemble something remotely human."

"No shit." Ikeda muttered back.

"Language." Ignis said as he covered Noct's ears.

"Iggy, I'm over 150 years old."

"Tell that to the Bizarre Dolls outside waiting to eat your Noct's flesh." Johnny remarked, he promptly received a slap from the motherly instincts of An.

'Why did you sign me up for this Gretel?' Gakushu grumbled to himself for another fifth time. Just in the past few weeks, the first game was to set up team that ended up being a marathon with him in a wedding dress. The salt on the wound was Ikeda dressed up in a tuxedo, and the two were assigned as partners, and Ikeda spend most of the match carrying Gakushu around as if he was a sack of potatoes over his shoulder.

At least Noct shared some of the pain as well as he was dressed in a cosplay maid's outfit with Ignis matched in a butler's outfit. And Ikeda missed out the chance on carrying An bridal-style as she wore a mascot costume. Although Ikeda did accidently peeked underneath after she took off her head piece. She was wearing nothing but her under-garments which left nothing to his imagination.

Also, An ended up in Ikeda's team than Johnny's team. The first game was to set up teams, Gakushu ended up with Noct, Ignis, An and Ikeda. The light-haired man enjoyed gloating and rubbing in Johnny's face that An was on his team.

The reason why Johnny was here at all was became he was separated from his team and was in need for shelter. And when everyone has the qualities of an average human, minus the immorality. Nobody had the heart to leave Johnny at the mercy of the hungry mindless breasts.

This was currently the fifth game the group was dealing with. The second game was a scavenger hunt that left Gakushu dangling in on a piece of rope that was attached to a helicopter as he flew across the city within the world of reapers. The same game left the team screaming for dear life in a van as they drove over a building.

The third game made Noct and Gakushu turn into a giant snowball as they rolled down a snowy hill and the fourth game had An, Ikeda and Ignis doing a car escape after a bank heist.

"Guys? Is it me or do you hear more moaning? And is it getting louder?" Noct whispered. The group took in his words as they began to survey around the room. Behind the tinted windows were the hands of the Bizarre Dolls. Ignis grasped at the boy's shoulder to ease his shaking.

"I think it is not you." Gakushu answered with a hint of fear, An gave her hand on his shoulder as a gesture of comfort.

And then Ikeda felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around. "Johnny-"

It was a Bizarre doll.
"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" The group screamed, Ikeda dashed out of its grasp as they all huddled on the other side. The freshly looking zombie groaned as it approached the group.

"How did he get in?!" Ignis yelled, he pulled his arm out to hold Noct back as protection.

"I don't know?! I'm not the expert here!" Johnny yelled the answer that was on everyone else's minds. And then for some reason, the sound of the piano started playing in the background. They all turned to stare at the jukebox as it sung Freddie Mercury's voice.

"Tonight, I'm gonna have myself a real good time."

"Who put this on?!" Ikeda asked to no-one in particularity.

"I don't know, the game-makers?!" Gakushu hastily screamed as he hid behind of Ikeda's back. He was coming very close of hiding under the man's shirt.

"I feel alive and the world I'll turn it inside out – yeah."

"God fucking dammit." Johnny replied with a sneer as they continue to back away from the approaching zombie-like creature. "They are taking this too far, they want us to recreate that scene from that Shaun of the Dead movie! We even got a pool table behind us... Damn you game-makers!"

Ikeda pushed back. "That is a reference to the Hunger-games though."

Johnny whacked the back of Ikeda's head. "Now is not the time Ikeda!"

"Iggy, get Noct and Gakushu somewhere safe!" An's motherly instincts kicks it.

Gakushu dashed to the back. "I will find the breach!" He exclaimed.

"I will try to stop the music!" Noct called out as he dashed off to the jukebox and his old friend quickly followed in pursuit.

"And floating around in ecstasy"

Iggy ran after his friend. "Wait!"

"Got any weapons?" Johnny asked.

"So~ don't stop me."

"There is a rifle up there!" An pointed to the rifle that was on display on the top of the bar. "Maybe it will be like the movie, it would be real at the end!"

"It's fake! It's just for display." Ikeda explained. "I checked earlier. You know game-makers, if you want to re-create this same scene then maybe you should have checked if the gun was real!"

"Well fuck me right in the ass!" Johnny sneered.

Ikeda chuckled. "Kinky, but not the best idea right now. Even if we have a table to bend over."

"Fuck off Ikeda-

"Now don't stop me." The song continued. They really need to turn it off, somehow.

"Pool! We have a pool table remember!" An called out, the two males turned to the girl as she leaped
over the pool table, forgetting that she was wearing a skirt. Probably the worst thing to think of was how her panties had sky blue and white horizontal strips. "If they want us to recreate the scene, then we'll give it to them."

She threw the sticks over to Ikeda and Johnny who caught it will ease. An took a stick of her own and jumped over the table once more to join with the two males.

"Alright, it's time to whack some ass!" Ikeda proclaimed, aiming his weapon to the creature. The three prepared themselves for the attack and waited for the right timing.

"Cause I'm having a good time, having a good time!"

And the three lunged at the creature, whacking it in beat with the song. It was barely doing anything.

Gakushu came back into the room. "I closed the breach! How's it going down there?"

"We are having a bit of a situation here!" Ikeda yelled.

"Why are you saying the lines from the movie!?" The strawberry blonde yelled back.

"You think I don't know that!?"

Noct and Ignis finally cut of the music by smashing a chair into the jukebox. But before the good news could hit them, the pool-sticks snapped.

"Shit!"

"Ikeda!" Gakushu yelled, "Catch this!" And the strawberry blonde boy threw a bottle of beer. Ikeda caught it with ease and smashed it over the doll's head.

"Dig it in there!" Johnny yelled to Ikeda.

"The skull is protecting it!" Ikeda tried and failed to finish off the zombie as he tried to jam it into the back of the neck. "Curse this flu!"

The group managed to kill of the Bizarre Doll with an ice-pick that Gakushu found digging though the bar. They waited anxiously and after three hours of a painful wait, the siren rings and the game has ended. It was a zombie survival game.

"I'm so done with this." Gakushu said and finally his jelly legs got the better of him. The group, plus Johnny collapsed to the ground collectively.

Finally, Gakushu decided it was the best time to take cover under Ikeda's shirt.

Ikeda chuckled at the memory, Gakushu smiled as well. "Haha, good times. Good times."

"And now it's my turn! My turn! My turn!" if Ikeda wasn't so focused on keeping his eye on the road, he would be acting like a five-year old child with his arm high in the air, jumping from his seat in fits of glee and begging to be chosen. Although Gakushu did already see Ikeda as that five-year old whenever the man goes off to annoy him or goes to steal his sweets.

"So? What about that demon incident?"

"What about it?" Gakushu muttered.

"I came dashing from my shift at the Department to save you." And Gakushu felt physically ill.
"You were jumping from rooftop to rooftop chasing a high-level demon in Tokyo. However you was too late and the demon made a contact with a revenge seeking girl who thought our cute little-" Ikeda ignored the yells of 'hey' and he proceeded on. "-Shu killed her brother when in actuality he was on his shifts and also has the ability to see us in our uniforms. After that Shu got trapped in the things magic before being able to break out, then later got slashed to the chest at some point with a rookie's death scythe."

"After that-

"It feels strange re-telling this when we already know this. And was there too…-

"Yeap." Ikeda popped at the 'p'. He agreed with Gakushu's opinion as he nodded. "Fun yes, but not as fun as we thought it would."

"…"

"You know, it would be better if we were talking about with a junior at the back." Ikeda looked back and Gakushu copied the gesture.

Gakushu had two fingers out to emphasis his point. "A, we don't. And B, this is a two-seat car like your typical sports car."

Ikeda looked back to the unchanging road. "It would be nice though."

"Give it another year, maybe An would adopt another junior." Knowing An, she probably would at the end of the year. She can be too kind and caring for her own good.

The two listened in the radio, listening in to whatever was airing. Sometimes it a random talk show, but mostly it was listening to whatever was playing. Ikeda scoffed as he changed the radio. "That song was shit."

"I didn't choose it." Gakushu shrugged, he didn't mind that the radio became white noise as he woke up from his short nap. He stretched out to the best that he could while being confide in the care. He should had brought a neck pillow, damn… he felt a crack from his neck.

Ikeda flicked through the stations before he finally settled with one, as a familiar tune of the bass plays.

"Now there's my song." Ikeda said with a smile.

"In your eyes, there's a heavy blue. One to love and one to lose"

"Sweet divide, a heavy truth. Water or wine, don't make me choose."

"Damn you Ikeda." Gakushu darkly muttered as he squirmed in his seat. He liked this song too.

"I wanna feel the way that we did that summer night….night~"

"Come me Shu, join me to the dark side." Ikeda smiled so cheekily and he wiggled his eyebrows.

"Drunk on a feeling, alone with the stars in the sky."

The song wasn't stopping for nobody, including a strawberry blonde with what Gretel considered to be as in a typical brotherly relationship with the light-haired man. 'Curse you Ikeda.'
"I've been running through the jungle!" The two started to sing out and clear. "I've been running with the wolves!"

"To get to you!" Gakushu and Ikeda turned to each other, they turned back to the windscreen before they turned to each other again they finger-gun. "To get to you!"

"I've been down the darkest alleys. Saw the dark side of the moon."

"To get to you!" Gakushu finger gunned to Ikeda. "To get to you!" Ikeda fingered gun back to Gakushu with a click.

"I've looked for love in every stranger." Ikeda tapped to his steering wheel. He danced with his shoulders, it was the same for the strawberry blonde since they were seat-belted. "Took too much to ease the anger."

"All for you! Yeah, all for you! I've been running through the jungle. I've been crying with the wolves."

"To get to you, to get to you. Oh to get to you-"

They sang along and then the radio decided to break. They paused and stared at the radio with static being played in the background. "Sorry about that folks, our machine decided to break down." The voice called out from the radio after the abrupt stop.

"No!" The two cried out.

"That was my song! That was my jam!"

"I spy with me little eye, something that begins with…" Ikeda looked around the vehicle. "C."

"Car." Gakushu answered, he smirked under his hand when he heard a 'damn it' beside him. The pair decided for a good game of I-spy and Ikeda was losing badly, Gakushu let the light-haired man chose the words and not one passed by the strawberry blonde's sharp mind.

Ikeda went for s, Gakushu correctly answered with sky. Ikeda tried with T, and the other answered with the correct answer of tie. When Ikeda gone for F, Gakushu once again correctly answered with Ferrari which was the car they were driving.

Then Ikeda had a brilliant idea. "I spy with my little eye, something that begins with Y." He had a smug smirk on his face, but Gakushu too had a smug look as he had an ace under his sleeve.

He turned to Ikeda and said, "Your car."

Gakushu turned back to the window, he bit his lip and covered it with his hand as he attempted to keep in the laughter that was begging to be let out. He could see from the corner of his eye that Ikeda was shaking.

"…"

"…"

Gakushu burst into laughter, to the point that it was becoming physically painful when Ikeda slammed his head on the steering wheel.
"Beeeeeeeeeeeeep." The horn goes off.

"Damn it Shu! Just let me win just one game!"

"That is for stealing my pudding when I was still recovering in the Medical Ward!"

"Night, your hands are freezing!" A man called out as he grasped at his icy and slightly blue hands, the older gentleman rubbed them and drew warm air onto them. The other only smiled.

Night paused for a bit, with no clear direction as he tiredly took his breath, and he looked up.

"It's snowing again." Night whispered to himself, his tired eyes lit up to the fluttering snow as it fell so gracefully. His face flushed red as his breath iced. "It's more pretty here…"

The snow that dropped on their clothes, melted and soaked through the cloth. "Hey Night? Do you like the snow?" He asked, he tightly grasped at Noctis' cold hands. And he tugged back.

"Yeah, I didn't get to see it very often. It reminds me of them you know… They dancing together under a full moon." The black-haired boy explained as he looked up with a sad expression. "I wish them happiness."

"They were cute, weren't they? Or so I heard." He chuckled softly. "Do you want to do some ice-skating?"

"Nah, my legs aren't up for it anymore." He carelessly laughed, he missed the sad look that washed over his face. "What about you? Do you like the snow?" He turned to meet with his deep blue eyes like his own.

"I… I like it too." He couldn't lie when that innocent and carefree expression was aimed at him. "It reminded me of my younger days, some days as it rained snow as I looked up to the grey skies. I hated it when I was alone, but when you're there. It is a least bearable, makes my thoughts less painful." The older male looked on ahead, the cottage was far, and the village was farther away.

"Do you wish me to teleport us there?" He asked of him, Night answered with the shook of his head.

"Okay." And the other complied.

They walked hand in hand through the snow, their pace became slower as the black-haired boy struggled. His breaths became heavier and harsher, the male looked to him with worry as he forced himself to walk. However, he knew that the young boy was stubborn, his redden face showed that determination of his. It must be in their blood.

The walking pace was extremely slow, as he wobbled forward, already feeling tired from this exercise. He breathed in loudly and exhaled, the ice wind showed his breath. Their pace slowed down even more. He took another step as he took in another harsh breath, the male looked to him, restraining himself not to carry him all the way to the cottage in his arms.

He pushed himself to move forward when his bruised legs were holding him back and then he slipped as he leaned forward too much. "N-Night!" He fell tiredly and the man quickly came under to catch him, cradling him.

He slightly pulled himself away to look to his face, brushing away the snow that fell on his face. "Noctis, are you okay?" The black-haired boy in a daze looked up to the sky, as he rested on his shoulders and chest. He closed his eyes, before again fluttering them to open them. They felt so
"Hey… Papa?" He whispered softly and he leaned his head closer to his body. "Is it night time already?"

The black haired male gasped, taking himself a moment before he answered. "Yeah." He choked, warming his stiff arms around the boy. "It is getting late into midnight." He lied.

"So dark… I can't see the stars." He whispered so weakly, as he leant on his shoulder, loosely wrapping his arms around him.

"It's a cloudy night." The other answered as he strokes through Night's soft black hair. "I can't even see the moon as well."

"I see…" He said, slightly lifting his head up. "Hey, papa?"

"Yeah?"

"I love you." He proclaimed, sending a stab to his heart.

"Yes, Papa loves Night very much." He answered back in a shakily voice, his deep ocean blue eyes had tears threatening to roll out. Night smiled once more as he weakly chuckled, then his arms fell down to his side as they went limp and his eyes closed.

The man felt those arms loosened and limped.

"N-Night? Night?" He called out to the boy, who remained unresponsive. He shook him but he couldn't no longer open his eyes. He pulled back, biting his lip as he glanced down to his peaceful face. A tear dropped down to his cheek.

No response came from Night, 'No, please…' 

"Night!" He yelled as the tears burst out from her deep blue eyes, hugging and burying his face to his body once more. The memories quickly flashed by, of the innocent and pure boy who they called Night. From when he was five to when he was fifteen.

"No! Anything but this!" He cried bitterly, hating of how pale he now looked. His hand gripping hard through Night's locks.

"No! Please, please don't let this be!" He cried out to the sky, cradling the sleeping boy in his arms. "Somebody please help us, help us! Help him!"

"Gods, I beg of you! Please help him!" The male desperately cried as he shot up to the grey skies. "Don't let him suffer anymore!"

"Somebody!?!" He cradled him tightly in his arms. "Somebody…” And then his head shot up once more.

"Dearest…! Brother!" He cried out.

"Help us, brother! Help him! Help us Loukas!"

There was no answer to his cries. "Brother…” He felt so tired, there was no-one here to help. Who could help them?

"Help us… father…."

heavy.
And Noctifer dropped to the snow, the white grew as it rained, with him in his arms. And so he waited, waited until the day he will wake up once more. He lost the strength to move forward. The male thought to himself as he threw his last misty cold breath with his son in his arms as they laid in the snow-

"-Are you crying Shu?" Ikeda called out on and interrupted his readings.

"I'm not crying! You are!" Gakushu angrily yelled back in denial as he rubbed his eyes with his sleeves. He wasn't doing a good job on convincing the light-haired man, because clearly his words were betraying his actions. "And it's Gakushu!"

"What happens? Tell me! Tell me!"

And Gakushu read it out once more from his phone. Ikeda started to cry along and Gakushu cried even louder

"Hax! I call hax!" Ikeda called out. "That can't be the ending! Tell me if there is a reincarnation chapter! Tell me! Tell me!"

"Curse you for making me re-live this you pudding thief!"

"Finally, traffic is loosening up a bit." Ikeda noted as they were finally picking up more speed and distance without stopping so often.

"But not enough, we are going to be late." Gakushu grumbled from his phone. It was almost out of battery, again. He went and charged it with Ikeda's portable charger.

Ikeda peered over the window. "It looks promising here. Look." And he was right, they were now at least consistently driving, albeit slowly, but an improvement nevertheless.

"At least we're on time." Ikeda commented, he whistled. Gakushu looked back to the windshield and saw the light turned green. The red car in front of them went first, Ikeda was taking his time as he checked both sides of the intersection and he slowly pressed on the accelerator.

Before the car before them, agitated by the slow car could blast them with a horn. The car in front of reaper duo, was smashed by an oncoming speeding car. "And Steven Smith came crashing to the scene." Ikeda joked. Gakushu remained silent as he watched with a blank stare of the nearby drivers and onlookers came out of their cars in droves.

"Let's get to work." Ikeda said as he stepped out of the car, dressed in his usual reaper uniform and he picked out the collection booklet from his chest pocket.

"Yeah." Gakushu quickly followed behind as he closed the door. He unleashed his key-like weapon and walked over, ignoring the sounds of panic, the frantic 911 calls, the horrid smell of burning flesh and gasoline as the red car burst into flames.

It was another day's work for the Department.

"Steven Smith, born in 1995-"
"Hey, wake up."

"Earth to the small boy here."

"Wake up."

A man's voice called out through the land of darkness, awakening Gakushu from the world of slumber. It wasn't effective enough however as the strawberry blonde was still comfortably luring back to slumber. He leaned his head into a firm and warm pillow.

"Wakie, wakie."

He then felt a pinch to his cheek. The voice was distorted as Gakushu struggled to wake up, although he could tell that it was a male's voice. "Shu, wake up."

"Five more minutes." Gakushu sleepy and cutely replied, he weakly pushed the man away. Not that it would had done much damage in the first place, but he was too tired to care. And he was quite comfortable in this pillow, firm but not too firm, soft but not too soft. It was quite warm as well.

That gentle pinch was no longer was gentle, it was now tighter. "Shu, I think my arm is dead."

"I don't care." Gakushu grumbled as he smuggled deeper into his warm cocoon of blankets and his firm pillow.

"You missed your early morning on ice-skating."

"I can do that tomorrow." And the other voice sighed, why did it sound so familiar?

"What about strawberry milk for breakfast?" He attempted to bribe the boy, taking advantage for his obsession for sweets. Gakushu knew this voice, all too well, he popped his head out from his blanket and could vague make out the outline of the man in front of him. Body toned like a swimmer, platinum-blonde hair, the shape of his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes behind those black-framed glasses.

'Great, I had used Ikeda as a body pillow.' Gakushu realised as he grumpily came to his senses. He now remembered, he had to stayed overnight at Ikeda's place because. They first went to the nearest Team Mart, brought a truck-load of snacks and supplies for Gakushu's overnight stay. Ikeda used a favour Hoshino owned him, passing the booklet over to be handed in by the pink-haired reaper.

"Fuck." Gakushu lifted up from Ikeda's arm. He looked and saw that the TV was still turned on. They must had slept in during one of their rare movie sessions, leaving the TV on. Or Ikeda could had turned it on.

"And good morning to you Shu." Ikeda yawned as he flexed his arm to ease away the numbness.

"It's Gakushu." The young boy grumbly corrected as he dragged himself out of the couch. At least it looked like it was brought from Ike and not needing to sell a kidney to buy the piece. Although he couldn't describe that from the man's room back in the department. Gakushu was rubbing the sleep out his eyes, while Ikeda loudly yawned and stretching his arms upwards as they walked their way to
the bathroom to start off the morning routine.

Thank the heavens above for spare toothbrushes, Gakushu sometimes like Ikeda's impulsive spending habits when it benefitted him. Even if the toothbrush set only costed around $5, he wasn't paying that much attention as he was eying at his sweets that was on Hoshino's counter when they were at Team Mart.

Gakushu squeezed out the minty paste on his pink toothbrush. Of course, Ikeda would give him that, saying that it matched well with his sweet obsession, especially for anything strawberry flavoured and for his cute personality. He muttered back that he wasn't cute, Ikeda scoffed as he squeezed out the paste for his own toothbrush. He was surprised that the man wasn't using the $4200 toothbrush he had accidentally gifted to Isogai.

The two started to brush their teeth, looking at the mirror with matching bird-nests for hair. Gakushu's was resembling more of Ivan's curly hair, while Ikeda was looking more to be like An's when she wakes up with bed-hair.

"Are you sure that Ivan isn't related to you?" Ikeda commented as he eyed at the bed-hair.

"And I'm sure that you are trying to be a matching couple with An." Gakushu tiredly retorted back, anything to get Ikeda to stop pestering him. It worked when Ikeda started to sparkle and beamed with sheer happiness and cheeks tinted in a soft pink. And the two resumed to their brushing, until Ikeda started the conversation again after a good minute.

"Have you heard? You are going to have to stay at my place from now on." The light-haired man mumbled through his brushing. "Gretel will bring your stuff from her place."

Gakushu choked and he quickly rushed to spat out the foamy toothpaste solution, he started to harshly cough with Ikeda gave him soothing pats on his back. He turned to him, as if the man grew a third eye.

"Why?!"

"Remember? I am your bodyguard, like officially your bodyguard now." Ikeda reminded the boy. Gakushu silently stared at him, he had completely forgotten about that small minor detail... who was he kidding? It was a massive glaring detail! And he had forgotten all about it, like a whole year has passed in that span of a day or two. Or was it two years?

"How?!"

"Well, looks like your father heeded to my advice, the whole getting security thing and the fact that you suddenly became a popular choice for kidnapping." Ikeda reminded the boy of the words he said when a small portion of La Morton visited. "After that, I handed in a report to the Department and they had authorised it."

Gakushu groaned as he went back to brush his teeth. "Don't remind me." The two spat out their toothpaste at the same time, and then grabbed each of their own small plastic cup to fill with water.

"This means I get to drive you to school now." Ikeda realised before he burst into laughter. Gakushu wanted to sob in the corner, right after slamming his head on the wall. However, even if he did, he would be dragged kicking and screaming to school. They rinsed their mouths with water and started to clean their respective brushes.

"At least use a car that looks normal." Gakushu asked. Ikeda gave him wide toothy smile and a thumbs-up, Gakushu didn't felt assured as he headed down to the man's garage.
The car Ikeda decided to drive looked normal enough, Gakushu was happy that Ikeda decided not to drive into school in a multi-million-dollar sports car from the garage.

The black sports car was still flashy nevertheless, as it was a sports car, but it wasn't bright red or gold-plated at least. Gakushu was thankfully that Ikeda didn't live to his promise of getting himself that gold-plated Ferrari from Dubai. They were still getting gawking looks as the Kungigaoko Town was still a relevantly small town, when compared with cities like Kyoto and Tokyo. And again, it was a sports car.

It was a good thing that Gakushu had the foresight to be wearing his black hoodie jacket over his school uniform. Overall the drive was alright, Ikeda focused on driving and Gakushu watching the passing scenery with music being played in the background.

They understandably gotten more stares as they entered school grounds, Ikeda driving to the teacher's driveway and many stopped to view the sports car. The teachers looked in bewilderment as they stare at the sports car entering the teacher's parking space.

Nagisa and Karma stayed and watched, they could spot Ikeda at the driver's seat.

At the same time, Karasuma had just finished parking his car, it wasn't the car that Ikeda gifted him but it was a good car nevertheless. A black Sudan car. When he left his car and successfully locked it, he finally looked up and saw a sportscar in his view. And inside was a beaming Ikeda and a horrified Gakushu who was taking comfort in hiding under a hoodie.

Ikeda slowly inhale as he hovered his hand over the horn. He slowly and calmly exhaled with a grin Karasuma knew all too well, a grin common placed on Karma Akabane's face.

"Ikeda, don't you fucking dare-"

"Beepbeepbeepbeepbeepbeepbeep!" Ikeda furiously pressed on the wheel, it's horn ringing too loud and clear for the school to hear. Gakushu knew that he was going to through a second death, dying by an over-load of embarrassment, what a way to die once more. The strawberry blonde cursed the heavens for making him endure this trial. "Beepbeepbeepbeepbeepbeepbeep!"

All eyes turned on the car and on Karasuma.

"Beepbeepbeep! Beeeeeeeeereeeeeeeraaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Gakushu unfastened his seat-belt, grabbing his school bag as he left the car with his hood on. He closed the door a bit too loud. He looked around for a viable escape and spotted Karma and Nagisa. ‘…Great.’ Still it was better than going into class back in the main building after this scene, so he walked over to the pair, they knew of Ikeda's antics to some extent.

Although Gakushu was happy that Ren wasn't around to see this, he was sure that he would spending the rest of his school year hiding under a rock if the hazel-haired boy knew.

"Have a good day at school!" Ikeda waved to the strawberry blonde madly and frantic, to add more embarrassment for the younger boy. Gakushu was so close to breaking half of his ribs, but since he needed to save face and he couldn't do it in public, he walked away.

"What!? No good-bye kiss for your awesome big brother!!" Ikeda yelled over to the boy, Karma thought it was impossible for the boy's ears to become even more redder. It made it so tempting just to touch them. And Gakushu gave him the finger, held up and high in the air as he walked away with his back still turned away from the light-haired man.

"..." Much of the main-building students and teachers had their jaws gaped wide open, and one student accidently swallowed a fly. What kind of delinquent would do such a vulgar gesture in a place as opened as this?

"Typical Class-E." One student from the main building muttered under his breath.

Karma was dying to laugh as soon as he was walking up the mountain steps. He couldn't help but feel proud over the young Gakushu Asano.

Ikeda smiled, "I love you too Shu!" He waved to the boy and Gakushu quickened his pace. Almost practically running to his class.

'… Crap, I forgot to give him his care package.' Ikeda remembered, but he also remembered that he could always ask Karasuma to give the bag to the student. The light-haired man did have a meeting with the teacher and, Ikeda tsked, the chairman.

Ikeda parked the car and came out, looking like an A-list movie star. Female staff and students swooned over the man with dyed platinum hair dressed in a designer-cut suit, Italian style and blackwatch-check. Male students and staff-members grumbled while Ikeda swiftly buttoned up his suit-jacket.

Students and teachers alike of the main-building were quickly getting out of Ikeda's walkway as he made his way to Gakuhou's office. He walked tall and confidently, he contemplated to break down the office door, but sadly the Department gave him specific orders not to physically or psychologically harm the man.

'What a shame.' And he opened the door, ignoring the man by the desk, he went over to greet Karasuma with what he considered as an endearing nickname. The man was like a bear after all.

Back to Gakushu Asano, as he, Karma and Nagisa make their way up the mountain steps for their last few weeks of school. Nagisa mentally noted of how childishly adorable the younger boy was as he was stomping his way up the stairs, clutching tightly to his hoodie.

'Why the hell did he, of all people, have to become my bodyguard?' Gakushu felt a twitch in his eye and foreseen a head-splitting headache later in the day. It was a good thing that he had strawberry shortcake for lunch today.
Karma couldn't stop laughing however, which adds the further shades of red to Gakushu's face. "You have you admit, it was really funny."

"How nice of you to find humor in my situation." Gakushu grumbled. He was almost practically stomping his way up the mountain steps and unwrapping the candy. "That and he is officially now my bodyguard."

Nagisa stopped in his tracks. "What…"

"Doesn't that mean… he would be in our class?!!" The blue-haired teen called out, Karma and Gakushu stopped for a moment and violet purple eyes widened with fear.

"Dear god no!" Gakushu cried out. Nagisa and Karma could feel that Gakushu died a little on the inside. "Anything but that!"

"It can't that bad." Karma mused, he actuality wouldn't mind. "Seriously, imagine him in our class." Gakushu scoffed and made a mocking face at his words. Although the red-head had to admit that it was a cute look on him, if only he could turn off the glitter-glamour in his eyes.

"Man Shu! I never thought that your teacher would some kind of hentai monster!" Gakushu mimicked the man's voice and gestures. With one man on his hip and the other over his forehead, like a mocking salute as he shouted. "I will save you! Away with you hentai monster!" He pointed to a random tree.

"Well that's one way of putting it." Nagisa commented with a chuckle. Karma smiled at the choice of description, it was very fitting for their teacher. Korosensei sneezed while he was preparing his classes.

"It's not wrong about that." Karma muttered under his breath. "That is if he is informed Class-E's little secret." He shrugged. "Unlikely, but it could happen."

"I rather be… actuality no, I rather have him in class than to be subjected to Gretel's fashion show." Gakushu hugged himself when he felt a shiver go down his spine. And all the memories came in like the floodgates opening wide of him being subjected as her test subjects through the years. He could already feel the tightness constricting around his waist.

"Is it that bad?" Nagisa couldn't help but asked.

Gakushu weakly chuckled to himself. "I wasn't kidding about the corset."

"Corset…?"

And a memory flashed back to a certain moment, a very moment where Gakushu finally and truly open up. The strawberry blonde rolled down the mountain steps and Nagisa rushing to help him, he was crying and was preparing himself for the backlash. Nagisa was genuinely shocked of how Gakushu saw things when he asked that he could laugh.

Nagisa pulled him into a hug, he drew him closer, the strawberry blonde felt small and fragile in his arms as he began to talk about his past with his mother. Relating to Gakushu's problems with his father, the blue-haired male could have felt Gakushu becoming less rigid and more comfortable in his hold.

The moment he pulled away and looked deep into those violet eyes, all the formality and maturity seen before has all been washed away by his tears. He could truly see a person who had been hiding behind an act all along, so he could be seen on equal grounds to his father and also to protect himself.
"You know, it could had been worse." Gakushu attempted to joked. "You could have been forced to wear a corset."

That memory passed through, like an echo traveling through a tunnel as some key-words echoed on and Nagisa slowly realised, that Gakushu was talking from personal experience.

"Wait, you don't mean-"

"Yes." Gakushu curtly responded.

"You weren't joking-"

"Yes."

"Doesn't it restrict your breath-"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you say no?"

"Gretel." Gakushu answered as if it answered everything.

"That doesn't explain anything." Karma crashed back into the conversation. 'No wonder Nagisa and Gakushu bonded quicker than anyone else in class.'

Gakushu blinked for a moment, he looked to the pair as if they grew a third eye. And then the realisation came crashing through which answered his question. "I forgot, you're not my usually group of friends. So you wouldn't have been around Gretel for too long." He turned a bit to the side with a grim smile. "Aren't you lucky."

"It can't be that bad… can it?" Karma hoped that it wasn't anything like what Nagisa had to endure.

"You say that because you were never caught by Gretel."

Eventually the first lesson started, it was English which Gakushu quickly finished. He was reading into his language book of the day, revising on some Russian when Karasuma came back into the class, disrupting the flow as he walked over to Gakushu's desk.

"What is it Karasuma-sensei?" Gakushu asked, he already wanted to hide away, maybe under Nagisa's shirt when he could feel everyone's eyes on him. Although that would give him more attention. Karasuma awkwardly held up a bag and placed it on his table.

"He told me that you forgot this bag."

"He?" Gakushu already knew of who Karasuma was talking about, his violet purple eyes instinctively twitched as

"So, with my calculations. Kuma there should had gave you the bag." Ikeda's voice rang from Gakushu's phone.

"Ikeda." Gakushu growled.

There was laughter, his iconic laughter blasting from the phone. "You forgot your care package-" Gakushu abruptly ended the call so he won't have a migraine at the end of the day. He rubbed his temple in a soothing circular motion. On the upside, Gakushu did receive a cartful of sweet, even at
the cost of him being embarrassed in front of Class-E. Ikeda's ribs had a lucky break today.

Gakushu internally shook his head. 'Fuck it, they know the true me.' He was now tired on retracting back to his mask. Gretel was right, it was an unhealthy habit. 'Might as well indulge myself.'

Before he could snack on some strawberry-flavoured kit-kat, Karasuma wanted to ask him a question. He coughed to catch the attention of the strawberry blonde. "Does your… friend-" Gakushu felt sick at those words. "-Ikeda buy cars often." Clearly Karasuma was concerned with the car incident Ikeda decided to gift him on a whim.

Gakushu went back to eat some chocolate. "He does that, too many times than I could count." He said between bites." One day it would be a Bugatti Chiron, then next it would be a Lamborghini Veneno, after that it would be a Ferrari Pininfarina Sergio or an Aston Martin Vulcan. If he gets bored then he would go cash in for something stupid, like canned air." He opened a packet of gummy bears after he finished the chocolate bar.

Korosensei watched Gakushu's sugar intake. 'That can't be healthy…'

"The cheaper sportscars he has in storage are the 2017 Jaguar F-Type SVR AWD Coupe at around $150,000. One time last year, in under two months; he got a 2017 Acura NSX Base, a 2-17 Mercedes-Benz AMG GT S, a 2017 Maserati GranTurismo MC Centennials, a 2017 McLaren 57GT Base." Gakushu paused for a bit to gather his thoughts. "Last time I checked."

'God, it never ends…' The class thought as Gakushu continued to list off the cars from the top of his head. 'Where does this man's wallet end?'

"Quick question." Maehara raised his hand up. "Does he deal in drugs?"

Gakushu took a break from his snacking, he showed three fingers from his hand. "A; he doesn't. B; As much as he dicks around a lot and get on my nerves way too often than I would like him to be, he is a dutiful police officer. And C; If he did, An would be a sobbing mess and basic rule when dealing with an Ikeda, it if makes An sad then he wouldn't do it. Once An misread a joke he made about drugs and cried, Ikeda now has to indicate that he is telling a joke firstly." At least with An.

"The story behind the 2017 McLaren 57GT Base was a good one." He remembered the story. "Je still uses that car often when he couldn't decide on a Lamborghini or a Jaguar."

Gakushu started to retell the story, he rested his hand under his chin as he thought back. An was have a boy's night with the gang, drinking and binge-watching on Friends, doing shot bingo. Which by the way never do when you're counting for explosions in a Michael Bay film. I don't know how, but they managed into a conversation about cars and she called it cute.

Karma wanted to go back on the topic of shot bingo. He has questions but Gakushu continued, and the story was getting to the best part. "The next day, Ikeda went out and brought that car."

Isogai was concerned, mostly because of the background he came from. "You don't seen concern about his spending habits."

Gakushu answered with a shrug. "I thought it was adorable, and it was expected." Gakushu answered as he unwrapped a lollipop. "Actually, anything he does for her is always adorable. He always buys her bagful's of gifts when he goes overseas. And I gave up on stopping his shopping habits. I only step in when he gets level ten overboard, like him buying an elephant during Boxing day."

The class wished that he was joking at that last comment, although deep in their hearts, Gakushu was
true to his words and was speaking out of experience. This was the same man who brought boy a camel, of all things.

'Everyone in the Department as some form of spending habit. I mean, I spend a lot of money on sweets, obviously.'

"Gretel spent a lot to get some platinum silk thread, apparently it was the same material used by Mauro for the Platinum wedding dress. Rilliane is a bit of a coffee addict, if we are lucky she would usually goes through six mugs of Blue Mountain coffee a day. I think it was Mark who always go to Ikeda, or was that James...?"

"But Ikeda's spending habits takes the cake-

"Back on the main subject." Rio directed the conversation back. Gakushu blushed and he nimble on some chocolate, the class but Teresaka awed. Nagisa and Karma sneaked in a few photos, Rio and Kayano were readying for the tissues in case of a potential massacre, more mainly for Nagisa with his nose-bleed problems. Chiba and Rinka were considering their plans to adopt Gakushu, although they may have to fight against Nagisa on this one.

"It was an off-hand comment she made, she was as red as a tomato when she found out about that car. It was good enough for me because I am the one who is often on the passenger seat." And Gakushu's next target for his taste-buds was pudding.

Kayano drooled a bit as she looked to the containers of pudding. She almost screamed tears of happiness when Gakuhsu casually passed her one. "Any other stories?" She peeled off the wrapper before digging in. Nagisa was proud and knew that Gakshu trusted her enough that he was sharing his sweets.

"One time he brought a friend a truckload of barbie dolls for Christmas as a means of a bribery." And much of the class did a massive spit-take.

"Did it work?" Isogai asked after clearing out his throat.

Gakushu nodded. "Of course, it did. It's Ikeda, what did you expect?" He said it as if it was a common occurrence.

'I need more context!' Karma was trying to find any logical sense of how that of all things worked as a bribery. 'I need to know, teach me.'

"Why did it work?" Okuda asked the million-dollar question.

"From his words. It turns out that he really like vintage barbie dolls." Gakushu attempted to mimic Ikeda's characteristics and manner.

"Actually, whenever you guys complain about Korosensei going off to Disneyland and wasting his money. I was very tempted to tell all the stories I collected over the years of Ikeda's spending habits."

"Like?"

"He brought himself a cabinet of expensive liquor that could have costed an average person both their kidneys per bottle." At this point, the class didn't know if Gakshu was exaggerating or not.

"When he was in America." Gakushu was now snacking on some marshmallows. "Almost three or four years back, he walked up to the Canadian border to get some maple syrup."
The class looked at they were slapped again. 'Who walks over the border just to get syrup?!
Korosensei was especially affected, with the teacher-income budget he had to make pass with, to
hear how this Ikeda character that looks to be in his early twenties was spending on a whim.

"Listen, if you want to know more of his antics with his wallets. We are going to be here all day." Gakushu warned the class. "This is the same guy who decided to buy that $4200-dollar toothbrush that wasn't even electrical."

"This is the same guy who brought me that gold-covered phone." He added.

And the class colourfully remembered that special moment. That and the current moment of Gakushu almost finishing all his sweets, they were only Turkish delights and choc-chip cookies left to go. Korosensei thought to himself that he should really take away the sweets away, although the being inside of him was telling him that would be one of the biggest mistakes he could make.

"He brought Noct a Heintzman Crystal piano."

"..." The class was quiet at that.

"He brought An a bouquet of Juliet Roses on Valentine's day."

"..." Gakushu swore that he could even hear a pin dropped from how quiet his classmates were being. Karasuma looked at the boy with a blank stare although the other could tell as the clockwork clogs started to run wildly.

"He did it because Johnny stole the red rose idea, so he settled for pink roses." Gakushu added, he was getting uncomfortable from the classes' stares and quietness. "... He was sulking a lot."

The class was still silent, watching as Gakushu was going through his cookies, there was hints of sparkles around his person. However, even Nagisa couldn't focus on that as he listened in more of Ikeda's ridiculous shopping stories.

"What does that mean to us?" Terasaka butted in the last minute. Gakushu gave him a blank stare and he blinked a couple of times before the realisation came in.

"Oh right." Gakushu coughed a bit shyly before drowning with some strawberry milk. He steadied his breathing and looked dead straight to his classmates. "I should had added some more details, I usually don't because the 'gang' knows the price-tag."

"Which is?" Sugino asked.

"The Heintzman Crystal piano, made in Beijing cost around $3.22 million dollars. While a single bloom of the Juliet Roses can cost upwards of $15.8 million dollars."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"Are you sure he is not dealing in drugs?" Maehara voiced.

For the rest of the day, it was uneventful, as uneventful it can be when you have a teacher like Korosensei. Gakushu observed in the background as he snacked on some more sweets as his fellow classmates tried to assassinate their teacher.
The final bell rang, and everyone was heading out for the day, walking down the numerous mountain steps and heading to the school entrance. Gakushu remained quiet, walking beside of Nagisa and Karma with the red-head leading the conversation and planning to watch the next Sonic Ninja movie in the weekends.

They stayed around school grounds, waiting for Ren. As much as Karma would had like to go off without him, the male was still too scary when he wants to be and Karma wasn't going to try to piss him off this time around. And on time, Ren was waiting for the group, more specifically for Gakushu.

"Hello there Nagisa." Ren curtly nodded to Nagisa and he turned to the Karma's golden amber eyes, "Akabane." Class-E felt the temperature around them went down.

"Gakushu-" And the boy was in his little world. They looked at him, tempted to poke his forehead with how his forehead scrawled in thought. At this point, they knew exactly what the boy was thinking of.

While Gakushu was deep in thought of what cake he was going to eat, those plans were quickly interrupted when he spotted someone all too familiar in the car-park. A tall male with white-platinum blonde hair in a style that was all too rememberable for Gakushu's liking; of how it was layered, with its middle fringe that covered his forehead and its slight curliness swaying to the left.

"Ikeda." Gakushu darkly muttered.

"Where?" Nagisa looked around, it shouldn't be too difficult to spot a character like Ikeda.

Gakushu pointed to the carpark, with Ikeda was it seems to be talking to his car, uncaring of how everyone around him was staring at him. "Ikeda." He couldn't help but growl.

They walked closer and Gakushu was right, there was the tall light-haired man dressed in a well-fitted black Italian-suit, its lining was tactical, his belt holster had his police baton and taser-gun.

"Car, turn red." Ikeda asked his car, and his car did from black to red. A car that changes colour at voice command. Bystanders around the car awed and marvel at its technology.

'I should have known that there was a catch.' Ren didn't comment of how Gakushu's ears started to go red. It was a good thing that he packed with a bag of skittles when the worst-case scenario comes.

Gakushu stepped forward to the man, who in turned gave him a cheeky smile as he lifted his sunglasses. "What are you doing?"

"Duhhh, what does it look like?" Ikeda laughed as he started to ruffle Gakushu's soft locks. "I was waiting to pick up my little brother!"

"Let me go! Everyone is staring at us!" Gakushu was failing to get away from the man's grip and desire to prove that the boy was related to Ivan Ivanov. It was a good thing that Nagisa packed some strawberry-flavoured pocky today.

"Don't be so embarrass." Ikeda still had his grip around the smaller strawberry blonde boy. "You are going to leave his dumpster-fire after graduation." Before Gakushu could respond to that, Ikeda shoved a bagful of more sweets into his arms.

Gakushu checked its contents. "Really, wasabi kit-kats again?" Although he wasn't complaining. Karma felt that he had found his spirit animal.
"Come on, I found a dog-café around town." Ikeda cheered as he opened the car door for him, Gakushu madly blushed by the combination of this gesture and the numerous stares at him.

"I was going to hang out with my friends." He murmured but Ikeda's sharp ears easily caught onto it.

"OMG, you just admitted that in front of all of these people."

But Gakushu's temper could explode, something thankfully stopped him in his way.

"You done yet?" A new character came before Ren from the behind. When they turned around, Karma liked to note that Ren was doing a very good job on hiding his scowl that was directed at the man who's lavender-purple hair was slinked back with gel, he thanked himself for the assassination training. Although the other man looked unaffected, even amused with how his sea-blue eyes glanced at him and looked to be ready to laugh it if as if it was a joke.

Much of Class-E correctly assumed that it was he who taught Ren how to effectively and scarily perform an intimidating glare.

Karma could tell that the man was not local, with what looks like to be a designer black suit specifically made for the tall male. Italian styled, his trousers were tapered heightened his aura of professionalism, but the lining was tactical. Now, alarm bells were ringing in Karma's clever mind, the initial impression was that the man was a rich businessman, but now what he saw told him otherwise.

Tactical suits were commonly for detectives and law enforcement, but also for those employed in security agencies, especially within the government. It was sense with Ikeda for his new job as bodyguard, but with the situation he and his class were involved in, he couldn't help but internally panic.

"Jones. I was hoping you were keeping your stalking to a minimum." Ren said, Karma could see that the hazel-haired boy was tightly gripping onto his school bag.

'Jones, isn't that Ren's uncle.' Gakushu looked back and forth between Ren and Jones. He remembered a photo Ren send to him back in the starting year for their final year at junior high; The two were at Disneyland wearing the iconic Mickey Mouse ears. Ren wore a strained smile, not one of fake politeness but one of annoyance. His uncle widely smile as he wrapped his arm around Ren while the other crossed his arms.

'They barely have any resemblance with each other.'

"Okay, I know the muffin top here." Jones pointed to the strawberry blonde.

'Muffin top!?' Gakushu looked visibly shocked, although with everyone else around them. Ren however, looked to be displeased by his uncle's appearance.

"But who are these characters? Friends?" The man playfully asked as he turned to Karma and pushing him into the spotlight. Ren rolled his eyes, mostly at the man but Karma couldn't find the words to retort back at this gesture. He couldn't help but feel conscious under the older man's look, hawk-like sharp sea-blue eyes on the red head. he knew that it wasn't predatory, but he couldn't help but feel like something was wrong. Class-E was ready to step forward when Ren answered for them.

"They are just in my school, class-E." Ren bluntly replied. Nagisa didn't like how the man's sea-like eyes flickered.

"Class-E. Interesting, such an interesting concept." He purred. "Makes a rather, competitive
atmosphere. I hear you are having troubles with your homeroom teacher."


The purple haired man clicked his tongue. "Now where are my manners. I am Lance A. Jones, I'm Ren's uncle." He pulled out his hand to Nagisa, and the other awkwardly grasp it, the blue-haired boy was taken off guard by the strength Jones wielded as he shook.

"Nagisa Shiota." He timidly greeted.

"What are you doing here Jones?" The hazel haired boy was having a difficult time not to sneer at him.

"I only wanted to see how my sweet nephew is doing," Jones pointed out. "And we have a busy schedule ahead of us today. Your aunt says hi by the way." On cue, the window at the front seat lowered down, inside was a woman with silvery white hair kept in a bob-cut, she wore a business suit and sunglasses. She gave the hazel-haired boy a simple wave and a faint smile.

Ren didn't look pleased at Jones, although his face softened and the scowl between his eyebrows decreased when looked to his aunt. He looked back at Gakushu and to some extension to Karma and Nagisa. He took in a deep breath and glared back at his uncle. "You own me dinner."

Jones waved him off. "Yeah, yeah I know. I got my wallet ready. I will be in the car." He walked to a black BMW 7 Series, a car often used as an official state car in most countries. Ikeda gave a smile at the man and the thumbs up.

"You too?" Ikeda asked, Jones rosed a brow. "Yours won't admitted that you are an older brother."

The lavender-haired man laughed. "I have been trying to get him say that for years, he threw things at my face since he was a babe. He still does it now, he thinks of me of that creepy uncle." He ignored the fact that Ren's ears were burning red. "It hurts like a bitch but hey, it is cute, even now."

"You were the one who keeps breaking into my apartment." Ren darkly muttered but Jones casually waved him off.

"Details, details."

"You should see Shu, the little guy won't let me use his nickname, even though he lets everyone else." Ikeda pointed to Gakushu with his thumb. Class-E caught notice of how Gakushu's face was as red as a tomato.

"Little brothers, what can we do?"

"I know right."

'Oh great, they have bonded.' Ren and Gakushu thought in unison.

"Nice car by the way, I would drive my favourite but work." Jones let out a dragging sigh.

"Thanks!"

"Sorry that I can't hang out today." Ren turned to Gakushu, he sheepishly smiled as he nervously scratched the back of his neck. "I will see you around?"

Gakushu nodded and smiled back with understanding. "I will see you around?" Gakushu let out a
soft smile.

Korosensei have may sneaked in a couple of photos, along with much of the students of Class-E. One more added to the Matchmaking book.

Gakushu stood alone under the starry night-sky, he leaned by at a lamp post as he swiped through his phone. Blue light reflecting onto his black-framed glasses. Donned in his signature custom reaper uniform; the black double-breasted hooded coat with its hood up, buttoned to the waist down, and military-styled white cargo pants underneath. Matching with some black boots tucked in and black leather gloves.

He impatiently tapped with his foot and a small scowl or the creases between his cross eye-brows never left his face. There were steps coming towards him and he knew exactly who it was. He looked up from his phone, 9:00 PM.

"Sorry that I'm late. I had to do something earlier." Ikeda called out, donned in his signature dark and well-fitted Italian cut suit matched with a dark trench-coat, black gloves and polished prada-shoes.

"Where were you? You're lucky that the first soul will die in twenty minutes." Gakushu grumbled.

"I was visiting Viktor at the Ward."

"..." And now Gakushu felt that he was slapped in the face and guilt came crashing down to crush his heart. He nervously glanced back at Ikeda who just realised of what he said. The flow of their interaction interrupted "How is he?"

"Sorry." Ikeda softly chuckled, an attempt to get back into a lighter atmosphere. "But yeah, he's calmed now. He should be getting out tomorrow, free and without that straight jacket."

"That's good." The strawberry blonde felt relieved, he beamed up and smiled to Ikeda. "You're going to see him at the lab after school?"

"Yeap! How could you tell?" Ikeda let out a booming laughter, uncaring but also knowing that they won't be caught. He lunged forward and trapping Gakushu under his arm and ruffled the strawberry blonde mop wildly. "You're truly are my little brother!"

Gakushu finally freed himself from the hold and pushed the man away. He huffed and slightly blushed as he started to neaten his hair that now resembled a bird's nest. "You can be very predictable." He tried to scowl back but there was still a small smile creeping back.

At this point, Gakushu realised that he never truly dislikes the man, as much as he tried to convince himself for the past four years. Something drew him closer, it was the same for the other, underneath all the teasing and chasing, they were like brothers in a sense. Not that he would want to admit that to Ikeda, he will never let it down.

Although he did think that Ikeda caught on ages ago, but he continued to play their games. "So, how many souls tonight?"

Gakushu passed the booklet over to Ikeda. "Two."

Ikeda read over the page, with a disbelieving look and he took a double take. "We should really get you transferred over to the States during the holidays again. Even with a serial killer lurking around your town and having some kind of experiment-gone-wrong teacher, your town is so boring."
"You just want that because you are my designated guardian." Gakushu scoffed, they continued their walk on the pathway. He quickened his pace and he smiled as he dodged the light-haired man's attempt on proving that he was related to Ivan Ivanov.

"Hey, I miss having my little bro witness my awesomeness. And you get more experience too." Ikeda reasonably pointed out. "How much do you usually get? In this town?"

"Between one to five per shift, I'm not the only reaper in town."

"Are you going to look for other work, like how Gretel runs a small tailors business for custom reaper uniforms with Arthur? Or specialise in another Division, like me and everyone else nowadays."

"Like how the Australian gang specialise in capturing seceders when given the chance?"

"Yeap."

"Maybe?" Gakushu shrugged. He never thought about it until Ikeda brought it up.

"Wouldn't that be the sight, An catching Tae-sik and giving him a massive lecture while sobbing her heart out." Ikeda laughed, Gakushu imagined the scene and he laughed as well.

"Maybe, or she could go chasing after him in a motorcycle while wearing a highly revealing bunny costume in the cold night." Gakushu added between laughs.

"Yeah." Ikeda nodded, he then quickly shot his arms onto Gakushu's shoulders and twisted him around. "What!?" Before Gakushu could answer, a red car zoned by, clearly over the speed-limit. They didn't flinch or was surprised when a car, driven by two careless teenagers came by and smashing against the electrical pole after a vain attempt to regain control over their vehicle.

"And there's the two." Ikeda said, he watched the two teens struggled to get out of the car. "We got two minutes before we have to collect them."

Gakushu checked his phone, and Ikeda was right. "That sounds about right."

"… So, was it true?"

"About what?" Gakushu played off innocent.

"You know what I mean?"

"Earlier this year, a bit before the Tournament, I was on shift with Rilliane for the weekends, we were over in Detroit and around the red-light distinct. After we completed the souls and about to go back to turn in the book. An came speeding by in a motorbike, wearing only a revealing leather lingerie set, with some bunny ears." Gakushu explained, while in the background two teenagers were dying from internal and external injuries.

"And no, if you were worried that Johnny caught a glimpse, she was with James. Turns out she is always partnered up with James whenever they go out capturing seceders."

"Thank the fuck." Ikeda let out with relief. He checked his Rolex watch a few more times, times up. He looked back to the wreckage and found that their two reckless teens paid the price of their careless driving.

Gakushu readied his key-like weapon and he activated the cinematic records.
"Hata Seiki, born in January 16th 2001. Died from injuries sustained by a car accident on XX XXXX. Remarks, none." And Gakushu stamped on his profile picture with 'complete.' And he turned to the next soul.

"Tanji Hirofumi, born in December 20th 1999. Died from injuries sustained by a car accident on XX XXXX. Remarks… none."

They watched as the last of the records of the teenager finished up and faded away, along with their life story.

"And we are done." Ikeda said. And the two were set to go back to the Department to head in the booklet at front desk. Maybe Gakushu would grab some food or go meet up with Noct for a quick conversation.

Gakushu felt a rumble in his pocket and then a sound came. "Ding!" He must had forgotten to turn the silent on, and now it caught Ikeda's attention. He picked up his phone from his pocket. "Ha, Gretel sent me text." Gakushu phone lit up Ren's sleeping face that acted out his phone background when logged in.

Ikeda hummed and whistled, he rested his chin over Gakushu's head. "Nice photo by the way." He quickly dodge a headbutt from a very flustered strawberry. "What does it say?"

"Come by at the Main Centre cafeteria, An has a surprise-"

Gakushu should had seen it, as he was pulled by his hood and effectively dragged away, his boots skidded on the pathway and face still haven't processed of what just occurred. "We're going!" Ikeda declared, and he picked up in speed. It says about Gretel's skills as a tailor that the hood wasn't ripped off.

"Ahhhhh! Let go!" Gakushu angrily yelled, he clawed into the male's hand, but he wouldn't bluged as he was dragged away back to the Department. "I can walk myself!

"We have to go! We have to go!" Ikeda chanted like a five-year old. He ran to the nearest Team Mart store.

Hoshino laughed her guts out when Ikeda and Gakushu burst into the store, Ikeda still dragging Gakushu while sporting a black-eye and the strawberry blonde's hair was ruffled up to be a bird's nest again.
Passing days

"Ikeda, when will you ever learn."

Rilliane let out a gruelling sigh, dragging her hand down her face. She took her seat at the main centre cafeteria and sat at Ikeda and Gakushu' table with her dinner of boeuf bourguignon, with a mug of black coffee on the side of course. She just came out of a conference meeting, thankfully not on the matters between Demons and Angels. She made a passing mention on how it was about Korosensei and what will be done.

"I don't know what you are talking about." Ikeda playfully hummed, and he hissed in pain. There was a black-eye forming his left eye, and he pressed the cold but also soothing ice-pack firm around the affected area. "Man Shu, you pack a mean punch."

Gakushu glared the man a hard look while he was straightening his hair to the best of his capabilities. "My name is Gakushu. When will you ever learn?"

Rilliane let out another tired sigh. She massaged her temples. "I was hoping that you would behave. We were going so well."

"You said that with the hopes that my ribs would be uncracked, and no broken ribs today." Ikeda let out a shit-eating grin. "And the streak is still going."

"How are you around my age?" The technically 24-year-old asked.

"A normal 25-something-year-old don't really go on undercover missions." Ikeda grinned back with a wink. "Nor would a normal 24-year-old would have the ability to transform herself to be at her 17-year-old self."

Rilliane looked to be done with this talk and took into eating her stew. Everyone on the table took this moment to do their own business, Gakushu was eating his late-night dinner of a lamb shank navarin, following the French cruise trend with his main senior. Ikeda was lazily leaning back on his seat, he was doing a balancing act with the ice-pack for his black-eye while looking through his phone for any new reports with the occasion snaking on his fries and sips of his black coffee.

"So, what is going to happen to the yellow blob fish?" Ikeda asked.

'Ha, I would had thought that he would name him hentai monster but close enough I guess...'

Gakushu internally monologed.

"There have been discussions that the Scientific and the Intelligence Division will be working together in the surveillance operation on Class-E that resumed."

"So that's why I was seeing Ivan and Lucia snooping around the place during the La Morton visit."

Gakushu sat, not partaking with the conversation, he listened while he ate his dinner. There were rumours, Ikeda informed of them to Gakushu while they were at the Hot Springs, before Class-E joined in the fun, Ikeda pulled him away to talk just for a short bit.

That there was a chance that it was no ordinary experiment that turned Korosensei the way he was. After some much analysing, deliberation and reviewing the Cinematic Memories captured by
Thomas Freeman by the Intelligence and Scientific Divisions, no ordinary human could have made a being like Korosensei or the fates being averted the way it was. After some researching further in the many of his classmates' fates changes, it was discovered that they have been changed too many times per student.

Karma Akabane was supposed to have died near the start of the school year and be walking in the hallways of the Department; averted. Death by internal injuries, averted. Death by explosion, averted. Crushed by debris, averted.

Nagisa Shiota, it was fated in his file before it was crossed out that he would have jumped off a bridge and thus adding another member to the Department; averted. Death by explosion, averted. Crushed by debris, averted. Death by immolation, averted.

Itona Horibe, internal bleeding due to unknown cause; cause could relate back to 'Korosensei', averted.

Death by internal injuries, averted.

Death by drowning, averted.

Death by 'crushing to death', averted.

Too many were averted. Then after, the Department decided to trace its steps back, around the time Korosensei might have been created, the estimated date was around March. No reports on a similar nature went further back. Going through in the archives, after some weeks searching file after file, they had found it, Project A-M1010. It was researching on creating anti-matter without massive energy requirements and that it can be generated within a living subject.

Kotaro Yanagisawa, heir to the Yanagisawa Family, in charge of the World Research Foundation. The chief scientist behind Project A-M1010 who went missing. On the notes made by Ikeda who infiltrated into the facility for three months who commented on the man's personality.

A genius biologist without regard for ethics or morals in his research, or a lack of passion or determination, very apathetic, prideful and self-centred. It appears that he is quick tempered, lashing out on his co-workers and subordinates, his anger does not spare his fiancée who too was a fellow worker. He was able to obtain custody of an imprisoned assassin that was sentenced to death as a subject to test his theory, there is no entries on his real name, so he would be dubbed on his nickname, Reaper. The subject arrived to the facility on XX-XX-XXXX.

His pride was severely damaged when his project was declared to be impractical, for both military and economic usage by the American government. This decision created an effect across much of the Western governments not to invest and to remain uninterested. It was most likely that the American government was tipped by an unknown entity, but according to Alfred Jones' sources, it is most likely to be that Allen Williams, the missing prodigy played a role due to how the American government was quick to act.

There were more details on the experiment forced onto Reaper. The project ended when the laboratory was exploded suddenly, catching Ikeda and his team off-guard. It killed almost every scientist on site, it made a sight panic in the team as they reaped the souls while creating make-shift profiles for each soul to keep track of. It also resulted on the destruction of the moon, 70% of it was destroyed, making more panic as the moon was needed for many of the Demon population's hibernation period. It took months, headaches and a lot of resources to fully repair the moon.

There was no report provided by the Retrieval Division that this coming event. Fate has changed, it
was counted as an outlier.

To avoid further panic and work from the demonic population, as they would had gone and search for vengeance, the higher-ups in the Department decided to write off the moon's destruction as result of a meteor both to the Demons and general population of the Department. Ikeda and his team were put on an order to not speak of its truth and went along with the story provided until the demons had calmed down. Then Korosensei announced himself to the world when the Japanese schooling just began, so more orders were added to heavily restrict information of Korosensei to be released to the general Department members.

It was decided to reveal the truth near the completion of the moon's repair, and the Scientific Division were able in time create a simulation with a fake moon to help the hibernation period. That was when Rilliane and her team suffering under another the last meeting between the Angels and Demons discovered.

Kotaro Yanagisawa and Reaper went missing the explosion. They wouldn't come up onto radar unless they either died or came onto any governments' radar. And then Korosensei came onto stage. There was always possibility that the same Reaper Ikeda saw months prior was Korosensei.

Having that many changes for one person was suspicious, even a year that suspicion would have multiplied tenfold. However, having a class full of kids that have been averting their fates left and right, of course the Department was going to look even deeper than ever before. And the possibility of Reaper being Korosensei, maybe the incident wasn't an outlier. Worried if there's an external influence, and if this fate aversion was connected to Korosensei, if there is someone possesses knowledge unknown to humans and started to mess about. If there was a demon working in the shadows, mischievous and bored due to the regulations and rules set in place by the Department.

"Othello is going to have a field day once he gets into that surveillance room." Ikeda commented as he ate some of his fries. "So this is the rumoured 'Korosensei'. It is very rare to see such a being, is it some sort of demon, I feel like I have seen you somewhere before, would you like some licorice candy?" Mimicking the mannerisms of the reaper from the Forensic Division.

"I wouldn't be surprised if he made his way into that class, so he could pull off the guy's tentacles off for testing." Rilliane added as she stole a fry. Ikeda allowed her and she allowed him to take a bite of her dinner.

Gakushu was deep in thought, while the two other reapers talked about the newly revived surveillance on Class-E and the new technology being used so it wouldn't be detected like last time. Although he will still be writing the daily reports or statements.

"Hey Shu."

"Gakushu?"

"Shu, Shu~~~"

The two reapers called out to the strawberry blonde, he brought his eyes up. "You got something in your mind?" Rilliane asked.

"Just backtracking on a few things." Gakushu explained. "Was there something you need?"

"Since we are talking about Korosensei, I think it reasonable to your input. He is your assignment." Rilliane explained. "And your teacher as well."

"Well in my reports."
"Yeah, I read the reports of his conduct. But do you think. It is your teacher, even if you only had him for a few weeks." Ikeda leaned forward with his free arm resting on his chest while the other still pressed the ice-pack on his black-eye. "What do you think of him on a personal level?"

"Is this necessary?"

"Yeah, because I know you have questions you want to ask." Ikeda worded, Gakushu mentally cursed the man's ability to read him with no effort.

"Do you think we should have done something in the first place…? When he first introduced himself?" Gakushu asked.

"Honestly, we had no orders from the higher ups or The Higher Ups telling us to eliminate the blob." Ikeda mused. "I don't think he would have it in him, especially with the connections he made with that class. To just go ahead and destroy the planet, just like that" He snapped with his fingers. "It's uncharacteristic of him."

"I feel the same way." Rilliane agreed to his words. "And even so, if it came to that, the Department would had stepped in and eliminated him. With that threat, a team of high-trained reapers with decades or even centuries of experience would had easily stopped him."

"And yet, they decided to send in an actual teenager to observe the class." Ikeda eyed at the smaller boy. "No offense."

"Usually, I would be snapping your ribs right now." Gakushu said with a straight face. "But begrudgingly you are right. With only four years compared to the seasoned reapers, Gretel could had simply joined Class-E from the start."

"There were rumours around the place that the blob fish wasn't an alien and just an experiment that gone wrong." Ikeda chucked another fry to his mouth. "A lot of us just write it off as trivial and went on our work."

"Why haven't I heard about them?"

"You were more often stationed in just one town with the odd transfer here and there." Ikeda took another fry. "Then there was the Tournament, then the Tokyo incident, some more transfers with me and it doesn't help that there was a restraining order that practically stopped the flow of information regarding on the blob. It doesn't help that the higher-ups labelled him as a very low threat to humanity, he was barely a level one threat."

"Wow." Gakushu was surprised and yet he wasn't at the same time of how the Department view things.

"And the rumours were circulated within the Intelligence and Scientific community. It didn't matter to the Retrieval Division when we go out to collect souls." The hazel haired reaper added. "I too only was revealed the truth barely some time before your assignment to infiltrate Class-E."

"The rumours never went away, even so, the Department still would not have taken him seriously when Korosensei first announced himself. Again, barely a level one threat. We dealt with worse before."

"I felt the same way, although it would had been cool to be like the scary Department representative for that class. I would had gotten bored pretty easily." Ikeda lazily leaned back on his chair. "The novelty would had worn off."
"It is just weird to think that I was continuing on my usual routine while there was a yellow tentacle monster right next door." Gakushu commented.

"Yeah." Ikeda hummed.

"It is odd to say the least." Rilliane commented.

"Welcome, welcome." A chirpy female voice called out, interrupting the conversation. They didn't need to look up to know that it was Gretel, with Arthur following beside her. "I'm so glad you have received the message."

Ikeda perked up, ignoring the pain from the sudden movement, he straightened his back and looked dead-straight to Gretel's cheeky expression. "Tell me! What is the surprise!?"

"Patience's young one." Gretel said, she waved him off. "All good things come when you wait. I will be getting some tea, save us that table next to you on the right."

Gakushu gave her the thumbs up, not wanting to speak with his mouth full of his dinner. He slightly turned his body, and rested his legs on the other table's chairs, indicating that the table was taken. Gretel hummed and nodded with satisfaction, she then walked off to one of the cafes with Arthur in tow.

"I'm surprised that you haven't heard." Rilliane spoke.

"I have a feeling that it was because of Gretel." Gakushu said, the three agreed with his sentiments.

Rilliane swallowed her dinner. "True, she sure loves to surprise us all." She set her cutlery down and eyed at Gretel back. "An's becoming a main senior again."

"...
"...
Gakushu choked on his dinner and Ikeda spat out his coffee, narrowly missing Rilliane. "What!?!" Ikeda screamed at Rilliane's face, he jolted back from the pain seething around his eye. "Rahhh!"

Rilliane hovered over to Gakushu and patted his back, rubbing in a soothing motion as he harshly coughed out his dinner. "Thank Ikeda for almost rupturing my ear-drums."

Gretel huffed, puffing up her cheeks as she pouted. "That was no fun, I wanted it to be a surprise!" She yelled as she was in line.

"I know." Rilliane simply answered as she took another bite of her meal, she could barely hide her smirk.

"Isn't it a bit too early, I mean- after who know who just left." Gakushu harshly whispered, leaning himself closer over the table.

"I knew that she was thinking of doing the whole main senior routine again, I saw her applying a few weeks ago." Ikeda softly said, leaning forward. "That this-, this has bad timing written all over it."

"But it makes sense. With the environment the Department creates. Striving forward, you continued forward, that means you have to distract yourself, so you don't look back." Rilliane said. "It has also become routine for An to endure, she has too many men left in her life; first her brother who
committed suicide, then Edward, then like three other friends within the span of 20 years. And her brother again when he seceded."

Rilliane whispered. "An said that she was called in for this special case. She couldn't have the heart to refuse, she is too kind for her own good sometimes."

Ikeda understood the poet's words, leaning back on his chair as he let out an 'o' sound. While Gakushu was confused. "Special case?"

"Hi everyone!" An called out from behind, breaking through the conversation. The trio turned their backs to see An and her new assigned junior to look after.

An gestured to the male beside her. He looked to around 17 years old, he had dark brown hair that was neatly and cleanly styled. Gakushu almost choked on his food after taken aback of how attractive and handsome the male was. He stood tall, he was taller than Gakushu and almost as tall as Ikeda. He presented himself as clean-cut, even with the standard junior uniform. The circular junior glasses, it made him look more approachable and adorable, and Gakushu didn't knew how but he managed to fit into the simple black and white suit that was usually ill-fitted for other juniors.

"This is Caleb, please help him feel welcome." She introduced the newly arrived male who politely smiled to the group. A smile that was too eerily similar to An's.

"I'm Ikeda of the Japanese Branch, I work in the Retrieval and the Intelligence Division, the handsome one of the group." Ikeda playfully gloated. Gakushu kicked the man's knee under the table, he made no indication that he was hurt.

"Ikeda, why do you have a black-eye?" An worriedly caught eye of the ice-pack that rested on Ikeda's face. She pulled away the pack to inspect the injury, she would had used the ointment Rilliane often used, but this was around the eye. Caleb hovered over An, so he could look to the light-haired male.

"I may or may not had pushed Shu's buttons too far this time around."

"Did you steal his sweets again?" An asked, she giggled as Ikeda pouted in response. He ignored the snickers from Gakushu.

"Nope, I was too excited by the surprise Gretel told us about. So, I pulled Shu back to the Department, by the hoodie." Ikeda explained, sounding too joyous about it. He again ignored the snort from Gakushu. Caleb looked that he took note of that.

Rilliane decided it was now the best time to introduce herself. "I'm Rilliane Williams of the Japanese Branch, I mainly work in Management Division, I do the occasional retrieval job here and there. I will be your teacher in your classes."

"Hello, I'm Caleb of the American Branch, I have no Divisions as of yet. I look forward of working with you." He smiled to familiarly to An's.

'So this is the new junior?' Gakushu asked himself. He was mentally commenteting of how the suit show-off his toned muscle. 'Curse your good looks, stop it Shu! You barely even knew the guy.' While to the outside world, he looked to be calm but, on the inside, he was as Gretel would like to describe it has; a big gay disaster.

Ikeda looked to her in concern. "Isn't it a bit too early? After… you know…" He hinted to the recent
"I know." An softly smiled to him. "But I thought I might take my mind off a few things. And they personally asked me to be his main senior so I took the chance as soon as I got it."

"So, you're taking him on the tour?" Gretel asked, she came back along with Arthur with their order, setting down on the table Gakushu saved for them. "How is he?"

"He was being very curious. " An explained. "And remember, first day." First day on being a grim reaper. "Because it's his first day, I'm taking advantage that it is laxer because we are just introducing him to his new life. Tomorrow he will be attending classes, but for today, we are just doing a tour."

Gakushu nodded as he crossed his arms. "I remember my first tour." He remembered how he followed along Rilliane like a lost puppy. Ikeda nodded as well as he looked back to his own first tour around the Department, he was an overly excited puppy as he followed An around the place.

Gretel playfully hummed, she rested her hand on her cheek. "I remember when I had my tour with Noct, it has been such a long time. He looked so happy to be able to walk without an aid of a wheelchair." And she liked the look of Caleb's widen eyes at her before he controlled himself and reverted to a professional manner. "Shy that he was, but you are already well adjusted to our life here and it's only the first day."

"I am?" Caleb tilted his head.

Gretel sipped her tea. "Yes, actuality. In all my 200 years being in the Department. Many of those how first arrive looked either overwhelmed or lost. You however, already got yourself grounded."

"Similar to Ikeda." An added. Caleb turned to the light-haired male and politely smiled, Ikeda smiled back with a smile. "You were so forward in your thinking, never once did you look back in your past. When I asked if you wanted to know what happened-

"I was like 'eh I mean I'm here now, all I need to know is that I had some bad circumstances that landed me here.' That was more than enough, it doesn't matter if I knew the details, it wouldn't change anything.

"I took from my human life was my last name as a remainder, with your advice of course."

"Of course." Gakushu rolled his eyes.

An was quickly texting on her phone, sending it to Ikeda. 'Caleb is like you, he has woken up with very little or no human memories of his past. He is very curious, a bit on the shy side but he conducts himself very similar to a soldier. I'm a bit worry. Please go easy on him.'

'You got it!' Ikeda texted back.

Caleb continued to smile, standing straight with his hands clasped behind his back. He looked around the food court, watching as reapers came and went, some passed by with reports in arms and brief-cases, and others on their lunch-break, or having breakfast or dinner depending on the reaper and socialising with each other. "So… This is a Department-run café?"

An perked up. "Yes, and there are places like this are stationed across the world outside. One of the ways for us to get around-

"And another way to pass the time." Caleb deduced. He looked around the café and its patrons. "Despite the growing human population, there has been a low soul count per shift for an avenge
worker of the Retrieval Division. Added to the fact that we have more reapers coming into the Department than returning back to the human world. New work is added to collect data and trends, in both the general public and more specialised work within the intelligence community."

"So, how did you come up with that conclusion?" An was surprised, along with the rest of the group. This is the same person who just recently joined the Department?

"There were some reapers as we passed by complaining the low soul count for their shifts, I only deducted of what I collected." Caleb explained, again with a polite smile.

Ikeda whistled, impressed of the junior. "Yeah, that's the gist of it." He nudged his arm to Gakushu with a smirk. "Looks like you have yourself a rival there Shu. He may graduate within two weeks."

"Ikeda, shut it." Gakushu dug his heel down at Ikeda's shoe, Ikeda didn't look to be fazed or under pain, yet.

"That's my little champ." An happily commented, she gave him a gentle and heart-warming smile. She was proud of him and it made Caleb smiled, well at least attempted to smile just like his main senior although it looked a bit strained. Gakushu and Ikeda quickly took photos of this moment.

It reminded Gakushu of his first year in the Department, unlearning of his father's teachers and slowly was able to truly smile. Good times. Although he was mainly copying from An, it is the thought that counts.

"But Miss An, I am taller than you." Caleb was confused at the height difference.

"It's a figure of speech." An explained.

Caleb titled his tilted his head. "Oh I see, so it is an endearing form of speech?" And An nodded.

"So, are you going to take a break from the café shifts." Rilliane asked. "I couldn't help but love your brew."

"It was a bit sudden, so I am still taking shifts at the café while Caleb will be in his classes." An explained. "It wasn't the most ideal schedule, but I will manage."

"Does this mean I have another little brother?" Ikeda blurted out, he was tingling in excitement and was practically hopping from his seat. He as usual, ignored Gakushu's comment that they were not brothers. Honestly, the strawberry blonde thought that Ikeda would be jealous when considering his other interactions with Johnny. But he then remembered something, Ikeda has an inbuilt radar that tells him that who would at risk crushing on An.

Caleb turned to Ikeda. "I would be delighted!" The aura around him it was too bright for this world, and it dissolves any negative thought Gakushu had of remembering Tae-sik. Ikeda gave Gakushu a spare pair of sunglasses… 'Nope, its still bright.'

Gakushu and Ikeda were already on their way to becoming doting brothers for the new junior.

Rilliane checked her wrist-watch. "I have to go now, I have a teacher's meeting in twenty minutes." She took up, taking with her a cup of extra-strong black coffee. "It was nice seeing you Caleb, I hoped that you will be in my classes."

Caleb smiled and nodded to her. "I could say the same for you."

"See you later Gakushu."
"And Ikeda, try to behave and don’t go into the infirmary tonight. I expect that all of your ribs remain unbroken the next time I see you."

"Will do." Ikeda cheered as he saluted to the retreating Rilliane.

"I will get us some lunch. Anything you want Caleb?" An asked but he shook his head.

"I don’t mind."

"Would you like something light?"

"I don’t mind."

"Ummmm, I will get you something light…” An suggested, but she only got a simple response.

"Okay."

Gakushu whispered to Ikeda while the female left rather hesitantly to get some food. "Told you she would adopt another junior." He glanced back to Caleb, who gave him a polite smile. "Were you like this Ikeda when you first started?" He spoke in French.

"Not really. An says I was a bouncing ball of sugar, curious to everything." Ikeda took another sip of his coffee. "Caleb here is a bit more of a stiff, curious yes, but he acts more like a soldier who analyses everything to the next level."

"Military family?"

"Eh, probably. It's not a bad thing really. I could say the same for you when you first arrived, you shielded yourself emotionally to the world. Or was it that you used a mask to hide away your true-self?"

"…Don't you usually swear at the end of that sentence?"

"Yes, but I am trying to be a good example." Ikeda smiled to Shu, almost flirtatiously which made Gakushu's heart skip a beat. He told his brain to stop keep doing that. "Awww~ Shu, you know me so well."

"Oh fuck you Ikeda-" And Gakushu realised that they forgot about Caleb who was sitting opposite of them. The two slowly turned their heads around, Caleb still with his smile looking back at them.

"Don't worry, we are not talking anything bad about you." Ikeda looked back to the third member of the table, Caleb politely smiled at them and nodded, unfazed. He titled his head a bit to the side and watched as An conversing with James as they stood in line, Gakushu and Ikeda's eyes followed.

'Well, one-part rains true.' Gakushu thought for the both of them, the two were like ducklings at the start, following each of their respective main senior. And Caleb would most likely be following in their footsteps as he was following An like a poodle, attentive to her every move.

"You want some?" Gakushu pushed a plate of strawberry shortcake towards Caleb. He blankly stared at the cake, he held up the plate to his face and started to analyse it.

"Wow Shu, I wish you have done that for me." Ikeda whined, he watched as Caleb poked at the icing. "You always kick in the ribs whenever I took your cake." He shed a couple of tears here and there.

"Shut up Ikeda, An says to be nice." Gakushu elbowed Ikeda in the side. "And I'm trying be a good
example." Smirking at man who still pouted. Caleb looked around the cafeteria area, he intently
to observe one reaper with oak brown hair who was eating what looked to be a chocolate mud cake as he 
conversed with a female reaper who had blonde bangs that goes outward and curly.

"And this is different, you deserve that kick because you keep stealing my food."

Ikeda shrugged, pressing the ice-pack back on his eye. "Eh, tomato-tomato."

Caleb gave the cake a sniff. Gakushu's heart internally broke, with this reaction it meant that Caleb 
ever ever had cake before or remember what it was like eating cake. His sweet-tooth mourned for 
this junior. Caleb set the place down, slowly picking up a fork and stabbed the cake. He cautiously 
bite and his chartreuse phosphorescent eyes lit up suddenly, with pleasant surprise and joy. He was 
now quickly and happily digging in more eagerly than before.

'And my work here is done.' Gakushu proudly commented to himself. Ikeda took pictures of this 
moment. "How old are you Caleb?" Gakushu asked as he took a packet of strawberry pocky from 
his pocket. He slapped away Ikeda's hand who was inching to snatch one.

"From what An told me, she said I was seventeen." Caleb answered as he ate the strawberry, 
savouring its taste.

"..." Gakushu silently watched on, Ikeda swore that he could hear the heart of the strawberry blonde 
slowly breaking. The light-haired man couldn't help but muffle his laughter and snorting coffee out 
of his nose.

"I understand the sentiment." Caleb explained. "I do act bit robotic, I think I made An worry."

Gakushu choked on his snack and Ikeda spat out his coffee, again. The light-haired man, after he 
managed to have a regular breathing rate looked back at Caleb. "You understood us?" He asked 
while he swiped the coffee dripping down his chin with a handkerchief.

"You were talking about me, and I know that it wasn't anything bad about me." Gakushu was still 
coughing in the background.

Gakushu looked to Ikeda. "Even though when you lost all of your human memories, 99% of the time 
your body still retain its muscle memory and past skills." Ikeda explained. "Sometimes even your 
values you held as a human act on, you don't remember them, but you could only speculate what you 
once were. The Department is weird that way."

"Ah, I see."

"And what are your values then?" Gakushu cheekily smirked.

"From what An told me."

"I know realised that you parrot a lot from An." The boy said.

"Like I said, its like a muscle memory thing. Leftover traits, hatred for bullies and I have a great 
sense of humour." Gakushu scoffed at that.

"It is true however." An came back with a trayful of food. "At first I was worried, but after 
graduating in five months, there was no need to worry."

"Awwwww~ Thanks An." Ikeda voiced. Gakushu wasn't going to admit this but he felt happy for 
Ikeda.
When An placed the tray down, there was a glimmer that was caught in Caleb's reaper eyes, presented was a plate of grilled turkey gyros; pita bread filled with grilled turkey, diced tomatoes and cucumber-yoghurt sauce. For dessert, a slice of strawberry short cake. Caleb took another bite of the cake.

Ikeda turned to Gakushu, who was watching as An was cleaning the icing off from Caleb's face. Those cheeks look so soft and squishy. Gakushu turned to meet with Ikeda with the look of content. "I can now finally see the appeal of pinching cheeks."

Gretel giggled in the background who sat behind the pair as she and Arthur have their evening tea, happy that this will distract them from the seceder situation. Another day going forward.

It was the usual day for the Department.
One of her lies

Anna felt a hard hand smack against her cheek, it knocked her off her feet and she fell to the wooden floors. She cupped her cheek as her brown eyes blankly stared upwards. She could no longer be able to register the words anymore.

'Even in the mornings…'

She didn't want to look up, she didn't think that she has the strength anymore as her head dropped, she didn't want to look to the looming figure standing in front of her. That person, that man was the one who she loved so much. He yelled and yelled, and yet she just sat there without saying a single word. All she could think of was, where did it go wrong?

'Why did this has to happen? How did it come to this?'

'He's been drinking.' A voice in her head told her otherwise, it was right because her beloved only gets like this when he drank. The black-haired girl barely registered that he knelled down to the ground as he grabbed hold of her shoulders. His touch caused her to flinch and the smell of vodka suffocated her. His skin oozed the stench of alcohol.

"Why won't you say anything!?’ He screamed, he hovered over the female, tightly and painfully grasped at her shoulders that she winced. Anna still looked down, not wanting to meet those sapphire eyes she so once adored and she remained unresponsive.

'How can I fix this?'

'Maybe I should cook him his favourite meal tonight? I know that he loves pasta bake.'

'Maybe I should hide the alcohol again? I just need to find a better hiding place.'

'Maybe I should give him some time alone…?'

"Tsk." And he pushed her away as he stood up. Sparing one last glance at the female before walking off, and slamming the door loud as he walked out. Probably for another day to heavily drink, 'Day drinking…' Anna stood up and she winched from the pain that slowly entered to her cheek. She walked to the bathroom and saw herself in the mirror.

"Oh dear, Kara isn't going to like this one bit…"

Her hair was a mess, bit and pieces hang over her face. Her cheek was red, swollen and she knew that it was going to bruise later. She let out a sigh, ignoring the pain as she implied her foundation. She mustn't make Karasuma worry, she started to wear long sleeves to hide the purple bruises when the little boy started to question as an extra precaution.

She was thankful that he brought up on her lie that it was from gym practice, since the boy saw how she trained and it reasoned well with him. She could nor would never allow such an innocence boy to be dragged into her problems.

'This was mine and mine alone.' She chanted to herself as she ingrained it in her thoughts. 'I mustn't make him worry.'
She turned to the clock. 'Kara is waiting for me.' She quickly tided her hair, she picked her essentials and check around the place before closing and locking the door behind.

'He is probably sleeping in.' She smiled as she thought more of the boy of eight years old, and eventually the drama between her and her love faded into the back of her mind. She thought about the softness of his chubby cheeks and how adorable he was as he slept.

Even if her arms hurt as she wrapped her arms around his small body, her legs numbed as she took every-step, if was all worth it to see that eight year old boy smile. The boy would had always been sick since he was a babe, he deserved a happy childhood, this was nothing…

'This pain is nothing.'

He mustn't be burden by her problems. 'I won't allow it.'

'I won't allow it…'

And she reminded herself more as she walked.

'I will never allow it.'

"Oh Kara~" She arrived at his home, she had the spare key to the house and she made her way in. The house was empty as expected as she walked to the bedroom.

"Wake up." This was long before Karasuma was a morning person. The little boy with short black hair was laying in the comfort of his bed and he only moaned at response.

"Kara~" And Kara groaned into his pillow as his body curled in bed. She had stiffened her awing, she thought that this boy couldn't get any more adorable than he already was. Although he would like to say that he wasn't cute, but cool instead. She wondered what to do to get Karasuma out of bed.

His parents were already at work and they trust her the most for caring their youngest and only son. Anna went to the curtains, she slide them wide opened and let the bright morning sun into the room. She then turned to the bed and ripped the blanket out. "Rise and shine!"

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!" The little boy screamed as the light entered, shining brightly and harshly against his eyelids. He shielded his eyes as he snappily got up.

"Good morning Kara." Anna sang with too much cheer for the morning, Karasuma grumbled as he snuggly dropped back into his pillow.

"Anna, my name is Karasuma." He muttered into his pillow. Anne only cheekily smiled.

"But Kara sounds cuter." She whined.

"But I want to be cool, I can't be cute if I want to protect you." Karasuma protested as he dragged himself out of bed. He almost tripped, if he had then Anna would have quickly be there to catch him.

"From what?" She playfully asked, any answer from Kara was bound to be cute.

"The drop bears!" The boy exclaimed and Anna blankly stare his chubby face which held the look of determination. Anna almost missed that look of Karasuma madly flushed face as she laughed her heart away.
"What are you laughing about!??" He yelled, trying to pull away from her hand as she ruffled with his bed-hair.

"I think it's supposed to be the other way around." Anna laughed between breaths. "My. Little. King." She smiled to him once more when her laughter calmed down. Karasuma felt sad, not because of the laughter directly at him, but that sound ceasing. He always loved the sound of her voice, especially when she was laughing.

Soon, he wouldn't be able to hear that voice anymore. His adult-self years later wished that he would had recorded it. She suddenly stopped as she looked to the small boy, his lips wobbled, he tried to hold back on the tears. Her bright smile wavered, and guilt came to dig into her heart.

"I'm sorry for laughing at you." She softly spoke, she kneeled to meet eye-level and hugged him. Drawing him closer to her body, even though her arms sparked with pain, her heart was more hurt when Karasuma started to tear up. "Please don't cry.

No, that wasn't why he was crying. There was only a few short weeks left.

'Please, I want you to laugh again.' Karasuma thought, blinking away the tears for his inevitable departure. He wanted to deny that fate and so he quickly distracted himself with another thought. Karasuma puffed his cheeks as he pouted. "Just you wait, one day I will be bigger than you! If I get big then I will protect you!"

"I know, I know my little king…"

"What should we do today?" Anna that she popped on her white sun-hat. She hoped that it won't involve anything water related, the bruises on her face won't be healed for a week. She walked them out of the house, Karasuma was rubbing some sun-screen on his arms.

"Movie." The little boy said without any hesitation. Anna felt bad that she internally cheered but she couldn't take the risk of making him worry. He could only buy into so much of her lies, he was a smart boy, she knew that but also that he was naïve. And she intended to keep it that way, she wouldn't tarnish his innocence away.

"Let's go then." She cheered, she fixed his hat and the two walked side by side and hand in hand down the streets of Melbourne. She hummed a song as she glanced down at Karasuma with his usual stoic look, it made him look adorable.

What caught her off-guard was how Karasuma tightly held her hand.

"Kara? What is the matter?" She gentle asked, they stopped their walking. "Does your legs hurt, I can carry you." She didn't mind if her arms would be swore by the end of the day, it was for Kara, she would give her 110% for him.

Karasuma shook his head, remaining quiet and leaving Anna worried, he didn't even called her out on her beloved nickname. "Are you sure, you don't have to force yourself?" And Karasuma shook his head some more.

A problem with Karasuma when he was a child, as much as he tried to hide his problems away, just pinching around his sleeves and pouting gets him to talk. The mere presence of his beloved Anna would easily make him slip. He was more emotional, it didn't help that this problem was directly connected to her. He felt that he could so easily tell her his feelings, and he trusted her.
And so that thought from early quickly came back to haunt him and consume his mind. "Do I have to go back?"

"Go back where?" Anna was confused.

"Can't I just stay here?" He choked and then came the waterworks. Tears rolled over his soft chubby cheeks. "I can just live with you, I promise that I will eat my lettuce."

And then it came to her, soon he will be leaving for Japan. She softly smiled. 'Oh Kara.'

"Kara." She voiced out.

He continued to sob as he tried to rub the salty tears away with his hands. "I wasn't crying because you were laughing. I don't want to go back there."

"I will eat any vegetable, I will even eat an egg-plant." Karasuma hates eggplants with a passion. "I would even eat five of them."

"Kara..."

"Kara, even if I won't be there side by side." She kneeled to see eye to eye, "I will always be there, here." And she placed her hand gentle over his chest, over his heart.

"I will be here, in your heart." And she held Karasuma's hand and guided it to her heart. "And you will always be here."

"Please smile, my little king."

Karasuma softly nodded, but he had a frown on his face. Anna decided on the next best course of action, so she lifted the little boy of eight into her arms. She drew him close, in a secure hold so he would feel safe.

"I can walk there myself." Karasuma grumbled, the tears that rolled down his chubby cheeks slowly ceased. "I don't need any help." He hid his face, burying his face in her chest, his short blades of hair brushing by. He let out a sniffle as he tried to hold onto his emotions.

Anna smiled, she could see how his ear flushed pink ever so faintly. "You were such a cry-baby." She whispered, not out of malice, it almost came out as endearing. "I know you could walk, but I want to say sorry for making you feel sad."

He looked up, big glossy eyes met with dark brown that radiated with warmness. She rubbed the tears away with her thumb. "And I like to help you."

"And you're so small. Now where is my smile, my little king Kara?" She pinched his cheek, she tried to mould it upwards into a smile to the best that she could with one hand. It looked very lopsided.

"I told you, my name is Karasuma." He pouted.

"Kara is cuter."

"I don't want to be cute!"

"It was a good movie, wasn't it?" Anna mused as they walked back to his home. The sky was now dusk, the two had a good day after the movie. Going to the park, eating lunch and ice-cream, teaching Karasuma how to do cartwheels on the grassy fields. Karasuma cheered and he rambled on
about how awesome it was from that scene and that other scene from the movie they watched earlier.

"And that cartwheel! He did it so fast that he dodged the bad guys attack!" And Anna would listen intently, she used had brought a video recorder for this moment, she couldn't wait for the day when the small boy would grow up to be an adult and she would low-key embarrass him of his childhood memories.

It was getting late, she brought some groceries, so she could cook dinner for Karasuma and herself. She planned for a simple pasta with various vegetables, she was going to cut them into many cute shapes to entice Karasuma to eat them. And maybe to hide some discretely as well. They walked hand in hand.

And suddenly, Karasuma had a look that he had forgotten something. His eyes widened and face blushed red. "But he wasn't as good as you Anna." He turned his head away out of a mix of shyness and embarrassment.

She awed at how adorable he was, in that moment of distraction she didn't realised that she was heading to a pole. "Thud!"

"Owwwwwwww!" Anna hissed as she covered her nose with her hands. Dropping her groceries to the ground. There was a slight tear on her eye from the stung. "That hurts!"

"Anna!" Karasuma cried out, he rushed to her side.

"I'm okay, I'm okay." She assured the boy. "I'm just a bit tired today. We had a fun day."

Karasuma said nothing as they sat there quietly. An didn't like how he looked so concernedly as he looked like his heart was ripped out.

"Anna?" He whispered.

"What is it Kara-"

Karasuma slowly reached out to touch her right cheek, his other hand was pinching onto her sleeve. He looked up and held a small pout. "Anna, you're hurt."

She noticed that gesture, it was a move she would use to check for wounds. Whenever the tearful yet stubborn Karasuma refused to show her his wounds in attempts to 'man out', whether it was an attempt to skateboard or he scraped his knee from tripping. What always get him to open up was when Anna pinched around his sleeves, letting out a pout to the young boy.

"Ah! It must had been the pole." Anna lied. She hoped that he didn't notice the flesh-coloured smudge on the pole.

"Does it hurt?"

"Maybe a little bit." Anna still smiled, even Karasuma could tell that it was strained.

'That's right... I still haven't got anything to help him...' 

For all the fun she had, she forgotten all about Edward and her problems. Then the shame, the guilt set in. Everything she had done to lead to this put, her leaving her family and brothers all for one man. A man that her family was in disagreement of. Her brothers tried to convince her that Edward wasn't the man for her, but she turned deaf ears on their disapprovals within she was blissful in the clouds.
'When did it all go wrong?' She wondered. 'Where did it all started...?'

Was it the stressful workload of the university that forced him out of his dreamed course, was it that she wasn't good enough to be his partner. How her heart aches when she watches him flirt with other females at parties, as she hid in the hallway. She didn't know how to fix all of this, she didn't know where to even start.

'I need to get started on the pasta bake.'

'But what if he doesn't come back... It wouldn't be the first time you would be waiting in a lonely bed or slept over the dining table with an uneaten meal,'

'What if it's drinking again? His temper always gets worse whenever he's back from the pubs or bars, more to hide away from sight.'

'What if he is finally sick of you? A plain girl, whom he took pity towards in primary school by the relentless teasing.'

She felt shameful to return to her family. She felt like she could no longer have the right to ask for help. Even if she has the right to ask for help, she felt like she does not deserve in the first place.

What kind of solution does she have left?

'I need to do something. Maybe I should give him some place to cool off, I am being too clingy. It's only a forgotten date or two, sometimes we are all busy without our schedules.'

Maybe he is not happy with something, maybe I wasn't being as helpful as I should had been, I should had given him the money myself. Maybe it is because I refused his advancements to take our relationship closer. This is my fault...'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault-!'

"It does hurt! It hurts a lot, doesn't it!" Karasuma shouted, his voice filled with worry and concern, he never saw Anna cried. Anna stayed quiet, as if she didn't notice the tears that streamed down her cheeks. Before she could make up another lie, he hugged her. His small arms wrapping around her to the best he could, she felt safer and loved for that split second, more loved than the past months since she came to Melbourne.

"It's alright Anna." Karasuma patted her back. "It's only an accident."

He pulled away and kissed her cheek. It helped to soothe away the pain, it truly did and yet the despair in her heart increased tenfold. "Does it still hurt?"

A memory flashed, suddenly her throat became tight and restrained. "One day, I will be strong just like you! Then I will be the one who will protects you! Like a king!" Karasuma once proclaimed as he crossed his arms, as he held back on his tears after he fell face first from a skateboard.

'... That would be nice.' What hope did she have left? A genuine declaration made by a youthful and innocent boy.
'You're pathetic.' A voice told her. 'He's only eight, why should he deal with problems that you made for yourself?'

'Because... Who else could I turn to? Was it better to live happily in a lie? Didn't Karasuma deserved to know the truth? I feel so lost. He is already having doubts that my bruises are from gym practice...'

'So you rather that you tarnish his innocent, that same innocent you spend all this time trying to protect? He's only eight... If you tell his parents, he will find out and all the lies you set out.'

"Anna? Anna?" Karasuma called out to her from her dark thoughts. She blinked and was met with Karasuma's worrying brown eyes. "Doesn't it still hurt?"

'Yes... It hurts so much. I don't know what to do anymore...'

Anna shook her head, she chuckled as she masked the despair away. He was here, and it was more than enough for her. It was enough happiness in her life. "Thank you, Kara. It really helped" She smiled as she sniffled, she wiped her tears away. "You are such a kind person." She pulled herself up.

"Let's go home." Karasuma said, he held her hand tightly as if it were his lifeline.

"Yes." She will protect him. She reminded herself of her responsibility. She couldn't allow Karasuma be involved of her troubles, he already had enough on his plate with his sickly health. 'I won't allow it...' She reminded herself, she mustn't make him or anyone else worry about her situation. It was her to deal with and hers alone.

'I won't allow it...' She confirmed herself.

'I won't allow it...' She affirmed herself.

'I can't allow it...' She convinced herself.

But at the corner of her eye, a shadow watched over them. She turned. She couldn't help but subconsciously positioned herself in front of Karasuma, like a shield. The person was much bigger than them, already Anna was devising a plan to keep the boy safe. Prepared to throw herself away so that he could escape.

A man steps forward, spiky dirty blonde hair and sapphire blue eyes that glowed in the moonlight. He hesitantly came out from his hiding face, with the look what seems to be guilt and shame on his face.

"Anna..."

"Edward?"

Anna's breath caught in her throat. The standoff continued for a few seconds, waiting for the next move until Edward collected his courage and slowly walked forward. He stopped just mere inches away in front of her, so close that she could feel the heat radiating from him.

"You're looking after the kid?" Her boyfriend asked, he peered over to look at Karasuma who hid behind her dress. He somewhat glared at the man, something didn't feel right but Anna knew him. So, it was good enough for him. But the feeling lingered that he was eager to get away from this Edward.

"...Yes." She could only meekly uttered. Karasuma caught onto this, it wasn't like her knew to act so
"Yeah..." She couldn't look up, biting on her lower lip, she didn't want to see his sapphire eyes.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. You came all this way, all for me..." Her partner hovered above her before he leaned over and hugged her. She gasped from surprise. He wrapped his arms ever so gently but also firmly pressed to his chest, her head buried at his chest and he buried his nose into her hair.

"So please, stop doing things that make me act this way towards you…" He whispered, his touch was comforting yet so painful. So small in his arms, it felt so right how they fit together in their embrace. So comforting, so safe it felt, the warmth that she was feeling almost brought tears to her eyes.

'So, it was my fault...'

Her arms slowly wrapped around his torso, securing her hold. She closed her eyes and allowed herself to be buried in his embrace. Edward smelled like pine, just like before. 'He didn't drink today.'

"I will change, I promise." He whispered, almost choking on his words, squeezing his eyes shut. "I can't do this without you.

"I'm sorry." He said.

"I'm sorry." He assured.

"I'm sorry." He chanted.

"I'm sorry." And his words caught her, snapped her into a trap once more.

Anna hummed, rubbing on his back in a comforting motion. "It's okay Edward, everything will be alright. We will get through this."

She forgave him once more, she let out a gentle smile as she pressed her cheek on his firm chest.

She forgave him again, again and again.

"I never got the kids name." Edward looked at the little boy who was looking at him square in the face. They were back in Karasuma's house in the kitchen, Edward was sitting at the dinning table adjacent to the kitchen. An was almost finishing the pasta bake, a Bolognese pasta bake more specifically. Karasuma decided that he rather be sticking closer to Anna, he couldn't still shake off the unsettling vibes that surrounded the other man.

"This is Kara." She gently patted his hair with one hand whether the other was sprinkling cheese.

"Karasuma." The boy corrected, positioning himself behind Anna, looking between her and Edward. Puffing his cheeks because he wanted to be the one to be hugging her like that. He couldn't wait for the day when he was finally taller than Anna. He would be the one protecting her instead.

And marrying her of course. Years later, he would find that it was lie she shielded away from him. The bruises on her arm, the tense interaction between the couple and the traps set out by the man to ensnare her back into his arms. All for the sake of protecting his child innocence.

If only he could had saved her, then she would no longer have to lie for his sake.
He woken up with a new view on that particular memory and it certainty didn't help his mood. Early in the mornings and he was already angrily curing Edward's name under his breath. He punched the wall and left a slight indentation. He was frustrated at himself, he shouldn't had seen the signs.

The bruises, Edward's words, and everything else. For all his childish proclamations that he would protect her, he never did, and he couldn't forgive himself so. He knew that he needed to calm himself down, it is only the second day of the week and he has classes to prepare.

He looked at the teddy bear dressed in a stereotypical military uniform, it helped calmed his heart. "Thanks Anna..." He cutely patted its head. "I just wished you would had told me though..."

He prepared himself for his daily morning routine, stretching out his arms, donning his suit and neatening up his dark hair. It would be considered too early for most people to be up this early, but it was never for Karasuma, at least now he should say. And he had to get to school in time for his lesson plan, but he had some time to treat himself for some coffee.

There was a popular café down at the shopping district he had heard many great things about. Heading down at the district to the certain café.

"Thank the fuck that she is back, our customer rate was lower than usual." A man with ice blue hair commented as he sweeps the floors. "I told you that they only come here for the girls and An, our beloved 'girl of grace.'"

"She is going to make that carrot cake of her? Because as soon as it hit the shelves, there will be riots." "Usually I would say that you should be thankful that Van wasn't around to hear that." A male with light blonde hair and skin as white as snow commented as he set out the tables and chairs outside of the store. "But I did notice the slower weekend... She is going to make that carrot cake of her? Because as soon as it hit the shelves, there will be riots."

"Tell me about it, we are going to need something to keep us from dying out of sheer boredom. That and I hope she save me a slice." The man sighed, casually resting over his broomstick. "Pray with me James."

"I'm sure she will Mark, you know her." James set out the last chair. Then he caught Karasuma staring at the duo.

"And we got one customer already, they can practically smell it a mile away." Mark commented in amusement, he gave a small wave to the teacher. "You can come in you know? We won't bite."

James looked to where he likes Karasuma was looking at, the sign behind the window still reads closed. He let out a

"Sorry sir! We're opened! Just forgot to change the sign." James hastily opened the door.

"We will be with you in a minute!"

Karasuma stepped inside of the café, he immediately went and checked that pastry selection that was set out. They all look so appealing. His eyes turned back to the duo outside, somewhat amused of their banter. They left the door opened.

"Why did you left the door opened?" James asked.

"I'm butt-cold, bring the warmth out I say." Mark exclaimed.

James could only sigh. "But that lets the heat escape. You are wasting the money!"
"I am freezing my balls off James!"

"I'm so sorry that I was late guys, I had to make sure that Caleb won't get lost on his way to classes." A female voice came rushing in, she was hiding by the two men but Karasuma could hear that she ran could the mile judging her heavy breathing.

"Nah, no need to be a mother-hen 24-7 at all times." Mark said as he lazily waved her off. "The kid's smart."

"But still-" The voice abruptly paused. "Did you dye your hair?"

"Yeap! I'm glad you noticed." Mark combed back his layered short hair with his hand. He pouted. "Nobody around here took a mentioned on it." He turned to James who gave let out a poor attempt on a whistle.

"Since when?" She asked.

"Just before you left to Haestu." Mark remarked. "I wanted to experiment a little."

"It looks really cool."

"Yeah, just don't tell Johnny and Ikeda that you called me that." Mark laughed. "We got a guy in waiting, I think he wants your famous carrot cake." He pointed the café behind him with his thumb.

"Mark, James, they're not even that good." The girl said to her male co-workers, laughing along with them.

"Good enough that even the infamous picky-eater Noct likes it." Another male joined in the conversation. Karasuma swore that he heard that voice before.

"Go on, use those hips and seduce him." Mark commented before he received a slap from James while a kick from an angry Johnny. The door chimed opened. She dressed in the café's uniform. A simple short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey pen skirt and well-kept leather shoes.

"Hello, I apologise for the wait-" Her brown eyes widened.

"Karasuma?"

"Miss An?"

James and Mark looked back and forth. "You know him?" James asked.

"We met at Haestu while me and Johnny were helping out the sister locations." She explained. "He's Gakushu's Class-E teacher."

"Ohhhhh." James droned out. "How's Gakushu by the way?"

"A good and dutiful student, it is good to see him becoming more open to his class-mates."

"That's good, that's good." James hummed.

"He's a bit like you now that I think about it." An giggled. "Being a closet sweet-tooth. Acting all stern and"

"I'm not cute." Karasuma instinctively answered.
"..." The three amigos outside had their mouths wide opened and gaped out like fishes.

"You are right." Mark looked in wonderment. "He is like Shu. Not wanting to be cute, trying to be cool. By the way, what is your daily sugar intake?"

"Alright, I will take the order." An said as she tied the apron around her waist.

"Thanks An!" James cheered.

"Welcome!" A cheery voice, even in the early hours of the morning, called out and it made Karasuma give out a rare smile. "What would you like to order sir~"

"Surprise me." Karasuma said, clearly overwhelmed by the smile.

"Righto!" An smiled. "12 sugars for your black coffee then." The coffee machine hummed as it did its work, she hummed a little tune as she tilted her head from the right and then to the left. Karasuma couldn't help but smile.

"You know me so well."
Chapter Summary

Another one of Ikeda and Gakushu's adventures.

The Archives

"There is a time and place for that. I teased, but I don't bully." Ikeda once explained. This is one of those memories.

It had been a day after the Sports Festive, Gakushu Asano was eating his tubs of ice-cream, quite bitterly Rilliane added. It was times like this that it would be best if she didn't prey too deep, especially when the strawberry blonde was practically stabbing into his ice-cream and only gave out one-worded answered, but her motherly nature dominated with her concerns.

"Is everything okay Gakushu?"

"M'fine." Gakushu grumbled as he shoved another spoonful of ice-cream and watches whatever show that was on Netflix. He decided to pick the British looking one with Claire Foy, he thought that Gretel would love this show because of the costume sets. 'That is a pretty dress.'

"Do you want some cake?" Rillane brought along a box of cake with a side of macarons. "I got some strawberry macarons too."

"Can't." Gakushu answered, he shocked his main senior.

"Do you mind me asking why?"

"Eating."

Then there was a knock on the door. "Is the cinnamon roll in the house?" Ikeda's voice called out. Rilliane turned to Gakushu who didn't response to the voice and was more focused on his cold treat.

Rilliane thanked the heavens that Ikeda had the common decency this time to at least knock and not used the spare key he made to break in Gakushu's room. Although she had to admit it could also be Ikeda's brotherly instincts kicking in and that wasn't the best thing to do in this current time.

"Come in!" She called out.

The door handle rattled, locked in place. "Can't! Door's lock." Ikeda yelled from the other side. Rilliane looked back before she stood up and walked over to the door.

"Sorry about that. Thank you for coming at a short notice-" She opened the door and was taken aback.

There was a long silence before Ikeda finally spoke."... Is there something on my face?" Ikeda asked, he pointed to his face.

"That's new." Rilliane looked up and down at the man. He wore an unzipped camouflaged hoodie
with a black tank-top that help brought out the silver chain necklace. The sleeves pushed back to show off his well-toned arms "I usually see you in suits and dress-shirts."

"Oh that, yeah An wanted to do some shopping and offered to help me buy some casual clothes." Ikeda explained as he fiddled with his hoodie. "Apparently on my recommendation for my next assignment is having casual wear." Then he sneered. "Then it said, 'Please refer to John Mcavey for additional information.' Turns out he is the go-to-man when you want to ask for casual wear. Obviously I wasn't going to do that, so I asked An for advice."

"Of course."

"What's eating him up?" Ikeda asked, his arms crossed as he casually leaned beside the doorframe. "I haven't seen him like this for months. Last time was because he missed out on greeting Ren at the airport."

"I remember." Rilliane let out a sigh, she remembered it too well. "He ate 10 bowls of ice-cream that day."

"More like 10 containers of ice-cream." Ikeda added. He looked around and spotted the many empty containers for chocolate, choc-mint, strawberry and whatever flavours Ikeda could make out of from his observation. "How much did he eat this time?"

"24." Rilliane asked. Gakushu tossed the container before proceeding the next one with a scowl as he angrily dug his spoon into his treat. "25." She corrected herself and Ikeda hissed a bit as if he was in pain. "Remember that school sport-festival he had?"

"Yes, he lost. Deliberately." Ikeda said. "Orders from the higher ups?"

"Kind of. He was called a Demon in school. Behind his back but his ears picked it up." Rilliane whispered low enough that even Gakushu's enhanced reaper ears couldn't hear. And Ikeda hissed as if he was in pain.

"Poor guy, especially after coming back from the Tokyo Incident."

"So I got permission by the Higher ups to get Gakushu to downplay his strengths and essentially lose the festival. They agreed because it would make him look more human." She explained. "The actual reason was to convince Gakushu that he wasn't a soul-sucking demon."

"Funny because he would be gone and staying at that fancy English boarding school the next year." He looked over to see what show Gakushu was watching, it was the Crown. "Was it Eton College?"

"Weston College." Rilliane corrected. She let out a sigh. "I am in need of your assistances, I need to head to a meeting that starts in ten minutes and I need you to coax him out of his room. The last time I tried that it took me four hours. You did it in under ten minutes." Before Ikeda could provide his advice, Rilliane quite cut him short. "And I tried to bribe him with some cake, he's not bludging. Not even for the Hello-Kitty themed strawberry short-cake."

"It must be because of my beautiful personality." Ikeda boasted, he flicked his layered hair.

"Ikeda."

"Yeah, yeah I got you Rillie." He gave her a wide toothy grin and a subtle thumbs-up.

"Hey Shu!"
Gakushu turned to the door, his eye twitched with a cute scowl on his face before going back to his strawberry flavoured ice-cream. "It's Gakushu." He dug his spoon into the icy treat.

"Hey, I know you are a junior and all." Ikeda got himself comfortable as he leaned against the door-frame with his arms crossed. He smugly turned his head to the side. "So, do you want to come to the Archives?"

Gakushu stopped his eating and turned to the door once more "The Archives?" He looked back with confusion painted on his cute little face.

"It's like a big library under the Intelligence Branch where there is a lot of information that is disclosed for us to read. With some conditions of course but you understand that." Ikeda waved off. The two adult reapers caught onto the slight sparkle in the boy's eyes.

'He's interested.' Ikeda couldn't help but smile with relief.

"Okay Ikeda, I'll bite." Gakushu set down the spoon on the coffee table, he pulled himself up from his seat and made his way to the door.

"Great! Let's go!" Ikeda grabbed the Gakushu's hood and dragged him away, the back of his boots skidded across the floor. Rilliane watched as Gakushu screamed at the man to let go of him and Ikeda answered with his iconic laughter.

As much as it is good to see that Gakushu was finally going out his room, Rilliane hoped that she wouldn't be seeing Ikeda in the Hospital Ward again for broken ribs. Lawrence, a doctor from the German Division was keeping a betting pool on how many ribs would be broken next. She didn't know who, but someone placed a twenty-grand bet for three ribs.

Reapers have a lot of spare time... And cash laying around, Ikeda's spending habits was a clear example of that.

---

Gakushu and Ikeda were in the train heading for the Intelligence Branch. The strawberry blonde quickly took the last seat he saw. 'This is vengeance!' He smirked to Ikeda who visibly looked unhappy of this as he grabbed onto the straps that dangled above.

"I gave you that seat because you are still too short for the straps." Ikeda playfully retorted and Gakushu glared back as the tension grew. The man smirked but that slowly ceased. "Haha, Classic. So, rough day?" Almost immediately the tension between the two effectively disappeared.

Gakushu couldn't hide it from Ikeda, the man knew him all too well. Even if he tries to deny it, Ikeda would easily see him through. "Yes." He admitted, he slumped his shoulders depressingly.

"On the scale from one to ten, how bad?"

"I want to hide under your shirt and hide from the rest of the world."

"Wow, that bad." Ikeda grimaced. "Man Shu, you are really competitive."

"Shut up." The strawberry blonde grumbled. "And it's Gakushu." He looked for any other subject to talk about and he focused on the new getup. "Didn't the last time you wore something like that, An was bawling for your rebellion."

"Actually, I think it was because of the tattoos really." Ikeda mused.
"Intelligence Division." The voice from the train's speaks robotically called out.

"That's our stop." Ikeda said and the two left the train. The Intelligence Division didn't look that much different with the other divisions on the surface, a lot of monotone colours of white and greys.

"So, what are the Archives?" Gakushu worded, he walked side by side with the older man as they walked down the hallway.

"The Archives is basically the world's largest library." Ikeda explained and Gakushu was taking the information like a sponge. "Old reports, documents, newspaper and Department statements, anything paper-related you could think of is archived there."

Gakushu whispered that Ikeda would act this professional more often. 'Why couldn't you be like this more often? And why the fuck are you so attractive!? How is it even possible!?'

"There is information that isn't opened to the general Department population because it can cause changes in fate. So, the information is sifted through a filter to decide which is best to release. Of course the Intelligence Division knows the top secrets because we were the ones who gathered it first and those assigned in dispatched would be given that information as a reference."

"Remember that Jack the Ripper incident?" Ikeda asked.

"Yeah, that is where Grell and a doctor paired up and started killing some prostitutes in London."

"Do you want the full details?"

"You know what I'm going to say."

"I just want the satisfaction of you admitting." Ikeda let out a toothy grin, Gakushu wanted to kick the man's face so badly. That and it made the man more attractive.

"Ikeda, don't tempt me."

"Yeah, yeah. I promised Rillie that I won't be admitted to the Hospital Ward today."

"Lawrence!" A female voice cut through the library, interrupting whatever Gakushu was going to say next.

"..."

"..."

Gakushu and Ikeda lifted their heads up from the file, they looked to each other and stared where the voice was coming from. They could hear more yelling and shouting around the corner, it was only by one voice. They peeked around the corner.

"I only wanted some light reading Anna." A man with a turf of short black hair calmly stated, while there was an agitated female following quickly behind. She was quite smaller than the male, it made the height difference all the more obvious. Long silky black hair that was tied in mid-high ponytail that familiarly curled a bit at it ends.

"Get back here! We are not stopping this discussion!" An demanded, she grabbed the back of his white lab-coat and attempted to pull him back. It failed as he continued to walk as if he didn't noticed the weight and she was skidding on the back of her heels.

"I only skipped out a meal." He bluntly answered, it was obviously not a good answer for the
mother-hen to hear. "No need to go mother-bear on me."

"You haven't eaten in two days!"

"We are reapers."

"It doesn't give you an excuse." An retorted. "But we still need to eat! And don't get me started on your sleeping habits!"

"Don't try to order me around."

"Is that Lawrence Waters from the Medical Division?" Ikeda asked, he and Gakushu turned to the arguing duo. They watched as they bicker around, honestly it was a bit more one-sided with An ordering and Lawrence answering back with a lazy and relaxed gaze. It reminded Gakushu of the shouting matches between An and Johnny.

"Who?" Gakushu asked as he watched as An tried to yack the man's white coat and him having no problem at the added weight as he walked forward. He noted that the man used An's original name.

"That's the man, he is the one who usually treats me whenever I get my ribs cracked." He noted, their eyes were guided as the two walked about and never noticed the two males. The male looked like he haven't slept in days telling from the dark-circles under his sharp reaper eyes.

'I wonder why?' Gakushu rolled his eyes a bit.

"He knows how to get around to An's mother-bear mood, you usually succumb to it almost immediately." Gakushu noted from his observe from his short years in the Department. "Why haven't I seen him before?"

"Shu, you don't have to know every single member of the Department. There are literally thousands of us. Hundred of thousands, millions even" Ikeda said, their eyes never left at the duo. Gakushu noted that Ikeda hasn't once release some of his killer intention around him, there was no dark sneer on his face, there was nothing to indicate that he was angry or pissed off, there was no urgency of protectiveness for his main senior.

"But if you want the longer answer, he has his own main group of friends to hang out but he occasionally hangs out with An." And Gakushu forgot to retort back that they weren't friends. Ikeda would later file this later so he could tease his 'little brother.'

"The guy is also a workaholic, most of the time An could do is text him daily messages to remind him to eat. If it were up to her, she would sneak out from her café shift to personally stuff down some food down his throat."

It was strange, usually anyone who demeanes An would get glared to death and yet Ikeda looked with a sort of amusement on his face. It was a nice look on Ikeda Gakushu begrudgingly admitted, the small smile on the man's relaxed face, and then Gakushu berated himself for thinking that Ikeda was attractive and handsome... Again.

'Why does he look so mature right now!?' And so Gakushu attempted to think of Ikeda back into a negative light with the man laughing his insides out as he rolled across the floor. "It's Gakushu." He quietly grumbled.

Then, quite suddenly, An abruptly let go the coat, she blinked with a bewildered expression and slowly turned to the shelf. Lawrence noticed the lack of pulled and turned around as well. He looked
to where An was looking at. "... Is that the files for the Black Dahlia case?"

Their eyes stared at the box. Although Lawrence tried to remain deadpanned, he was quite excited by the contents of the files waiting to be read. "We need to read this." He said and he took out the box.

"This doesn't change anything." An commented, she crossed her arms.

"I was thinking of getting some coffee on the way."

An signed and she give him a pout. "It's a start."

"They seem really close." Gakushu said as they watched the two walked away.

Ikeda turned to the strawberry blonde boy and tilted his head. "What are you trying to imply there Shu?"

Gakushu was quite proud of himself of not gaping like a gasping fish at the remark. One time on Valentine's Day, Ikeda was sulking because Johnny stole the spot for red roses to be given to An, so he had to out-best him with some pink Juliet roses. Ikeda was not jealous of Lawrence. "You're not jealous?" It was a shock.

Ikeda didn't gave any indication that he was mad or even annoyance at Lawrence. He always gave Johnny the stink-eye, but then again it was Johnny and the two are bitter rivals. "Why should I be, it is clearly platonic and he saw her more of a little sister and vice-versa."

"The last guy who all buddied-buddied with An was met with a punch by you, Johnny and Van. Tae-sik gave him the scare through stares alone."

"That was because he had a love letter he wanted to give to her." Ikeda let out a tiresome sigh. "But Lawrence is also a part of the protection squad."

"A what?"

"The Protect Anna from the Undeserving. It is getting difficult because of that fan-club of hers. So far, it is me, Johnny, Tae-sik, Lawrence, James and Mark."

"You think you are deserving?"

Ikeda shrugged. "I would like to think that I'm getting there, I'm getting courting advice from Gretel and my time in the playboy person for an assignment for the US helps a bit. I think I could swoop her off her feet." He gave himself a smile, a smile Gakushu would almost described as shy. There was even a slight tinge of pink in his cheeks. Ikeda looked at any random box he could find, he walked down and Gakushu followed.

"But if Lawrence wants to marry her, more power to him. I wouldn't really mind actually... They would make a cute couple..."

"Ikeda..."

"What do you think of this case?" Ikeda pointed to the box, the Beaumont Children. Gakushu nodded and he took the box into his arms, he let the topic slide and going back to focusing on their adventuring through the Archives.

The Beaumont Children case, or the Disappearance o the Beaumont children case, Australia's most
famous cold case where three siblings disappeared from Glenelg Beach near Adelaide, South Australia in 1966. But in the Department, the truth lies within the box that laid rested in Gakushu's arms as if it was a casual activity.

"An once told me that she met him when she was like nine and him twenty-two. He was apparently a medical student doing an exchange and was staying at her family home. Died when she was thirteen." Ikeda let out a soft smile. "He gave her the confidence, when she needed it most."

"Ha, small world." Gakushu whispered to himself.

"Having a good read there?" Rilliane asked.

She finally came out a gruelling and boring four-hour meeting, although she wasn't complaining too much when she compared them to the other meetings she was forced into. She decided to come and visit the Archives to see how Gakushu was doing.

Gakushu and Ikeda were going through several police files. Ikeda was casually and lazily leaning back on his chair, with his legs on the table as he read some file from the 1970s. Gakushu was.

Rilliane looked to see that there were half-eaten sandwiches in front the strawberry blonde's.

"It is really interesting." Gakushu said after swallowing his bite of his chicken sandwich. Ikeda used the reaper-equivalent of uber-eats to bring in some food in. Rilliane was happy enough that the boy wasn't drowning himself with ice-cream.

"Thanks Ikeda. You really saved me there."

"No problem Rilliane." Ikeda cheered. "Anything to get my cute little brother's mood up!" He dug his hand into Gakushu's strawberry blonde hair and ruffled it madly. Gakushu tried to slap the hand away, which he was successful after a good minute of ruffling, as usual his hair ended up resembling a bird's nest like Ivan's.

"Behave Ikeda- Is that a file on OJ Simpson!?" Rilliane gasped, she pointed to the box behind the two with excitement tingling in her body. Quickly the two snapped their heads to the shelf.

"Yes!" Ikeda could only say. "Holy shit! Why didn't I think of this sooner!?" He immediately snatched the box off form the shelves, he placed it on the table and was quickly going through the files. He took out the file.

"Oh my god, let me see too!" Gakushu dove in and pushed Ikeda's face away to get the first read. He completely forgot the state of his hair and Rilliane was also trying to join into the reading. Their eyes followed along with the page.

"...

"...

"...

"...

"Ha, so that's what really happens." Ikeda noted.
Another day

Chapter Summary

Lets play a game; there would be mentioned of usernames in this chapter, guess which one goes with who and the winner gets a free virtual cookie.

Another day

Gakushu and Ikeda spent their night with An and her new junior. More like Ikeda dragged Gakushu to An’s room, not that the strawberry-blonde was complaining too much. He also wanted to see how would Caleb would react to a reaper’s apartment.

Caleb’s reacting was… it was anti-climatic to say the least, but Gakushu and Ikeda already had a rough idea on how the newest junior would have reacted, neutrality with a smile.

Before they knew it, it was time for Ikeda and Gakushu to go back to Kungigaoko town, on An’s insistence. The mother-hen wished for the males to have a good decent amount of sleep for the upcoming day.

A phone sounded its alarm in the early morning, and it was answered with a groan.

Gakushu barely got of warm comfort of his bed as his phone blared its alarm. “I will be up in a moment.” He grumbled, and he tried to bury himself deeper into his blanket. And yet the makeshift alarm won’t stop blasting.

He knew that he needed to get to school and he needed some more practice on ice-skating. He groggily reached his arm out and grabbed his phone. “Enough already! I’m up!” And he grumpily turned off the alarm.

He physically dragged himself out of his bed, with a yawn and a stretch. He covered his mouth as he yawned and walked over to the bathroom. During this short walk, he was checking on his phone for any notifications for shifts, updates on the new development of his current mission and so on.

‘How many hobbies do I have again?’ He thought as he was in the process of removing the sleep from his mind. ‘Soccer, singing, dancing, ice-skating, baking, the guitar, learning with languages… Do I even have time for these-‘

‘Wait… I do have all the time…”

“Wow Shu, you are up for once.” Ikeda popped up as he combed his hair. He was already dressed up for the day, with the tactical Italian black suit but this time he was wearing a blackish-grey dress shirt matched with a white tie.

“Shut it, and it is Gakushu.” He let out a gruelling groan as he tiredly prepares his toothbrush. “And don’t remind me. You should had tried harder.”

“A, I tried. But you insisted of having me as your shoulder-pillow.” Ikeda snarky pointed out, the tips of Gakushu’s ears slightly blushed red.
“You are one heavy sleeper when you want to be. If it wasn’t for phone calls and several alarms, you would have stayed in bed all day. Makes me wonder if you are related to both Ivan and Noct.”

“Unlike Noct, I do not wear my pyjamas under my reaper-coat whenever I go out for shifts.”

Ikeda answered with a chuckle. “That is true.” He fastened and neatened his black tie. “And B, I got to take selfies with you and get to mess even more with your hair.” Ikeda ruffled up Gakushu’s hair.

‘… What?’

Gakushu quickly slapped away Ikeda’s hand and went to his social media, the Grim Reaper Instagram; Death Scroll. He went straight to the home-page as he quickly and rapidly scrolled down through his timeline to find Ikeda’s posts.

And there it was, under Ikeda’s username of reisfield. ‘strawberry_boi has decided that I will be his pillow.’ There were several comments underneath and the post garnered over 500 likes. He read through the top comments.

‘whiterussian_iv :( welp, looks like I have been replaced.’

‘whiskeybonbons @whiterussian_iv you and me buddy… you and me…’

‘vaalea @novanaps looks like you got some serious competition.’

’hoshiyoshi Awwwww~ *w* even when he is drooling, he is still cute as fuc.’

’novanaps zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.’

‘coffeeaddict a nice photo to help me endure another meeting, that and 50 rounds of coffee.’

‘re_marked who wants to bet how many ribs will get cracked once Shuie finds out. I say 8.’

‘dr_lawerence @re_marked I say 4 or 6.’

‘felipasta pasta!’

His hands trembled, fury was brewing and threatened to boil over.

“You know that you could had found it in the tagged section.” Ikeda mentioned as he hovered over Gakushu’s shoulders. And that fury spilled and exploded like an erupting volcano.

“Ikeda!” Gakushu chucked his phone at Ikeda’s face, he should have known by now that it hardly ever works and Ikeda easily catches it. Although, Gakushu was happy for that catch because he still needs that phone to be functional.

“You really should keep your temper down, it is still early in the morning.” Ikeda calmly stated as he effortlessly dodged Gakushu’s blows. “And you almost broke your phone because of it.”

“I do not have a temper!”

Ikeda only escaped with a minor bruise in his abdomen luckily enough and what seems to be a permanent frown etched on the boy’s face. He drove him and Gakushu to the reaper-run gym for Gakushu’s ice-skating hobby, with the strawberry brown grumbling in his seat.

As soon as Ikeda parked at the gym, Gakushu immediately left the car, slamming the door behind
him and stomped inside. All the while, Ikeda laughed as he locked his car. By the time Ikeda went in to the ice-rink, Gakushu was already skating.

“Awwww~ Shu, doing it without me.” Ikeda whined.

“Like you could do any better.” Gakushu growled as Ikeda put on his own skates.

“Now step aside Shu.” The man snapped his fingers, and some classical music began to play.

‘How does he even do that?’

Ikeda pushed off, sliding back on the ice with one free leg up and two arms high as he skated around while holding onto it, performing an arabesque. He switched gears, going back two feet to gather up more speed, he leaped and did a waltz jump. He landed with grace and perfection.

Skating around Gakushu, his arms lifted to the imaginary audience. The soundtrack would be reaching to its encore, then Ikeda lowered one leg down and slide on it. He glided through the ice effortlessly and stopped in front of Gakushu in a ‘paint me like your French girls’ pose.

“I hate you so much Ikeda.” The young boy was very close on cutting the man’s handsome face with the blades on his skates. He then mentally screamed at himself for describing Ikeda as handsome once again.

“And I love you too.” Ikeda blew a kiss to Gakushu. Before Gakushu could even lift up his foot, even if the ice has dulled the blade, it should still be sharp enough to make the cut-

“Well again!” Caleb suddenly appears on scene. To say that the two were surprised would be an understatement. In their peripheral the rookie was looking around at awe, next to him was An who greeted with a gentle smile and a wave.

“An!” Ikeda yelled out in cheer as he jumped back onto his two feet without slipping on the ice somehow. He glides his way through the ice so fast that he almost flew over the ice-rink. Now that Gakushu would definitely want to see, capture and immortalised it.

“What are you doing, if you don’t mind me asking?” Caleb curiously asked, he tilted slightly to the side.

“Shu has a new hobby, so we are doing a practice run.” Ikeda heaved himself up, careful not to slip on the ice again, using the ice rink as his support.

“Ah, I see.” Caleb hummed, still with that polite smile.

“What about you?” Ikeda leaned over the rink. “What are you doing here?”

“I wanted to survey the area, as this would most likely be where I will be frequenting in.”

“… I see.” Caleb continued to politely smile as he surveys the ice-rink, in wonderment of the icy-floor. It reminded Ikeda of that story of when An saw snow for the very first time, asking if it was powered cocaine. Johnny asked her how she did not saw snow before, there was the Snowy Mountains back in Australia. An embarrassedly screamed back that she was from Adelaide. Her three male friends ‘ohhh’.

“Are you practicing for your routine?” An asked. “I would like to see it, if you don’t mind.”

“I will count it as extra practice.” Gakushu shrugged and An’s smile became even wider. Ikeda may
It reminds me when you sang, Miss Heart-stealer.” Gretel made an off-handed comment that was immediately sending alarm bells in An’s mind.

“What!” An screamed, her head snapping to the sudden appearance of the blonde duo, Gretel doing her famous cheeky gesture with the hand on her smile and Arthur looking stoic as usual. And her brown eyes caught the phone in Gretel’s hand. “W-wait! Don’t show them—

“Show what?” Ikeda worded. Gakushu looked with a confessed expression, while Caleb tilted his head, like a puppy.

‘Heart-stealer?’ It caught attention by the other two males, Ikeda was the most interested out of them all.

“Arthur! Restrain her!” Gretel commanded.

“Of course, M- I mean Gretel.” Arthur wrapped his arm around An’s stomach, trapping her arms under his strong hold, and easily lifted her up in the air. She was frantically kicking the air as she fought her way out, begging to be let go.

“Gretel! Come on! Let me go! Let me go!” An could only watch as the phone was, like in slow motion, dropped into Ikeda’s hand. “Come on!”

“Oh my, I didn’t expect you to be this over someone what you wore.” Gretel smiled.

“Didn’t you cried that one time before I came into the Department, that Ikeda was wearing those fake tattoos?” Gakushu called out, he gracefully skated over to Ikeda. “For quote on quote, my Ikeda is being rebellious.” He affirmed his words with hand gestures.

Ikeda wasn’t going to lie, he liked that ‘my Ikeda’ line. It rolled on his tongue quite nicely.

“What happened then?” Caleb asked questioned.

“When Ikeda was short. After seeing Johnny’s torso tattoos and his general taste in fashion, he decided to apply some fake tattoos and An was a sobbing mess because her little Ikeda was being rebellious.”

“Although her definition of rebellious is quite different than to the usual definition.” Gretel recounted, she ignored the screaming female in the background. “Her definition is of not acting as your true-self.”

“Class example.” Ikeda pointed over to Gakushu with his thumb. “Shu over her acting as a cold leader than his cinnamon roll self. She found out in his school trips, shoving a massive sack of candy in his arms to get him to not be ‘rebellious’.”

“And I have to be honest here, I really didn’t like wearing them, so I went back to my usual suits.” And Ikeda didn’t add the other reason why he tried out the temporary tattoos.

Meanwhile Caleb looked happily neutral in all of this, no real reaction came out in assessing the other’s antics, there was an air of professionalism to him as he politely smiled that never reached to his eyes. He hovered over to the phone, and hands clasped behind his back.

The music played, with An as its lead singer as she bobbed her head in line with the beat. The video only showed her upper body, showing off her ripped black and white stripped tank-top, although it
shouldn’t be described as such as much of the lower shirt was ripped into shreds to reveal her naval. It was matched with a short-sleeved leather jacket decorated with studs. Although with other accessories such as the black-leather choker and the black suspenders. Her face adored with deep green eye-shadow and bright red lipstick.

Loud music screeching in the room, blasting out the bass and drums, that image and with how An usually presented herself, it was quite a juxtaposition between heavy metal and the motherly and graceful An.

The drums thudded in a steady tempo played by Lawrence, along with the deep electric guitar as An confidently strutted to the stage, dressed in the semi-revealing attire. It was an odd choice to have a violin being played along with the drums, bass and electric guitar. But with how cool the way the violin was played, it fitted with the genre.

And then the drums fastened its pace, signalling An to sing. “Oh-! This crazy world, I’m lost in this crazy world!” And the violin played sharply, strangely fitting with the tempo of the song.

Ikeda looked like he could die happily, Gakushu was still surprise at the intensity of the performance and at its lyrics.

“Now I know that I am not the first one to have come to the idea. Making such a revelation here.... I just want my answers, that is all I bloody ask. Standing here, needing to know how for this hell to be over...

I'm in danger, the harsh screams resounding. Full of rage, demanding to the world.

To be with him, to be happy. I need to know. I have to know.”

Caleb however grinned and it was more than his polite smile. He gently bops his head, closing his eyes as he took in the music, creating even more of a juxtaposition.

“At least you got yourself another fan.” Gretel teased the other female.

“Is that you wearing booty shorts?” Gakushu asked, he looked back and had to take a double-take. “And are those ripped booty shorts.”

Ikeda was repeatedly screaming ‘yes’ to everything in his mind, his inner self was dancing with joy, all the while still maintaining a neutral expression outwardly. An’s dropped her head down, face furiously blushing out of embarrassment. “...Yes.”

“And are those leather high-heel and knee-high boots.” And she quietly answered with a nod, hesitantly looking back at the trio.

“Do you still have that tattoo on your upper thigh?” Gakushu asked. And something snapped in Ikeda, the man was surprised that he hadn’t collapsed from blood-loss yet. Thankfully the light-haired man had good self-control.

An face’s became even more red, if that was possible, she was brighter than Karma’s hair and reverted her eyes away once more. “…No, that was one of those fake tattoos.”

‘Do you think I could convince her to get a permanent one?’ Ikeda couldn’t help but think to himself.

“Buildings are falling down, playgrounds set blaze and nobody there to save us in this shit pile of despair!” The song continued.
“Oh this crazy world, whatever reason did you have for making this world.”

“All I can say is good job, I quite like the performance. You really poured everything to it.” Gakushu said, Ikeda beside him was furiously nodding and Caleb took the phone to replay the song as he gently bobbed his head. It worked as An gently and shyly smiled back.

“I like the song.” Caleb complemented and it was clear as day.

Gretel turned back to the Australian female with a twirl and her iconic cheeky smile. “See, it wasn’t that bad.”

An however would disagreed, she would rather that she would sink into the ground and hide from the world. “I’m going to die from embarrassment.”

“It had to have come some time, especially when next mouth you are going to be stationed at the red-light distinct again.”

“…What?”

“So, I had a grave-yard shift at the Office last night, and it just so happened that I was sorting out papers for next month’s assignments.” Gretel checked her nails. “There are reports that there was a seceder seen around the place. And because it was more of a seedier establishment than last time. They are still deciding whether or not to have Ikeda or Johnny or both on the team.”

“At least give me some time to sort out a few things!”

“It wouldn’t have given out the best reaction.” Gretel retorted.

Caleb rose up his hand after pausing the video. “I have a question.”

“What is it Caleb?” Gretel said.

“What is a red-light district?” Caleb asked with the most innocent eyes, his doe-brown eyes beaming with curiosity.

“…”

“…”

“…”

“What makes it so special, it’s just a place with a lot of red light. That’s why it is called red-light, right?”

How should they explain this? Gakushu’s ears were flushed with redness, An became even more embarrass as she stuttered about, if Ikeda was drinking his coffee then and there, he would had immediately spat it out while choking and gasping for air.

“It is a centralised place where all of the explicit adult conduct occurs.” Arthur calmly explained it in the most professional, but at the same time not revealing too much.

Caleb politely smiled, unknowing of the awkward air. “I see.”

‘Good save there.’ Much of the group agreed.

“Would you like to try out some ice-skating?” An broke in with an ice-breaker and stirred away from
“the current topic.”

“Yeah! Are you just going to stand there?” Ikeda cheekily asked, he wrapped his arm around the boy’s shoulders.

“Yes please, if that isn’t too bothersome for you.”

“None at all.” Ikeda and Gakushu said at the same time.

Caleb was a scarily fast learner, although he was having more fun spinning, taking Ikeda along for the ride.

“Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!” Ikeda cheered. Arthur was glad that he wasn’t with Ikeda and Caleb at that moment. The blonde-haired male was off to get some hot-drinks. While An was on the sidelines, behind the ice-rink, preferring to stand and watch with a smile as she videoed this on her phone.

“Oh! I almost forgot. I also I have a new song for you.” Gretel proudly stated, skating her way to the boy. She passed a folded sheet of paper over to the strawberry blonde boy.

“Isn’t it Arthur’s turn?” Gakushu asked as he unfolded the sheet.

“We had a game of rock-paper-scissors to decide.” Then Gretel puffed up her cheeks. “Honestly, I think he allowed me to win again.”

“You do know it is very difficult to give-away a win in rock-paper-scissors.” Gakushu looked down to see what Gretel has in store next.

“So, what do you think?”

“Dude, I think he is sleeping with his eyes open.” Maehara whispered over to Isogai, there were other students who hovered around his desk, whispering to each other.

“How is it even possible?” Isogai questioned Maehara’s theory. They looked back at the unresponsive boy who sat there with a blank expression, unmoving and unblinking. Hands placed on his lap as he stared on.

The other shrugged. “This is Gakushu, I’m sure he found a way.” It was becoming unsettling how the boy was acting.

“He does have a point there.” Kayano added.

Rio however, disagreed. “But it is not like Gakushu to be sleeping just before class starts.”

“But Gakushu does forget to eat breakfast from time to time, and he did daze off one time when that school came and visit.” Okuda pointed out.

“Ummmm…. Should we wake him up right now?” Kanzaki asked.

Kayano was very curious and wanted to see if his cheeks were as soft as they looked. “I don’t have the heart.” They were so soft and squishy, she poked once more. It was very tempting to the other students, Isogai gave in and poke.

‘So soft!’
"I don’t think he’s sleeping.” Itona added, he too joined in touching Gakushu’s soft cheeks.

“What happened?” Nagisa worriedly asked.

Gakushu came into the class without emotion, no words uttered as he walked up the mountain steps and into his classroom. Ikeda was worried, the class could tell behind his sunglasses, so he followed with the boy, it was his job both as an elder brother and bodyguard.

“Honestly, I don’t know.” Ikeda said, he waved his hand to Gakushu’s face to capture his attention, but the strawberry blood still stared into nothingness. Ikeda even messed around his soft strawberry blonde locks to resemble more like Ivan’s, he didn’t struggle under his hold, he didn’t even go tidied up his hair.

Many of the students quickly went on their phones to capture this image. Nagisa was quickly grabbing tissues to help deal with his nose-bleed.

“But whatever it is, it shook him up.” Ikeda added, pulling his hand away. “It shook him up real bad.”

“Shook?” Kayano asked on Ikeda’s choice of words.

Ikeda nodded with confidences. “Yeah, shook.”

“Don’t you mean shock?”

Ikead shook his head. “No, shook.”

“Shock.”

“Shook.”

“…Shook?” Maehara voiced.

“Shook.”

“Sho-ok.” Rio added.

“Shook.”

“Shook?” Karasuma joined along.

“Hey Shu! I got you your favourite!” Karma joined in the frame, he placed a carton of strawberry milk in front of the strawberry blonde boy.

“Strawberry milk for a strawberry blonde.” Karma flashed a cheeky smile and he ruffled up the strawberry mop of hair some more. ‘… Wow, it is softer than it looks.’

Not even blinking, Gakushu still sat there with a small frown. He was still unresponsive to the point where it is no longer concerning, but comical at best.

“It’s not Tae-sik or Wolfie.” Ikeda whispered to himself, he crossed his arms in thought. “Maybe, nah I haven’t told Gretel and Shu definitely hasn’t. But this is Gretel, she will always somehow find out.” Without much context, the class couldn’t understand Ikeda’s rambling.

While Ikeda was backtracking and mumbled to himself, Nagisa was failing to capture the boy’s attention, Karasuma trying to get the students to their desks to begin class. Karma had an idea, and
Nagisa caught that look that plastered on the red-head’s face.

“What are you doing Karma?” Nagisa asked, he watched as Karma took out his phone.

“Something I should had done from the start.” Karma smiled as he went through his contacts.

“…” He waited.

“…” The two waited.

“Ren speaking.” Ren’s answered through the phone on speaker. There was a rule that during lesson time, if you speak on your phone then it must be on speaker. They were three minutes into the lesson, so it counts and the whole class along with Ikeda has to listen to the conversation.

“Aren’t you supposed to be in class right now?” Karma couldn’t help but tease.

“I could say the same for you Akabane.” Ren scoffed. “How did you get this number?”

Karma checked his nails as he leaned over the lean, looking very smug. “A certain gender-bent gave me some connections.”

Ren let out a tiresome sigh, Nagisa could imagine the hazel-haired male rubbing his temples or pinching the bridge of his noise. “It’s Gretel isn’t it.”

Spot on.

“Oh! How did you know?” Karma asked, still retaining a playful smirk. The class could imagine that Ren was glaring, how he made that glare, so intimidating was beyond them. For a boy who collapses in PE, he can make himself scary when he wants to.

“It is very easy to see that you look quite alike to her, she wore a red wig one time and she looks almost like you.” Ren answered. “And this would be the sort of thing she would have done, although I haven’t known her for very long… I know well enough.”

In the back, Nagisa and Karma as well as the rest of the class could hear some yelling in the background. It was sounding more and more like an argument was brewing. Although Ren didn’t sound worried. “What do you want?”

“Where are you?” Karma asked, barely three minutes into the phone and he was already concerned.

“What do you want?” Ren affirmed.

“Ren, seriously you are not in class. I don’t want you to drop dead in the street the next time I see you-“

Nagisa snatched the phone from his friend. “Gakushu has been quiet, he won’t talk to us.” He eyed at Karma, ask if to say to respect Ren’s boundaries, he will come around eventually like how Gakushu did.

There was silence on the other side, allowing the yelling in the background to grow more pronounce. There were screams and absurdities about safety and promises. “… In what way?” Ren finally answered, with concern all over his tone.

“But we are trying to give him a normal-“ A woman’s voice screamed in the background.

“Madam, I understand your concerns-“ Another man spoken out.
“We barely got him to even go to school in the first place. What makes you think this is better for him...” A voice that sounded like Ren’s uncle cuts through the argument.

Ren could only sigh, the class could hear the screams lessened as Ren walked away. He slide the door opened to his apartment balcony and closed it behind him.

“Sorry about the noise, continue on.”

“L-Like not the main-student Gakushu way, like he won’t react to anything.” Nagisa looked back to the unresponsive strawberry blonde. “Beside the cake. Although he is eating it with the most blankest poker-face I had ever seen.”

“Oh! I have seen this before.” Ren answered, all tire vanished from his voice, he sounded more chirper, like he was trying to hold back his laughter. “Although it wasn’t for this long, but it could be Gretel’s doing.”

Ikeda muttered under his breath. “Of course, I should have known. Maybe it is a new song?”

“Get someone else!” The woman screamed in the place.

“Madam, this is for his own-“

“... I have to go now, tell Gakushu that I said hi.” And Ren abruptly ended the call.

“...”

“... What was that about?” Takuya spoken out.

“I don’t know, but I hope he is okay.” Nagisa murmured.

“It doesn’t sound like the typical family argument.” Fuwa added.

"Wait, I got another idea!” A lightbulb flashed in the inner workings of Ikeda. The class almost forgot that the man was in the room, although he looked flashy and flamboyant, he sometimes had a low presence. He wanted to the front of the classroom, position himself in front of Gakushu with a bit of distance. Nagisa could sense an odd aura more prominently around him

Before the class could even think or ask of what Ikeda had planned next. He threw something towards the boy.

“Think fast!”

And Gakushu caught a carton of strawberry milky that was too close from impacting his face, the entire class stared at the boy, some paled as white as snow, some was close to having a heart attack, especially for Nagisa. Even amongst the shocked expressions, there were still an aura of amazement for the strawberry blonde, the split time reaction, even if this was the second time it happened, it never lost its amazement.

Although however, Karasuma was glaring at Ikeda. The other was blissfully ignorant, or most likely happily ignoring the glares like it was nobody’s business. Violet eyes blinked, multiple of times, as he was returning from his thoughts. He snorted with an unfazed look as he stabbed the carton with a straw.

“Really Ikeda? You could had hurt someone.”
Karasuma couldn’t help but imagined the knife replacing the carton in the boy’s hand. Of how the knife dangerously was barely away from his face, how the knife would gingerly rest between his fingers.

“But Shu~” Ikeda whined, he faked his tears that rained down from his sunglasses as he walked to the boy. “You were ignoring me, you know that I wouldn’t hurt you. I knew you would always catch it.” He battled his eyes, leaning on the table-top with pouty lips.

Gakushu violet eyes’ twitched with annoyance. Much of the Class-E would never thought that they would be happy to see an emotional reaction from the youngest student, but ever since the Hot Spring excursion, it was very easy to become protective over the little Strawberry.

“How many times do I have to correct you, it’s Gakushu. Ga-ku-shu.” But Ikeda further pouted.

“But Shu~” Before Ikeda could finish his whine, Karasuma came up to grab the man’s collar.

“What the hell are you doing!? I thought you were supposed to be protecting him.”

Karasuma remembered, he remembered how Ikeda threw a knife at Gakushu not long after he joined Class-E. The anger boiled after he remembered that small little fact, a fact that was buried under the antics and comical stories Ikeda had done. Not only that, he was angry at himself for forgetting such a red-alarming fact.

Ikeda wasn’t imitated, he stared deep into the man’s dark eyes with a bored look. He smirked, shrugging his shoulders with a mocking gesture. “If that is what you think of him, then you suck as a teacher.” The air around the once-cheeky man changed.

Tension grew between the two and the air in the class became almost suffocating. “That doesn’t matter, whether if I am his teacher or not, I won’t have you go around throwing things at his and everyone’s faces. Even if he could catch them, there would always be a chance for a mistake.”

“Was this about that knife incident?” And everyone froze.

“How did you-“

“I was the one who found that machine hovering around. I brought back to my place.” Ikeda coolly explained. “And I had a friend looked it over, to my surprised a student from this class was eavesdropping on our little conversation.”

“Itona, wasn’t it?” Ikeda let out a smile, although it was unlike his chirpy feel, but it felt more colder. “Ah yes, Itona Horibe, a transfer student, son of Horibe Electronics Factory's president until the company was bankrupt. And because of that, Itona was bullied by his peers in his former school.”

Itona felt vulnerable, Ikeda was effortlessly and casually explaining personal details of his life. And something about his eyes, the neon-green eyes, it greatly stands out from the man’s platinum blonde hair, it felt so inhuman and alien.

“God, I really hate bullies.” Ikeda scoffed, he side-glanced to the white-haired boy. “So, I have some sympathies for you kiddo.”

“Answer me.” Karasuma ordered, Ikeda eerily turned back to the man.

“Character profiles, they are fun to write. They pass the time.” Ikeda answered. “And it is easy to find information when you have the right connections. It wasn’t that hard to find, it is quite public knowledge. That last part though, I had a friend who was around the area before little Itona
transferred here. Nice guy by the way, you probably saw him around the place Itona.”

“W-who?”

“White-silverly hair, beauty mark under the corner of his mouth, muscular but on the leaner side, wears a lot of turtle-neck clothes.”

“Are you threatening me?” Karasuma growled.

“I don’t know, I’m just stating some facts.” Ikeda smiled.

“Ikeda, I thought Rilliane told you to behave.” Gakushu finally spoken out, Ikeda and Gakushu’s eyes met and silence brew. “This is not behaving.” Gakushu rose a brow at the man while the other playfully whistled.

“I was just having some fun, all this town has is that serial killer and he is starting to slip a bit.” Ikeda let out a bored shrug. “It won’t be long until he is caught and all the fun would be sucked out from this town.”

‘…. Yeah, fun.’ The class questioned at Ikeda’s morbid sense of fun.

“And I would rather have that you don’t look into my student’s personal lives and throwing knives to their faces.” Karasuma firmly started.

And then something in Ikeda changed, he let out a booming laughter as he slipped away from Karasuma’s grip. He held onto his stomach, as if it was too funny. “Looks like I can trust you to look after my little brother after all. You are worthy to be my rival.” He wiped away a stray tear that was forming on his eye. Ikeda promptly ignored the ‘am not’ from Gakushu.

‘… What?’ Karasuma was stunned by this man, one moment he was the most terrifying person and the next moment he was only having fun. It perplexed him. ‘Rival?’

“I can see that he is in good hands. See you later Shu.” He waved as he prepared to leave the classroom.

“It’s Gakushu!” And he threw a carton back for the man’s head. He slightly turned and caught the drink with the most minimalist effort.

“And thank you for the free drink!” Ikeda yelled back with a smile, he closed the door behind him and was out of sight before Gakushu could do anything else.

Gakushu propped back down on his seat with a tiresome groan, massaging his temples to ease his coming headache. He looked back at Nagisa and Karma, then to his other classmates and teachers with a grim smile. “I hope he didn’t bother you too much.”

“I think throwing a knife at you could be on a higher level than ‘bothering us’.”

“He likes to play around with people like that, it keeps him from being bored.” Gakushu sighed, as if the man only misbehaved. “Giving him a reaction is like a prize for him. Although he does have a stronger sense of justice, he sure doesn’t act like he does.”

“At least it wasn’t like last time.”

The last time the class remembered that time when Ikeda threw a knife at Gakushu after threatening Class-A that he would scope out their eyes.
They were glad that Ikeda was on their side, probably. It is most likely that Ikeda was on Gakushu side more, but it was better than nothing.

It was lunchtime, Nagisa had to go help Kayano with something pudding-related. Gakushu was left with sitting under a tree as he ate his lunch, he didn’t need as he got to do a little bit more sleuth work for his on-the-side investigation on Allen Williams.

Karasuma did a peculiar thing and left the school grounds to get some lunch, he came back with a small smile and there was a dust of pink in his cheeks. Gakushu had a good idea where the man was at and who he talked with.

He would be worrying for the upcoming Drama Festival, but Allen Williams was far more interesting.

Today’s was a simple ham sandwich with the extra sides of dessert. He was munching some dark-chocolate Ikeda brought from Adelaide. The richness spreads in his mouth as it melts, he hummed to himself before going back to reading the articles, reports and some tabloids. He thought back to the file that Viktor gave him.

‘The American government allowed Allen to disappear, but he needed some sort of network to get it processed. It could be possible that he is staying in one country and hiding his tracks.’ Gakushu doesn’t know too well of this level of technology, but he was sure that you could pretend to be in Brazil while staying in Australia. ‘However, if he wasn’t, then he would need the funds. But it could be possible that the government is generously paying him…’

‘Man sentenced to life in prison. The Virginian man who killed two people in their homes out of vengeance. David Boyle, 20, stabbed the parent’s of Rilliane Williams, who a month earlier committed suicide after dealing with emotional abuse from her parents. Her brother, aged 7 disappeared and hasn’t be seen since.’

‘-CEO daughter Avery Jona-Zwiers meets with murderer again?! Read to find out more.’

‘-David Boyle released haiku book, could this hide where missing Allen Williams is? Can it be decoded?’

‘-Read more on David Boyle autobiography, his life with the Williams.’

‘-Avery Jona-Zwiers seen at café in Kungigaoko town with fiancé Lance A. Jones.’ A photo of a woman with silvery white hair kept in a bob-cut was sitting with a man whose lavender-purple hair was slinked back. The printed article dated back to when La Morton first arrived at their school.

Gakushu mused as he took the finishing bite to his sandwich. He distinctly remembered Noct’s word when La Morton visited his school.

“*I also saw Avery Jona-Zwiers dining at a café nearby.*” Noct’s words echoes in his head in a loop.

Avery Jona-Zwiers, daughter of the CEO of a major company, the father being the CEO and the mother was an A-listed actress. Known for her charity work and galas as well as her achievements as an equestrian. For the recent summer Olympics, she represented her country, the United States of America and won a silver medal.

The photo was at good quality, however he knew exactly who the man she was dining with. He had to do a double-take and looked to the photo once more. Lavender hair slinked back with gel, designer black suit, the smug smile on the man’s face-
‘That’s Ren uncle!’ Gakushu felt god-smacked, although he cannot fault for Ren hiding a secret like that, not after all the secrets he had hid from the hazel-haired male. To be engaged with a high-profiled character like that, it made less sense that he was the second richest student in the school body when his father can’t match to Avery’s family riches.

But it could be Avery’s doing? As she would be fully aware of what her status can bring and advise Ren to hide much of his family relations.

And then dots started to be formed-

“Hey Shu~”

And those dots completely scattered about.

Gakushu turned, slightly annoyed. “What is it Akabane?”

“So, what did Gretel wrote to you?” Karma teased, flashing a playful smirk. “A love letter maybe, it makes sense since you are so adorable right now.” He was so tempted to pinch Gakushu’s ears that were turning bright red. He decided to pinch them anyway.

“Shut up Akabane!” Gakushu harshly whispered back as he was swatting Karma’s hand away and then covering his ears, he was turning redder than Karma’s hair.

“So Shu~ What is the new song like?” He was curious of what Gretel has written for Gakushu to act like a blushing virgin.

He might as well. “…Take a look for yourself.” Gakushu handed him the piece of paper over to the red-head.

Karma cheered as he took the sheet off from Gakushu’s hand. He hummed and whistled to himself as he read over the new lyrics. He was excited, he was getting some exclusive stuff from Candy-fest before it is even recorded.

‘Hmmmmm, We are about to enter into the climax, hard against the walls. At this stage, at this moment. (And fall in this pit of love!)… nice!’

“This is quite… suggestive.” Karma noted. “I mean, it is for someone like you.”

“What does that supposed to mean?”

“Cinnamon roll, remember?”

Before Gakushu could retort anything, a ringtone interrupted the conversation. He dug out his phone and checked the screen for the caller’s ID. It was a picture of a blonde-haired female standing in front of the tower of Piza, doing one of the most stereotypical tourist pose.

Gakushu picked up the call. “Hi Gretel.”

“I got some news, great news for you. But not so much fun for me. You don’t have to sing the new song.” Gretel let out a sigh, while Gakushu internally celebrate. However, that quickly died down when something off tugged in his gut, when he realised that this was Gretel he was talking to. Maybe the next song would have him sing in a dress, or worse a corset.

“There’s a catch, isn’t there?” Gakushu couldn’t help but think for the worse.

“Oh’ you know me so well my little Strawberry~” Gretel laughed, she paused for a dramatic effect
“The song will be sang by An.”

“. . . What?” Not exactly was he had predicted.

“It would be absolutely perfect for her, I even go some ideas for her outfit already.”

“Gre-“ But she continued to ramble, too excited for this new development.

“Could you imagine her singing it? Like ‘no matter the soreness, drive it harder and faster.’” Gakushu chocked on his saliva. Gretel didn’t take that into note as she was improvising the tempo, knowing full well that Gakushu’s ears was turning bright red. “No matter the neediness. Drive it slow. Whatever your preference is. Show your attentiveness.”

“Is it the colour of rose red symbolising our love, or it is of the not-so-purest white?”

Karma was trying his hardest not to burst out laughing and rolling away in the grass while clutching his stomach, gasping for air.

“Although I did plan for this to be a duet, and its going to be a nightmare to choose between Ikeda and Johnny. And poor James has stage fright.” Gretel pondered. “What to do? And I can’t go ask her brother Law, he still has his work to attend do for a good couple of months.”

“Do you think I should ask Kain for a favour?”

“Who’s Kai-“

“I wonder when Caleb’s birthday is? I should go ask Antonio on that.” The strawberry blonde knew that she had plans for An’s newest junior to become her new dress-up doll.

“Sorry! But as much as I would love to stay and chat, I have to go. I need to find some materials for An’s outfit. Oh’ I will have Ikeda and Johnny drooling– Have a good day at school! I will talk to you later! Bye!” And Gretel ended the call.

Karma and Gakushu stared at the phone for a good couple of seconds, until the red-head broke the ice.

“…”

“…”

“…”

“Gakushu, you have some really fun friends.”

“I sometimes wonder if you are actually related to her.” The strawberry blonde made the off-hand comment as he took out another chocolate bar. Karma smirked back, he leaned forward and rested his chin with his hand.

“Overlap your photo and Gretel’s and you would have a good match.” Gakushu continued.

“What makes would you say that? You said that a lot since you came here.” Before Gakushu could speak, he closed his mouth as he thought more on it. Karma was right on that part, as much as he begrudgingly admitted.

“Although she looks a bit like me, you resemble her more now that I think about it.” Gakushu took a small bite on his chocolate bar. He then let out a light chuckle. “Sometimes it is the way you jest.
Sometimes it is in the expressions you share.”

“I think you have a bit of Ikeda and Gretel, relaxed and casual demeanour but also I could see a bit of Gretel’s charm in you.”

“You and Gretel’s laughter is a bit similar too.” Karma noted as he recalled for the Hot-spring adventure.

“It is?”

“Honestly, I was surprised that you can laugh.” Karma stated. “But on my part, you didn’t make it easy. You were such an ass back in the main building”

Gakushu couldn’t help but smile. In the short time he was in Class-E, he felt more open with his emotions and expressions. “Imagine if the two of you were siblings? You two would be masterminding together. Dear lord, imagine your matchmaking endeavours. Already, you torment Arthur with the spinning.”

Karma couldn’t help but smile as well as he thought up what the two would be doing together. ‘I could finally do the ultimate match-up with Ren and Shu.’ He thought back to the great pairing of Noct and Iggy. And then, he remembered the image of Ren and Gakushu resting together, strawberry blonde hair brushing against Ren’s Ren.

Karma saw how the two held hands. ‘He’s good at hiding it but Shu clearly has feelings for the guy, and I’m pretty sure that it was mutual as well. Especially with how Ren has been glaring at me whenever I’m with the strawberry boy.’

‘… I should probably ask Gretel about this.’

“Would Gretel be older, or younger?” Karma asked as he sipped his strawberry milk.

Gakushu didn’t know how to answer that. Should he go for her actual age or her family history of being in a family filled with older brothers? He decided to go for the easier opinion.

“Depends, she could be seen as an older sister for her protective she is, or you could say that she is younger for her demeanour.”

Karma shrugged. “Wouldn’t that be the day.” He leaned back on the tree truck, his head resting against the tree as he looked up to the clear blue sky as the clouds slowly passed back. Something warm in his stomach tingled, he felt a small spark in his heart as he smiled to himself.

“I wouldn’t mind actually.”
Short Story: Memories of Grace (III)

Chapter Summary

Ikeda asked about a photo that sits in her room, no matter how much hurt it may bring, An couldn't bring herself to have it face down.

Picture frame

No matter how much heart break it brings it, she could never bring herself to put away that photo. And so, she left it there, standing alongside with the other photos she collected over the years; the new ones and the old ones of her previous life she had replicated.

It has been 10 years since she came to the Department and it was some time after Ikeda became a full-fledged Grim Reaper, when the question was finally asked. Ikeda came around to her room to quickly snatched some carrot cake as a midnight snack, before Johnny could have a chance.

"Oh, come in Ikeda. Make yourself at home." She warmly welcomed Ikeda and he, almost practically skipped into the room.

While An was brewing some tea, Ikeda was walking around the living room, observing each of the photo-frames. There's one of capturing the moment when he became a full-fledged reaper and receiving his customised glasses. There's one of An drinking herself silly with her guy friends; Johnny, James and Mark. There was another of her when she was a small child, back when her hair was cut short above her shoulders. There was a single braid to her right with a polar bear hair-tie, and she was being piggy-backed by Lawrence.

But there was one that piqued his interest. It was of An in a wedding dress, at her side was Lawrence and two males he didn't recognised, one had chestnut brown hair and the other had curly brown hair. Actually, there was some familiarity with the unknown male with black-hair, the gentleness and warmth of his brown eyes mirroring with An's.

"An? What's up with this photo?" Ikeda gestured to the photo. "I don't recognise these two."

An walked over, her breathe hitched as she walked forward to the photo. Ikeda attempted to save the situation. "You don't have to explain it! I can ask about the other photos." In a panic, he looked for any picture that may come across more interesting.

She shook her head, "No… It's fine…"

"Do you know about Peter, reaper no. X-5672 of the American Branch and Leal Chung, reaper no. AD- 67826 of the Chinese Branch?"

Ikeda nodded. He heard about the two, in very random and small spurts of information, they were the original group back in the day; Peter, An, Leal and Kain. An graduated earlier from her classes and spend much of her time with the two veterans plus another junior who also graduated early, while Johnny, Mark and James where stuck in their classes. However, he couldn't tell if Leal was actually her brother or was one of those confusing systems that was going on, like with Zeus-William and Gretel, father and daughter.
"Leal was my blood related half-brother from my mother's side. She was Chinese while my father was Vietnamese... Leal came to the Department when I was seven years old... at twenty years old. He had a twin brother, they got into an accident when he was 14, only Leal survived. PTSD, survivors guilt, he felt that he had done something wrong for surviving such an event, when his brother died."

"Like Gretel?"

"Yeah... I guess you could say that." She carefully propped the photo back down.

"Why have I never heard of this?" Ikeda slowly asked. Okay, he knew that he was lying but he needed to start the conversation somehow in this situation. He then felt his face to be itchy and he scratched his cheek. An rose her brow. 'Shit, was she catching onto my lie?!'

"Ikeda, you can ask me. You don't have to walk around the bush or have to lie." She settled down the mugs onto the racks. "We can break the tradition here."

"How did you know?"

"Well, now I know." An laughed. Ikeda blushed and lowered his eyes, averting them away from her gaze. She walked over and stood next to the boy.

"Ikeda, you touched your face." Ikeda was confused at her response until she picked out a book from the shelve, 'How to Spot Lies like the FBI' by Mark Bouton.

'Oohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.' Everything clicked in the young man's head.

"One way to indicate a person of lying is face touching. People's faces often itch when they lie, touching one's face may indicate lying as there is a chemical reaction that causes people's face to itch when they lie." She explained as she handed the boy to him. "And also watch their hands as well."

"So, why is it a wedding photo?"

"Gretel's photo-shots." An laughed as if it explained everything; it did. Ikeda looked back to the photo, An gently smiling towards the camera. He intently glanced over to the male with chest-nut brown curly hair.

"Is Peter gay?"

"How did you know?" An was caught off-guard.

"My sixth sense?" Ikeda hesitantly answered, he shuffled his feet over the other and his hand slightly twitched, blushing under An's look.

"Ikeda."

"That is true though, whenever Johnny is around you, I get angry. I can't with Tae-sik because he is loyal to his last wife, it is the same for Wolfie."

"And there is James and Kain, he leans on the other side and I don't get mad whenever he is comfortable around you. That and I kind of low-keyed snooped around his room and found a drawing of a man behind a picture frame." Ikeda somewhat saved himself from diving closer into his feelings of jealously and also loving affection for his main senior.

"Who knows, it could had been a family member. Brother? Uncle, or even cousin." An teased, she
poked at his reddening cheeks that became even redder, if that were possible.

"Could be the case until I went into the archives. Second World War. Poor guy."

An listened with a sad smile. A story architype that was too familiar within the halls of the Department. She remained quiet as Ikeda conversed. "When the lover died, he decided that the best course of action was a knife to the stomach. Another Romeo and Juliet scenario added to the Department's archives."

The mood was sombre. She quickly changed to more happier outlook without breaking a sweat. "You are shaping up to be a great agent. Imagine yourself in the CIA or FBI." She warmly smiled as she patted his back.

"It's not official. Don't know if I want to go straight into the field." The idea was tempting to Ikeda.

"You could first start small, maybe a police officer? Dip your toes and see if it interest you" And that small idea gave a spark to the light-haired boy, he looked down on the book while An went back to finish brewing some hot chocolate. She couldn't help but recount of an old memory, brought back by Ikeda's endearing curiosity.

"It all started, in a storage room."

It all started when the three decided to hide away in one of the stuffy storage archived room, one filled with boxes of old reports, dated back 100 years ago and even further. Leal, dearly known by his actual blood-related sister, An to be a bit of a bookworm.

Leal read though the report. 'So that's the details of Jack the Ripper, didn't know that his chainsaw of a death scythe was illegal then...'

"I brought some cake." An softly whispered as she brought out a container of carrot cake.

"Nice! We just need to ration them." Peter walked as if he was treaded on unsteady waters, but he was still excited for An's famous carrot cake and that he will get the first slice. Even if he has to whisper.

"... Is it me or do you feel like somebody is watching us?"

"Fufufufufufufufu..."

"I know that chuckle." Peter whispered, he and the two grimly looked at the only exit of the room. Nobody uttered a sound, their breathing sounded too loud for their liking.

"-Fufffffufufufufufufufu."

"... Maybe it is just our imagination?" An suggested.

"Fuffffufufufufufufu."

"Fufufufufufufufufufufufufufufufufufufu." It was getting louder, and too close for home for the trio. They slowly treaded back, their backs up against the wall, the giggles were becoming more louder as they huddled together. And then, suddenly an axe came through the door.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" All three screamed for their lives as they hugged each other for dear life.
"I. See. You." Gretel looked through the hole of the door and sang, a scene that was ripped from the Shining.

"Here's Gretel!" An arm went through the hole, unlocked the door, and the trio screamed even more. She opened it wide, and standing behind her was Arthur, carrying a neutral expression on his face as he looked to the three.

Gretel gleefully clapped her hands together, with a wide smile that reached her ears. "I have some new clothes I want to test out."

"She smelt the cake!" Peter screamed in panic.

And the Department could hear the three's screams resonating down the halls for miles on end. While William T. Spears was doing his shift at the Office and could hear the echoes of their screams, he immediately assumed that Gretel was off on her fashion quest. It sends shivers down even in the most veteran reapers, that was the power of Gretel needing some test models for her new batch of clothes.

"I don't see why we have to have multiple versions for this." Leal let out a strained smile.

He was dressed in a suit similar to Peter's and a perfect fit for him, the differences being that Peter was forced into a dark-turquoise vest and with a dark-grey dress-shirt, to allow the spotlight on the make-believe 'couple'; Peter and An. And Law, was acting at Peter's best man.

Although Lawrence corrected that he was more likely to be acting as An's bridesmaid.

"I don't see why I was chosen." Lawrence Waters with 5 years currently under his belt remarked. He was from the German Branch, he was fairly a tall man, so he was made to sit down beside An so that the photo can be balanced. He leaned back on his chair lazily and was hoping for all of this to be over so he could take a nap. He was dressed in the same outfit to Leal's.

"I know that you don't like to be ordered around but you were perfect for the photo-shop. And you were perfect for the family shoot, you resembled Leal and An." Gretel noted as she dabbed some foundation to hide the dark circles of his eyes. She gave up on styling his hair when it refused to stay back. "I can see that your hair has also inherited your stubbornness." He rolled his eyes.

"I could say the same for me." Another reaper spoke as she adjusted the lighting. She was a 100-year veteran from the Intelligence Division, although she lived much of her life and died in England, she was technically born in France making her a member of the French Division. She kept her black hair simple, in a low-tail that rested on her right shoulder. There was a distinct mole underneath her left-eye that gives her an aura of maturity, which was emphasised of how she presents herself.

"Diva, you are not currently in this dress." An let out a strained smile, fitting to her brother's.

"I did wear a corset back in my day." Diva monotony answered.

"... I see your point."

Gretel smiled at the veteran. "I thought it would be lovely to give you some fun before you go off on your dispatches. Sometimes you don't know how to relax, I rarely see you around the Department nowadays. You even brought your reports in." She pressed her hands on her hips. "Diva, a little be to the right please."

Diva hummed as adjusted the lighting to Gretel's liking, not denying that she had indeed brought in a
file concerning about her next assignment. "That is true."

"What about you Albert?" Albert was Diva's brother by blood. He came in first and a few months later Diva followed, and both were taken under the wing of Francis of the France Branch. The duo was considered to be special case in their circumstances and was the talk of the Department for months as Gretel once detailed before.

"I'm just here because Diva might need some help." He had a sister complex. He always had it since they were children, it was so engrained and nurtured that it became second nature to him. There is an unspoken rule, where you see Diva around, you will be bound to find Albert close by, including assignments. Diva could only answer with a sigh.

"Oh, and Kain is doing some work somewhere in Europe, I would have him paired up with An, fitting as the two joined at around the same time. But Peter would have to do, he was closer." Gretel noted.

"I don't see why I have to do this... Seeing that I... -into, I... I turned- I mean. You know, for the other side..." Peter shyly squeaked, his face was mad red from embarrassment. Leal and An looked to him in surprise, Arthur keep to his stoic face and it was the same for Diva for her sameness. Albert only rose his brow with intrigue and Lawrence let out a yawn.

Gretel turned back to Peter from applying the eye-liner to emphasis the softness of An's eyes. "You mean gay, Peter, you mean gay."

"H-hey!"

"Peter, if you swing that way, that's fine." Gretel said with no cheekiness in her tone. The group knew that she was being serious. "And you are taking a big step from the closet for entrusting us with this personal fact. Although the Department is very different, and a lot has changed since you came here almost 30 years ago."

Leal and An started to clap. "She's right you know." Leal pointed out, Gretel held a smile as she patted herself on the back.

"If you want, you could talk with James. He was in the same position as you." An added. "He came to me before graduation that he was gay. Lawrence here is also bi-sexual."

"He is?" Peter eyed at Lawrence.

"I thought I was very obvious in my orientation."

"Yeah, and James said that it put a lot of things off his shoulders." An added.

"He is right on that." Peter chuckled.

"Isn't Kain also gay?" Lawrence mentioned.

"Yes, but he never hid it to begin with." Diva blurted out.

Everyone turned their eyes on Diva and Albert. "I don't see why I should be bothered by your sexual orientation."

"I'm not on the same boat as her." Then Albert smirked. "And that means it one less person to deal with."
"Albert."

"You deserve better."

"Thank you, thank you." Gretel said as she patted herself on the back. "And if anyone says otherwise, you know someone putting you down for your sexuality. I will see it that they will regret doing so." She held up the eye-line like it was a knife.

'Remind me to never get on her bad side.' The group added to their mental list.

"And for you question, it is for experimentation. Also, I wondered what Miss An looked like when she was 9." Gretel re-did the girl's make-up, going for more of a lighter and natural look, to highlight of her gentle and graceful personality. With a dark shade of blue eye-shadow. An wore an elegant strapless gown, it's ivory stain bodice narrowed at the waist to highlight the reaper's slender figure, incorporated with floral lace motifs and excellent beading, with the lace on the shirk veiled in a layer of tulle.

She smiled at the group with a hint of playfulness, "And it's good to plan ahead too."

After going through a catalogue of bridal hairstyles and consorting with long-time friend, Arthur, the two finally begrudgingly settled for a 1950s hair-bun for its graceful look. Meanwhile Arthur was beside the blonde girl and was fixing Peter's collar. The poor guy was trying not to experience a second death with how tight the collar was.

Currently, An was using her form of 19, the age she would had been as of now if she never died. Peter went for 20, although he still looked to be 17 with his soft chestnut curls and big-doe eyes, even with the inhumane and cold colour of chartreuse phosphorescent, his face practically screams innocence that never tasted the apple. Because of that, Peter was Gretel's favorited test model. And Leal decided to go for 25, no reason really. Lawrence reverted back to his usual form of 26.

"I think it's too tight." Peter managed to rasp out, while Arthur and Gretel contemplate on what tie would be best suited in Arthur's own collection of designer ties.

"Here, let me help you." An said as she stood up from her seat, setting aside the white bouquet of lilies and went to help her friend to breathe. Popping one button helped for the air to re-enter into Peter's lungs.

"Thanks, An! You're an angel." Peter thanked the girl, hugging her but was also careful on not smudging her re-applied make-up. He let go and rubbed around his. "How Arthur breaths in that, I will never know."

"You learn as you go on." Arthur answered back as he and Gretel came back with the chosen tie, a dark blue navy silk tie that would had costed more than the average common tie. Peter grimaced under Arthur's looming glance and he was subjected to the tight collar once again.

Gretel placed a white camellia into Peter's pocket. "Now, fit for a cutesy prince."

"Hey!"

"I'm sorry." Gretel smiled. "A cutesy gay prince." She teased.

"You know, this won't be so bad." Peter laughed as he retained to his pose, back straight as he stood strong and firm with confidence. "Pretend that this is a photo of your wedding, with Leal and me attending for our little sister." He light-heartedly suggested, he let out his arm to his 'bride'. 
The idea however, brought a gentle warm in An's stomach. Yes, that would be a nice idea. And she wrapped her arm over Peter's arm. "Which means that you are over-dressing, the attention is supposed to be on the groom."

"And bride." Leal added.

"If so, I will make sure that you three would be in the guest-line. I would be in despair if you don't attend."

"With your personality." Leal couldn't help but laugh, not as to demean or to taunt, An and Peter could easily tell it was on the teasing and light-hearted side. "I wouldn't be surprised that you will capture the hearts of men across the ages and develop your own harem."

"Hey!" An madly blushed at such a suggestion, she slapped her older brother's shoulder. Gretel playfully clicked her tongue as she waved to the trio for their attention. The usual stoic and frowning Diva let out a meaningful smile.

"Extend the invitation to use as well." Albert smiled. Even Lawrence let out a lazy smile,

"I could always give you some pointers." Lawrence let out a smug smirk as he wiggled his eyebrows.

"Lawrence, shut it." She elbowed him in the side, although it was a light jab and there was no malice in An's tone.

"Get ready everyone! On your stations! Eyes on the camera." Gretel successfully reverted the attention back to the camera, she could barely contain her laughter, and it helped when the three spotted that Arthur held a small smile.

'The two would make a good couple.' The three agreed, it was humorous that even the Great Matchmaker like Gretel didn't know about Arthur's true feelings.

"Nevertheless, we will be there when the church bell rings." Leal announced, he stood tall and proud beside his little sister. She seated herself on a posh seat, next to left was Lawrence and on her right was Peter.

"Promise?"

"We promise." The three males sang.

"Smile!" Gretel called out to the group and then came a flash over their smiles.

After An finished her story, Ikeda couldn't stop chuckling of how Gretel had hardly changed. She laughed with him as well, it was for the best.

'When did it all go wrong?' She couldn't help but wonder. 'Where did it all started...?' Peter and Leal suddenly disappeared without a word, she couldn't tell the signs of their eventual departure.

"Even after all these years, she hasn't stop chasing others in the name of fashion."

"She sure hasn't." She laughed. She grasped at around her mug of hot chocolate, she didn't take a single sip and it was now lukewarm. Ikeda still looked to the photo with a wide smile on his face, however slowly it devolved into a thin frown.

'Ikeda?' An could only blink at this sudden abrupt change.
"I wonder, what would you say if you see them again." Ikeda asked, he sipped his beverage of hot chocolate as he turned away from the photo and looked back to her.

'…What I would say to them…'

"Hey, An?"

"What is it Ikeda?"

"You know, Lawrence once told me something." Ikeda did his best to maintain eye-contact with his main senior. "That you have a habit of bottling everything up, you tell yourself that you shouldn't burden others about your problems."

An's eyes widened, a gasp almost escaped from her. "I-I..." She took a moment to calm herself and she softly smiled to him. "I'm fine Ikeda, there is nothing to worry about."

"See An, you're doing it again." Ikeda looked to her with a sorrowful expression, so unlike on his face. She felt so ashamed of herself and the guilt sets in. She should had put that photo away or had it faced down, it was her fault to making Ikeda feeling this way. 'I'm doing this… This is all my fault.'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault.'

'It's my fault.' She chanted to herself.

"You did it when I asked about the photo." Ikeda said, and she remained quiet. He could so easily see through her lies, as she held back her tears. She looked down to her lap solemnly. "You acted as if everything was okay, you forced yourself… to tell yourself that you were fine."

Ikeda shook his head. "But you weren't fine, were you?"

"..." An forced herself to stay quiet.

"... Let it all out. You say that you shouldn't bottle up everything inside and yet you do the same." Ikeda asked, he couldn't bare that overwhelming sad look on her face. "Please, let it all out."

"...

Ikeda stepped out of his chair and walked around over to An's side, he kneels down and grasped her hand. An slowly turned his way, but their eyes couldn't meet, she looked down to her lap. However, she did grip back, as if she was going to lose him as well.

"What would you say to them?" Ikeda asked once more, his voice was so kind and soft, so soothing and calm.

"..."

"...

"...

An looked up to Ikeda, desperately trying to blink away her tears in her redden eyes. "Would… you like to… attend to my wedding?" Her voice cracked, her throat felt parched and constrained, she
could barely speak out her next couple of words.

The next words she did spoke were only sobs and the flood-gate of emotions opened. All of her emotions, rushing out as she latched to any sort of emotional support she could get.

"So many people left me. My half-brothers, Lawrence, Edward and Kara." An cried out, she clutched at his chest. "And-and it happened again, Leal and Peter became seceders. I don’t know what else to do anymore, I didn't want them to go. I didn’t."

Ikeda happily provided her much needed support. He was already mature for his age. Ikeda wrapped his arms around her and they held each other. His embrace was so comforting, it was like Edward's, she felt so safe in his arms. She couldn't help but feel that Ikeda was quickly growing up, already she was small in his arms.

Outside of the Department, in a graveyard somewhere in Adelaide, Karasuma was too crying at her grave for the first time. And he places the flower at her grave.

A memory from ten years ago lingered long in Karasuma’s mind as he rose up in the morning. The moment he was waiting for as he arrived in Adelaide, for ten long years to see her face once more. Once Anna told him that she moved to Melbourne for her studies and she intended someday to return back to her home city of Adelaide.

It was cruelly snatched away when he was told by a mutual-friend of Anna's that she died a month after he left home for Japan. He wanted to deny it will all of his heart. He could barely muster the words, he almost timidly asked if he could visit the cemetery.

When he arrived the cemetery, there it was on her grave-stone and on it, it reads "Anna Nguyen. A dear sister and beloved friend. Forever in our hearts you will stay, you are never very far away."

"I will be here, in your heart." She once told him.

"I’m sure this won’t be the last time we see each other again." She once promised him.

“You were always such a cry-baby." Even after all these years, he could still hear and remember her voice. He placed the bouquet of flowers at her grave tomb, he didn't bother to wipe away his tears.

"I know, I know… Anna." He answered to the grave-stone.

He woke up with tears running down his eyes. He seamlessly stared at the ceiling before he turned to side to be greeted with a home-made teddy bear dressed wearing his little camouflage military uniform. to her last gift.

"Morning Anna."

He looked at it intently, he licked his lips while warmly smiling at the bear.

"I meet this girl, her name is An. I think you would really like her."

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I have to warn you, the next couple of chapters will be short shorties. Sorry about that but I couldn't really fit it into the main chapters and I am still writing the main chapter.

Sneak peak into the short story; new details of Rilliane's and Allen's backstory
Short Story: Home-deco

Chapter Summary

An IKEA adventure.

Home-deco

The practices of the relationship between a main senior and a newly arrived reaper is to stay at the former's apartment room for the first two or three weeks to help get the junior settled in. Afterwards, the junior can get their own apartment room and the chance to customised it with whatever they want with any sort of furniture and feature.

Currently, James is going through a crisis.

He was flipping through the IKEA catalogue for any inspiration to furnish his room, or to even change the entire layout. He wasn't satisfied of how his room looked, how the room wasn't fitting to his person. The bathroom was fine, the kitchen was getting there but the bed-room and living definitely needed some work. He couldn't properly describe why it felt so out of place, it just did. He couldn't help but think back to all of his friends and their apartment rooms.

Ikeda's room resonance with the pure essences of class. The dark green-emerald wallpaper, the marron rug, the green-glassed lamps and the regal furniture like his posh leather counch or his mahogany coffee table with an olive ash banding and bevelled glass. James should also mention that the man has his own personal bar. The dim-lighting gives the lounge room an aura of sexiness. Even his coat rack looked really fancy!

Gakushu was well-known within the Department for having his infamous sweet-tooth. This matched with his apartment, the yellow cream wallpaper, decorated with various plushies, and a surprising amount of strawberry themed products. His bookshelf is filled with books from graphic novels to dessert books to dictionaries and language books. A modern kitchen with a long marble counter and barstools on the side, a Hello Kitty rug fashioned in his living room which matched with his white corner couch. A spiral staircase that leads up to his bedroom.

An was a bit of a mother-bear, which was a bit of an understatement. She followed with more of a homey aesthetic for her apartment room, photos plastered around the place, with some pastel pink floral wallpaper, a Hemmes furniture set and fake plants in every room. Whether James would come in, he would almost always be engulfed with the smell of home-made fresh pastries and cakes.

Mark has- "Dude, seriously? There is nothing wrong with your room." Mark exclaimed exasperatedly. He looked up from his IKEA monthly catalogue booklet. They were in Mark's room and specifically his living room, he followed with the more urban and modern look with industrial touches; brick walls painted white, polished oak wooden floors, movie posters framed and hanged. His furniture mainly consists of black, grey, dark navy blues and white.

The man was hundled up in his retro-styled chair, it has high-track arms, it was upholstered in a rich charcoal fabric without rounded and tapered legs. His eyes rested over his bent glass coffee table.

"You say that because you have a nice set up." James answered with a grumble, he eyed at the pin-
up board behind the computer system, it was covered in memos, motivation notes and memes. It told some much of Mark's humour and his fun personality.

"Have you not seen at my room?"

And Mark had, it was really organised and neat. Not a frame uncrooked and not a speck of dust to be found. "Yeah, it is really neat and organised." He remarked, and yet he could still feel the judging eyes of James.

To make his point, James opened Mark's fridge that was covered in magnets he collected over the years. The man was still confused as he stared at his friend, James let out an annoyed sigh as he got up from Mark's retro, chic and suede black couch and he made his way over to the kitchen.

James opened the fridge and music started to play with lights in a multitude of colours blared out like it was a rave party. James closed the fridge, the light-show and music stopped, he opened it again and it played again, then he closed it again. He did this several time as he looked dead in the eye at Mark.

"Okay, I think you have made your point now."

The group went to the shopping distinct of the Department. It was obvious that James and Mark were going to call in Johnny and An to help them in their quest to aid in refurbishing James' apartment. However, what they didn't expect was that their little group was going to be increased. It first started when Antonio who came back from his shift in the Identification Division and asked what they were doing.

"What is the occasion? Is Mark going to break his legs again?" And he also asked that if An was going to act as damage control to stop Mark of doing whatever crazy thing he was planning.

When James explained that they were going to IKEA, Antonio asked if he could come along as well, he said that he could use some lunch. Then it created a chain reaction, because Ikeda went up and asked Antonio if he wanted to come to his place for a movie marathon. "I was thinking of running through the Three Flavours Corinette trilogy." The Spaniard said that he couldn't because he was going with the group to IKEA.

Ikeda at first thought the store kind of sounded like his name, Antonio agreed and now An couldn't un-see that. He asked if it should be his nickname. Then the group and Antonio realised that Ikeda was also dragging around Gakushu by the back of his hoodie. Nobody noticed, despite the boy was scratching at the man's hand. However, Ikeda was giving no indication that he was in pain, not even a flinch or a grimace look. Then Gakushu decided he too wanted and was interested to help James out.

Soon Rilliane came by to lecture Ikeda for messing around with her strawberry blonde junior. And somewhere down the line, Gretel and Arthur came along for the ride because what they were doing looked interesting enough.

"Wow, it is really bigger than it looks." James said in awe as he gravitated to look at the lighting applicates. "So that's why we need those arrows." He looked down to the arrows plastered on the ground.

"That's what she says." Mark softly uttered under his breathe before he was elbowed to his gut by James. "Oof!"

"Ohhhhhhh~ They have a new selection of rugs." An called out with curiosity. "And some plushies
too.” She then turned to a basket full of plush sharks. When Johnny came to pick up the plushie with the intention swing it to Mark's direction, An quickly shoved the plushie into his face. Already, there are distractions.

"Honestly, I'm just here for the meatballs." Antonio said as he patted his stomach and chuckled to himself.

"Same." Ikeda sang with a wide smile, he followed behind his friend with his hands in his pockets. "I'm quite happy with my set-up. Custom-made. Hey James! If you ever want custom furniture like mine, I can hook you up with the person. She did furniture for Gretel."

"I agree, I came here with an empty stomach." Rilliane said as she sipped her coffee. Much of the group thought that it was instead filled with mountains of caffeine. "But I would like to see their new selection of lamps this season."

"Ohhhhhh, I didn't know that there was a tea shop next shop!" Gretel squealed with delight as she grasped her hands together. "I definitely need some new tea-ware! How splendid!" And it wasn't long before she was dragging Arthur to accompany her. Barely a couple minutes in, there are already casualties.

"Woah, hey guys look! I could see a Tiffany and Co shop here!" Ikeda exclaimed as he pointed to the top-tier store with excitement.

"Ha… that we do." Rilliane worded, she and the others looked in wonderment. It was quite out of placed to say the lease. "I mean, they also do other accessories as well."

"Why would a high-brand shop be right next door to IKEA of all things?" Gakushu asked no-one in particular. "Seriously, we have a Gucci store right next to it too." Everyone turned to the other top-tier stores.

"I could go to Review after this for some coats, I quite like the vintage look." An giggly noted and already Ikeda was heading his way to buy a whole wardrobe. That was before he was rough-handed by Mark when he grabbed the light-haired man by the back of his collar.

"Guys, remember. No excess purchasing, I'm looking at you Ikeda." At Mark's words, Ikeda was cheekily waving at the group. "We are here to help with James, we already lost Gretel and Arthur, and nothing else- Oh! Shiny!" Mark remarked as he pointed to the lamps.

James face-palmed and slowly dragged it down his face. Ikeda and Antonio snickered, Rilliane hide a smile before her coffee cup and Gakushu looked on with amusement at the irony of it all. Johnny, James, Mark and An started to format a plan on how they were going to traverse through the store with maximum efficiency.

"Psst, hey Antonio?" Ikeda whispered as he lightly jabbed the Spaniard with his elbow. "You know how there is a lot of stores here right?"

"Yeah?" Antonio slowly answered as he looked back to his friend.

"I guess you could say it is a… Department store."

"Ayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy." Antonio smiled widely as he gave Ikeda the finger-gun and Ikeda followed back the gesture like good friends they were.

"Ayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy." The two droned out the song as long as humanely possible.
Rilliane downed her coffee with a bored and unimpressed look. It was the same expression carried with Gakushu. "Are you doing yet?"

"Not yet." Ikeda sang while still retaining his finger-gun pose. "Ayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy.... Okay, now I am done."

While Gakushu tagged along with Johnny and An to look for fake-plants. Everyone else was going to the bedroom area. Ikeda and Antonio were goofing around with one of the bedroom sets, the Spaniard was laying on the bed and Ikeda was spinning wildly around in the office chair. Rilliane decided to take the mantle of baby-sitting the two while she drank her coffee. James and Mark meanwhile were observing the set with the colour theme for red next door to them.

Antonio comfortably laid in bed, however, his stomach was crying out for food. As he rested on his back and hands grasped together over his stomach, he could smell the delicious scent of hot chips and was salivating. He mentally berated his mind for hallucinating and conjuring up the smell of food.

Ikeda slowly stopped spinning and something caught his eye on the desk in front of him. "Woah! They even have fake laptops." He called out in wonderment. He lifted up the laptop to inspect it.

'Ha, prop laptops.' Rilliane had to admit, it was a bit funny. It even has the fake logo and everything, instead of the iconic Apple logo, it was replaced with a banana.

"I guess you can say that it is a prop-top." Ikeda snarky quipped.

"Holy shit." Antonio exclaimed as he hopped out of bed. It was definitely not on the fake laptop that caught the Spanard's attention and awe.

"What?" Mark asked as he popped his head out to them, he then looked to where ever the Spaniard was looking at. Ikeda, Rilliane and James followed suit.

"Oh my gosh, it's Kain in the flesh. I haven't seen him in months." Antonio exclaimed as he pointed to the couple.

Kain was from the English Branch, his black turtle-neck shirt helped to show off his body, muscular but on the leaner side and his hair white as snow with some parts sticking out. But his most defining feature was the beauty mark under the corner of his mouth on his delicate face. And like Ikeda, he was often dispatched in other countries for his assignments, sometimes for months at a time. Currently, he was conversing with a male companion as they checked out each bedroom set.

"And his new boyfriend." Rilliane coolly said as she took another sip of her coffee. The group now realised that she was carrying a carton of coffees, extra-large and all. "How domestic of them, I always knew that Kain was a romantic somehow."

"Yeah, me and Ikeda will go talk with them." Antonio said. "And where do you keep getting the coffees."

"We are near the cafeteria." Rilliane answered. "If you look to your right." Which the group did, there was literally a high-school styled cafeteria to their side. "You could see our fellow reapers dining in with some Swedish meatballs. There is a coffee machine there are well."

"So that's why I keep smelling food and my stomach was begging for food." Antonio noted and he was soon heading over to Kain and Tobin.
"Ha, I will get some after then." Ikeda said, and he was walking his way to the duo with Antonio quickly following behind.

Rilliane let out another sigh. "I might as well come, to make sure that they will behave. Oh, and I think that bed on your left would look nice with your drapes." She pointed to the set on the right, it was organised and simple. The walls were dark-grey and white in all the right spaces, at least in Rilliane's personal opinion. The bed was fitted to have storage underneath and the headboard has a built-in shelving for any personal items. "I think you should keep the same set-up for the rest of your room, just have your bedroom more personalised."

"Honestly, as much as you act slightly childish at times, you are quite professional yourself James. Why not go for the room fitted to the type who is on the job all the time."

Then Rilliane walked away to look after Ikeda and Antonio. She smiled when she could hear James yelling his thanks to her with a cheer. That was the bedroom done.

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"Kain! My dude! It has been months!" Antonio came rushing in and pulled the white-haired male into a crushing bear-hug. Ikeda also dove into what is now a group-hug. Rilliane just stood slightly beside them, her arms were too full with coffee to be able to join in anyway.

"Oh, and Lawrence says hi." And Ikeda showed his phone screen, showing the message from Lawrence saying 'Tell Kain I said hi.'

"Text Lawrence back that I too said hi."

"Will do that." And Ikeda started to test back Lawrence. After he was done, he looked back to his white-haired friend while ignoring the glares from Tobin. "So, is there something we missed?"

"Nothing much." Kain shrugged, but then he jolted, he let out a tiresome groan as he gentle massaged the base of his spine.

"What are you buying?" Ikeda asked as he hovered over Kain's shoulders.

"I need a new bed." Kain simply answered. Tobin didn't like the look of how Ikeda and Antonio looked to each other, all smugly like that. It certainty didn't help that Rilliane along joined in as she smiled before she took another sip of her coffee.

'… How much coffee did she consumed today?' Tobin couldn't help but wonder.

"Did the bed creaked a lot?" Antonio arched his eyebrow.

"Ever time I turned." Kain bluntly answered, he pointed to the bed with the orange and white horizontal stripes. "What do you think of that one?" The four didn't notice or decided to ignore Tobin's reddened face.

Antonio reviewed the bed set and scrunched up his face. "Nah, too much orange." He shook his head and they proceeded to the next.

"And, it broke last night so I might as well buy a new one. The folding couch isn't that good for my back." Kain massaged his hips, at this point Tobin's face was as red as an erupting volcano as the conversation continued. "What about this one?"

"Patterns doesn't suit your walls." Rilliane shook her head and they continued to walk down.
"So, it must have been real intense." Ikeda rolled his tongue.

"Okay." Tobin finally interjects. "You guys are definitely doing this on purpose."

Kain hummed as he checked out another bed set with Antonio poorly whispered as he looked off to the side. Rilliane found her coffee cup more interesting as of yet and Ikeda checked his Rolex watch. "Well you could look at the time, we have to go back to help James out." Ikeda waved them off, his hands in his pockets as he coolly walked away.

"See you later." Rilliane curtly said, she mumbled that she needs to refill her cup as she followed after Ikeda.

'How much coffee do you need!?' Tobin internally screamed.

"It is good seeing you again." Antonio gave Kain one last hug before tailing out.

"..."

"..."

"You knew." Tobin smiled through gritted teeth.

Kain had the audacity to look shock. "I have no idea what you are talking about." And Tobin knew that Kain knew exactly what he was doing.

Rilliane was done with her cup of coffee, she didn't know how many she drank today. Antonio raced over to the cafeteria, passing her and Ikeda, screaming that he needed food and that he was going to save them a table.

Ikeda smirked as he prepared himself to catch up with his friend and overtake him to the finish line. Rilliane yelled from behind to not fall the way there, she didn't need to bring Ikeda for another hospital trip.

And she just stopped, she froze and stool still. She looked back and backtracked a bit. She stopped at the bed with the white and blue horizontal sheets and promptly dropped her empty cup, it cluttered and rolled around the floor. Ikeda noticed, and he turned to call out to the female, but he stopped himself. She blankly stared at a bed, it wasn't anything spectacular or memorable about it. It was like any ordinary bed.

However, he knew that look, that distance look that many of his colleagues carried. He picked up the empty coffee cup from the floor as he walked over to the almond-haired woman.

Rilliane remembered that bed, it was the sort where she used to tuck Allen in whenever she has the chance. The day's when Allen was yelling creative profanities, even at his young age at one of her closest friends, it didn't help that said-friend often carried the little boy around like a sack of potatoes. And yet, it made him feel more like a kid, albeit more of a teenager than an actual eight-year-old, it was close enough for the prodigious pair with more connections to the federal government than any ordinary citizen.

Her friend would go pick up her little brother from school. "Don't mention it, I love picking up the kid." He would say, thinking back to that moment would always bring her a smile.

"Rilliane... do you think our parents love us? Or love the idea of us?" Allen once asked as he was being tucked into bed after a bedtime story. She distinctly remembered reading the tales of Hansel
"Remembering something Rilliane?" Ikeda stood beside the reaper as he looked to the bed.

"It looked like the bed from my childhood." She responded.

"Bad memory?" Ikeda asked, but Rilliane shook her head.

She answered with a smile. "It is the same bed where I used to tuck my brother in. We had matching beds, Allen loved to copy my taste in furniture. So, it is one of the better memories." She didn't turn to face Ikeda. She could imagine that Allen was here, underneath his warm blankets as he intently listens as Rilliane read to him.

"Do you mind me asking sharing these memories?"

"Like I said… it is one of the better memories."

She softly smiled. "Allen was quite the little sailor. He made a deal with Avery that he won't swear until he gets into high-school. It was a poorly maintained deal whenever Lance was involved."

"Matching beds? That's cute." Ikeda said to himself.

"Yeah, David though the same as well." She weakly chuckled as she remembered her friend's words. "Seeing that we were supposed to be twins."

"…"

"…"

"What?"

"Did I never said that?" Rilliane blinked, she turned to Ikeda and was met with the look of surprise on his face.

"All of that." Ikeda waved his hand around Rilliane's face. "Was never mentioned. It wasn't mentioned any one of your articles."

"You read articles on me?" She arched an eyebrow at him.

"I'm from Intelligence, I couldn't help myself." He scoffed as he flicked his light layered hair. "My rule is that I don't bring it up, that's up you."

Rilliane understandably smiled. "Fair enough. I was IVF baby, during the process the egg was split into two." She paused so she could catch her breath. She hated how her parents made her feel the sense of incompletion. Although her anger was more simmered than Allen's who openly complains to his biological parents for robbing their opportunity.

"However, at the time they only wanted one baby, so I was inserted first. Years later, after unfreezing my brother, he was born."

"Allen always hated how our biological parents prevented us from being actual twins." Rilliane weakly chuckled. "He would always complained of how he hated his eye-colour. I was told that I had olive green eyes, while… I think it was between the range of olive and turquoise. I would always say that it close enough to make him feel better, even though I don't remember how they look."
"We were like two separate halves, I took the arts while he took the sciences." Her eyes glanced to the side, distantly and away from Ikeda, solemnly as she recounted. "Even our names are like mirrors, R for right, Allen's Len means Japanese for left. And no, my biological parents didn't come up with this, it was my grandmother."

"The right side of the brain responsible for creativity, while the left is responsible for logic." Ikeda said offhandedly.

"You know, you could had talked about this to Gretel." Ikeda asked as he turned to Rilliane once more. "I think she is more of an appropriate person to talk about this as she was a twin herself."

"True. Seeing that she did a bit of wordplay for her stage-name, so it could match up with her brother's name." Rilliane recounted. "And I was told by Arthur that she adopted some of her brother's more cheekier traits. But I find it much easier to talk about it with you."

"Awwww~ Rillie, it is great to see that you value our friendship." Ikeda voiced, he widely smiled at the hazel haired woman as he ruffled around her with hair.

She smirked as she pushed away from Ikeda's hand, but it slowly morphed into a thin frown "… He asked me a difficult question." She could remember it vividly, the weak grasped around her wrist, the small sad frown, his soft whisper as he asked. "If our parents love us, or the idea of us."

"Smart kid." Ikeda noted, his hands in his pockets.

"Truly he is." Rilliane agreed.

"What did you answer?"

"… Allen was far too smart. We both knew the answer that we were nothing more but mere trophies to be displayed. Even then, I wasn't the right trophy for them." Rilliane bitterly and harshly whispered, she almost hatefully spatted out her words. She could feel the tears welling up in her eyes, she vigorously rubbed them before she looked back to the bed.

"Instead, I answered that at least David, Avery and Lance love us."

Ikeda calmly smiled and he slightly leaned back, his hands in his pockets. "Yes, that would be the right."

However, although better, they were still bittersweet. She still couldn't remember his face.

"Okay! we are back, and I brought James a tea-set." Gretel said as she seated herself at the table in the IKEA cafeteria. She handed the paper bag carefully over to James. "We also got some of your favourite tea in their as well."

"We got you some French Earl Grey, Chai, Geisha, Irish Breakfast, a Green Rose blend and some Matcha powder." Arthur dutifully stated as he took a seat and saved another for his blonde friend.

"Thank-you Gretel." James shyly took the bag. The group were split into three tables; Table one was Johnny, James, Mark and An. Table two was Gretel, Arthur and Gakushu. Table three was Ikeda, Antonio and Rilliane. Everyone was doing their own thing.

Johnny, Mark, James and An practically ordered every single item on the menu and began a taste-testing session. An was trying the pecan and butterscotch pie, her happy expression was quickly and sneakily taken by Johnny and Ikeda. Mark was trying the salmon fillet with mash potatoes, cabbage
fennel with capers and roasted buckwheat, he said that he felt very fancy while eating it. Johnny was eating the veggie, chicken and regular meatballs while James was trying out all of the soft drinks he never tried before.

Antonio was finally dining in with his plate of Swedish meatballs, filled with mashed potatoes, cream sauce and lingonberry jam. He also has another plate of fish and chips on the side. Ikeda was taking some of the chips as he read through his magazine despite having his own serving of meatballs. Rilliane took the salad and another serving of black coffee.

Gretel and Arthur were conversing on what shifts they were having, and that Gretel was insisting on patching up Arthur's winter coat. Arthur of course, politely refused but Gretel kept insisting as they were going to Russia again very soon. Gakushu was eating all of the desserts IKEA served while playing on his phone.

While Rilliane was about took a piece of lettuce in vinegar dressing, she felt a slight bump to her knee. Rilliane paused, her fork was slightly above her simple salad and her chartreuse phosphorescent eyes met with Ikeda’s. He looked back, his eyes lifted from his IKEA magazine, the background noise behind them became more distant as they dived into each other's eyes.

Ikeda and Rilliane looked at each other for a good couple of seconds, enough for Gakushu to lift his head off from his current gacha game. No words just silence while everyone else was pre-occupied and seemly not looking at the confrontation.

Then Rilliane looked down to sipped on her another cup of coffee and Ikeda lowered his head as he took a bite of the Swedish meatballs with the sounds of pages turning.

And Gakushu returned back to his phone.
A day's preparations

Chapter Summary

Preparing for the Drama Festival.

A day's preparations

"I have a weapon. A hint. And a remarkable blood-lust." A person clad in white spoke, he calmly observed, content. There were branches scattered by his feet, tree-trunks broken and looked as if they were so easily snapped in half. He cupped his chin in thought at the scene in front of him.

"It's about time you wake up, Mister Monster."

"I am seriously concerned with your caffeine addiction Rilliane." An said, looking Rilliane with grimace. The female only shrugged as she drunk her fifth cup.

Some of the other patron watched with slight horror of the amount of coffee being consumed by one person, and it was hard to look back on their own caffeinated beverage. While others shrugged it off as it was the norm.

"I'm surprised that your heart hasn't exploded yet." Johnny said as he lazily rested his chin on top of his broom.

"Yeah? You always say that. And I have a meeting in fifteen minutes, I will be needing all the caffeine I can get." Rilliane said as she goes for her sixth cup. She adjusted the files under her arm as she bit into her donut. "Mf' wl probz mm- gn for mf'four days."

"Try not to speak with your mouth full."

The café employers feel nothing but sympathy for the hazel-haired reaper. Rilliane's grim and tired expression just screamed 'help me.' Already, she could feel a headache coming up from just thinking of what her meeting entails. She swallowed in her chocolate-icing donut after giving herself a helping of some streaming hot black coffee. At this point, she was used to the burning sensation as it goes through her throat and into her stomach.

"I will probably be gone for four days."

"The usual?" An asked.

"The usual, we have to go act as the neutral mediator between Angels and Demons because of our inherent nature and blah-blah-blah." Rilliane waved her hand, the tone of her voice emphasis the levels of frustration she was going through, not that An could blame her. Everyone could see why Rilliane needed the copious amount of coffee.

"Why don't you just get the coffee back at the Main Central's café?" Mark asked as he gives trays of coffee to the hazel haired female. "There is like six trays here, how are you going to carry it all the way over there?"
"Because you guys make good coffee and I will be needing something homely to keep me sane." Rilliane stated as she balanced the trays in her arms. "And I will find a way."

"I'm glad that you take my barista skills to high regards." An couldn't help but smile.

"You're welcome." Johnny added.

"And of course, you too John." Rilliane smiled, there was a bit of chocolate icing at the corner of her lips.

"I thought we agreed that I would be called Johnny?"

"And I already back-ordered some coffee for the next couple of days and the store will not let me order more. Also, the others were on alert during this time and wouldn't let me buy over a liter of coffee."

'So that's why…' Much of the staff realized.

"Oh! And if you see Noct by the end of the meeting, remember not to give him soup." An called out. After the last meeting, as all the ragged and drained reapers dragged themselves to the cafeteria, Noct who was beyond tired dropped his face into the bowl of soup.

"Thanks Lawrence." Rilliane murmered and off she went to another grueling and draining meeting between the Angels and Demons.

An quickly turned her head around at the sound of his name. "Lawrence!" She greeted the reaper.

"I heard what happened with Tae-sik, so I came back as soon as I could." Lawrence bluntly cut to the chase.

Much of the patrons quieted, they side-gazed to the two. Tae-sik and Wolfie was still a sore topic around the town, as for one they found it so unlike them to just drop everything and secede from their duties. Diva and Albert looked to the duo with interest. The only hint of emotion on her neutral and posed expression was her eyebrow arched high. Her brothers' eyes subtly averted from his newspaper.

"Well, it has been a rough few nights but I'm okay now." An said with a smile, although not reached to her ears. "I have been keeping myself busy, oh! And I can't wait for you to meet Caleb-"

"I know you." Lawrence interjects. "I know that you bottle these things up, until flood-gates open up. You cried in front of some stranger last time I heard."

"Not exactly a stranger." An shyly whispered, her eyes averting from Lawrence's piercing blue gaze. Lawrence couldn't help but let out a sigh as he dragged his hand down from his face.

"I will be in this town for a few months." He said as he took the nearest seat. "And besides, I am forced to take my mandatory break from work. I would like to meet this new junior of yours." He picked up the meal and asked for a cappuccino and a Bircher muesli.

"Coming right up!" An quickly chirper herself up as she wrote down the order and passed it over to Van.

"Welcome back again Karasuma." An greeted the tall male who waved back as the door chimed open.
"Hello there Miss An, how are you?"

"I'm good. And you don't have to be so formal with me, please, call me An." She said as she playfully punched at his shoulder. Although, Karasuma corrected himself, it was more akin to a tap than a punch.

His eyes lingered slightly longer on her and her café uniform; simple short sleeved collar white shirt, dark grey pen skirt and well-kept flat shoes. "I make no promises." He turned the smile, he praised himself for not being a stuttering mess.

"Awwww you~" There was a slight blush splashed across An's cheeks and Karasuma almost wavered.

'Why are you so cute!?' He also could feel the glares digging behind his back by the male with dirty blonde hair and slightly tanned skin.

"Trying out the breakfast menu?" An asked with a chirpy tone.

"What do you think is good?" Karasuma asked.

"Ummmmmm." An pondered to herself as she cocked her head a bit to the side. "Honestly I think everything on the menu is good, and I don't have to say this with a gun to my head by Van."

"I would never do that to my junior!" Van called out from the mini kitchen before heading back to prepare the orders..

"Can I have a big breakfast with a regular cappuccino please?" Karasuma asked as he set down his menu.

"One big breakfast coming up and a cappuccino with five sugars." An joyfully exclaimed, although Karasuma felt that he was already getting a healthy dose of energy from her smile alone. He almost slapped himself to stop staring at her.

Mark whispered over to Johnny, "Try not to get jealous over your new rival." He was swiftly elbowed in the gut by the dirty-blonde male.

The door chimed once more. "Aren't we busy?" Johnny muttered under his breath and he looked up to see with a male in a turtle-neck shirt with white-silvery hair walked in. Although what caught his eye was the beauty mark under the corner of his mouth. Behind him was another male figure, more muscular in build than the other with short raven black hair.

"Oh, hey Kain." He said with a bit of surprised.

"Hey Johnny." Kain replied back.

Karasuma looked up again and he had to quickly catch himself from having his mouth gaped wide open.

"Nice guy by the way- White hair, beauty mark under the corner of his mouth, muscular but on the leaner side, wears a lot of turtle-neck clothes." Ikeda's voice gleefully echoed in Karasuma's mind.

'No…' Karasuma couldn't help but linger his stare on the man as he walked past him. This was the man who passed on some person information about one of his students, Itona over to Ikeda. Although some where public knowledge, it still led a scare for the student.
"An." The man playfully whined, and he came in for a bear hug. He wrapped his arms around her waist, he gingerly rested his chin on her shoulder. "I'm hungry and I am need of your cakes."

"Kain!" An happily greeted the newcomer and she returned back the hug. "When did you came back? Is this an early Christmas or what?" She asked as they pulled back. "How's the boyfriend going?"

"Fine, fine. Not too long ago actually, and also Tobin is doing okay." Kain explained with a dramatic pout. "Oh the town I was in previously was boring, all I did was lounge around as some janitor for some school. But at least I found a better job here."

As much as this Kain fellow and Ikeda were friends and it would make reasonable sense that Kain would talk about what happened in the previous school. Karasuma won't hold his guard down around him.

Karasuma then caught some snickering from the male café employers and their whisperings.

"Oh, we are going to fuck with him tonight." Johnny jested as he struggled to hold in his glee. It reminded the teacher of the mischievous Karma.

"Let's see if Ikeda wants to join in." Mark cheekily asked as he texted on his phone, the sound effect played out to signify that it was sent.

"Of course, he is going to join us! how could he not?!" James retorted back.

"You have a fair point there." Johnny said with a nod.

"For once, you two are going to be civil." James smiled. "No more in-fighting for the time being."

"Hey, only for when Tobin is around and that is it!" Johnny quickly said. "We have a mutual goal and that's it!"

"Yeah yeah, and you will continue to fight for the love of your life." Mark dismissingly remarked.

"If you going to chit-chat all day, then you have time to go back to work. GO BACK TO WORK!" Van spoke out from the counter and the three hastily scurry off to their respective jobs.

"Maaa-maaaa I smell some of your famous carrot cake." Kain sniffed. "It has been months; may I have the entire batch please."

"All right then." And An peered over Kain's shoulder. "Oh! Hello there Tobin. I didn't see you towering over Kain here."

"And it is good to see you smile, it brightens up my day." Tobin added as he too hugged her.

'I agree.' Karasuma thought as he watched.

"What did I miss?" Tobin asked with a smile as he looked back and forth of the group.

"Lawrence's hyper-protective brotherly tendencies." Johnny answered before going back to sweep up the floor.

Karasuma couldn't help but stare at An, the way how she laughed and the way how she smiled reminded him too well of the same caretaker all those years ago. And he thought he was being subtle about it.
"Dude, keep staring her at like that and you will burn a hole through her ass." A voice rudely interrupted his thoughts. Karasuma almost choked on nothing, he snappily looked and found Mark looking at him with a smirk and his breakfast.

"I was not!" Karasuma harshly whispered back and Mark snorted.

"Pfff, as if~! I know that look! I was doing the same thing!"

"Why would you mention that!?" Karasuma seriously questioned the man's words and how he said them so shamelessly.

"By the way, don't worry about those three." Mark whispered to Karasuma. Karasuma looked to the man who wiggled his eyebrows at him as the man set down's his breakfast. "Tobin and Kain are gay together. And Lawrence is more of a brother. Although you should worry about Ikeda and Johnny, and especially Ikeda."

"What are you talking about?" Karasuma said like he didn't knew and Mark scoffed.

"Dude stop fishing. I saw those love-sick eyes… for that ass. Which is kinky as fuck."

"Mark, what are you doing?" An came by at the table and looked at Mark disapprovingly.

"He was just checking your butt." Mark answered forwardly and chatter in the café immediately stopped as every patron stopped what they were doing and looked to the group. Karasuma wanted to both simultaneously die where he sat and kill the man in front of him.

"…"

"…"

"…"

James slapped the back of Mark's head hard. "OW!" Mark exclaimed, with some tears around the corner in his eyes as he snappily turned his head to James. "What the fuck was that for?"

"For Mark being Mark." James answered with a disappointing sigh as he shook his head.

"Pissed off." Mark flipped his finger off to his friend. He also ignored the glares from Johnny who was tightly gripping on his broom, Mark was surprised that it hadn't snapped yet.

"You were checking out her butt, weren't you Mark." James answered and the other puffed up his chest.

"And? You have to admit, she has a cute one-" Before Mark could finish his sentence, he realized that Lawrence was dangerously hovering behind An and looking directly at him.

"Do you want your ass to be destroyed?" James harshly whispered before he walked away to take Grell's order.

"Oh shit." Mark just realized of the consequences of his words, now that he was staring at the face of Lawrence Waters. A person who was well-known in the Department to be protective over An, and if you thought Ikeda, Johnny and Tae-sik were protective, Lawrence was all three combined along with a surgical knife he always keeps in his breast pocket. Mark could see that the man was reaching for his pocket-!

"Oh~ by the way bear-boy, you have some competition." Mark playfully smirked at the Karasuma's
reaction as he patted his shoulder, the other's bright red face along with his failure to not stutter his denial.

"Now hold on a minute!" Karasuma exclaimed, his face flushing red and his ears even redder. "And what do you mean bear-boy!??"

Mark whistled a tune as he casually looked off to the sides. "A: Ikeda called you Kuma. And B: Welp, I will be getting some extra flour. Good thing that I didn't do it yesterday. Bye-bye." And he was out the door before Lawrence could say a single word or brandished out his surgical knife.

"He got out fast." Kain answered with a snicker as the bell chimed. There was some chuckles and laughter amongst the café patrons and all resumed of what they were doing previously. Johnny and Lawrence dangerously threw bloody daggers at the door as their eyes followed the fleeing Mark.

"I am so sorry about Mark." An profusely apologized to Karasuma as she straightened her apron. "His mouth has a mind of his own. As an apology, please accept a free slice of cake at the front."

"You don't have to do that." Karasuma tried to assure An, keyword 'tried.'

"Nonsense." She insisted and she smiled at him in a way his heart couldn't help but flutter a bit. "Doctor's order." Behind her, Lawrence blurted out a snicker.

"Uhhhhhhhhmmmm." Karasuma could only response and he mentally slapped himself. Could he not sound so bashful?!?

"I mean." Karasuma nervously looked away to the side. "What kind of cake do you have? I mean… we did passed the whole me being a sweet-tooth? Right?! Could he not act so bashful in front of An for one minute?!?

"Awwwwww, you are just so adorable. You are so like Gakushu." An cooed as she giggled. Johnny looked like he was about to scream bloody murder and Lawrence couldn't help but want to laugh at it all. It has been quite the morning.

"I am not cute." Karasuma instinctively answered.

"See, definitely like Gakushu." She teased. "I hate to rush you, but you have to go teach a class soon. I can take-away your breakfast."

Karasuma looked at his watch, and she was right. He needed to go to school to prepare some papers. "Shame, I wanted to be in your company a little longer." Karasuma blurted without realizing and he felt that dug himself deeper into a hole. He internally screamed, and he felt his ears burning once again under An's gaze.

She kindly smiled at him. "And I like your company too."

Karasuma told himself to not instantly melt into a puddle. "Remember to pick out your cake, or else I will be coming into Class-E with a boxful of cake." She teased and yet somehow Karasuma knew that she will do just that.

"Asano-kun wouldn't complain there." Karasuma stated as he rose up from his seat and An laughed at his joke.

Lawrence watched as Karasuma insisted that he picked up his plate and they walked off to the front counter. He hid a smile behind his hand while Karasuma was debating whether to go chocolate or carrot and An was itching to given him both.
"Looks like you are going to have another rival there Johnny-boy." Lawrence said as he sipped his coffee, his eyes lingered as Karasuma left the café with a chime of the bell and a boxful of leftovers and cake.

"Oh, fuck off." Johnny was so tempted to hit the man with his broom, he had gotten it all nicely dusty. "-Wait, don't you usually scare off any potential suitors of her."

"Not all, somehow I haven't scared you off yet despite my attempts." Lawrence smugly said as he sneered at the work.

"And I don't know, he seems like a nicer guy than you." He passively waved Johnny off as he leaned back into his chair. "I wouldn't mind him or Ikeda. I would approve."

"Oh, fuck off." And Johnny grumpily stomped to James.

"So early in the morning." James tiredly signed to himself. "… You noticed it?" He whispered over in English as he wiped the table and picked up the finished plates.

Johnny looked around the café, it was busier than usual in this little town. "Yeah." He eyed back at Kain who was busy chatting with An and Lawrence nodding along. Diva and Albert having breakfast together, Lawrence was drinking his third cup of black coffee while reading his newspaper. Then to the reapers unfamiliar to Kungigaoko Town, Grell Sutcliffe dining to some of carrot cake with Ronald Rox.

"Grell, you are a nice guy, you really are. You are good in your outings." Ronald was busying explain to the red-cladded reaper. "It's just when you get your hands on some or any sort of paperwork, everything goes bananas."

"There are more of us patrolling the area, like something big is going to happen soon." Johnny said. "And it is definitely not because of our serial killer friend."

"The Drama Festival?" Nagisa mumbled. He looked at the piece of paper given out by Kayano.

"And on top of that, we are the only ones who have to perform while everyone else is eating."

"We just can't catch a break." He signed, he stared at the papers before dropping his head down on his table with a thump and a depressive slump.

"And just like usual." A fellow student sighed, joining in with much of the classes' downtrodden sentiment. He couldn't help but slap the papers out of frustration with the schedule allocated. "We don't a have big enough budget. And we have to carry all our stuff down from her."

Gakushu was about to chirp in that all they needed to do was ask Gretel and she would be happy to help. With Gretel will always having Arthur following right behind her, and we could easily bring the stuff up to the mountains and to their classroom.

However, Gretel could so easily hijack the entire production, meaning that there was a very good chance that Gakushu would be first pickings for her fashion run-way. The strawberry blonde decided to save himself some of the troubles and stayed quiet as he listened in to his classmates. He also saved them from the creative mind of the fashionista.

"And we still have school entrance exams to worry about." Terasake grumbled.

"This handicap is just ridiculous."
Gakushu peered over Karma as the red-head played on his Nintendo 3DS, he was playing Animal Crossing New Leaf and currently after doing his daily routine, Karma was having some difficulties on whether he should buy up the striped tee or the no.8 shirt.

"That is class-E for you…” A fellow student couldn't help but sigh.

"I don't get it? What is the problem in that?” Gakushu just barely peered over Terasaka's shoulder, he had to tip his toes for added height. "From what I remember correctly from the Principle, the school believes in memorizing lines, stage directions and such in a short period of time. This is a part of the school's objectives."

As much as Gakushu disliked his father's teachings, some of them he does somewhat agreed with, mainly because it helped his line of work. The strawberry blonde picked up the schedule. "Something like this should be easy for a class who has been taught under the ways of the assassin."

He handed the schedule back to Nagisa and gave a small smile. "You are Class-E, you will think of something." Immediately Kayano rushed over the collapsed Nagisa, the blue-haired student muttered to himself that he could die happily from blood lost.

"Well but we also have to study, unlike you." Maehara interject in jest, he gave a cheeky smirk to the strawberry blonde.

"I do too study!" Gakushu retorted back. His ears turned a faint shade of pink. 'I just do on other work.'

"Dude, you literally finish your work in like under ten minutes and spend the rest of the time either going through cake recipes, writing something or whatever you do on your free time." Maehara exclaimed. "And we have to work hard just to get into Kungigaoko High-school."

"You forgot that I also got second place for my final exams." Gakushu grumbled as he crossed his arms and gave slight glance to Karma. The latter gave a wave.

"You see my point?" Maehara raised his eye-brow at the strawberry blonde. Much of the class-mates nodded and agreed. Gakushu turned even more red, and much of the class sneaked a photo. Nagisa had another reason to die as a happy man.

"But I am not looking to go into Kungigaoko High-School." Gakushu blurted out, he would had berated himself for that, but Ren already knew because of Gretel. And he would it was fair enough to let everyone else know about it. It wasn't like he was going to see them again once he graduates junior-high.

"What high-school are you thinking of getting into?" Nagisa curiously asked in a nasally tone. He lifted himself up, rolls of tissue plugged up his nose.

"Okay, I might not really be a full-fledged class-E student like you guys. And that I don't need to study now for Senior High." Gakushu nervously rambled. He stopped and calmed himself, he took a deep breath and looked back dead in the eyes of his classmates.

"Weston College." Gakushu answered. "I'm going to Weston College after graduation. Gretel always said that that the blue would match with my eyes."

"Oh, I see. That sounds fancy" Nagisa answered, he did agree that blue would match with Gakushu's amethyst purple eyes. There were mentions amongst the students that 'fancy' would fit with Gakushu preference of schools.
There was some quietness in the class as they went off to work on the play.

"…"

"…"

"…"

"What?!!" Korosensei exclaimed when all the information had finally fully processed through. Even with his small beady eyes, Gakushu could tell that the man was shell-shocked. "Wait-wait! The Weston College?"

"What does it mean?" Mimura asked.

"That's all the way in England! It is a traditional British public school, it has the same prestige as Eton College! 19 prime ministers went to Eton College. Tom Hiddleston and Bear Grylls went to Eton College!" Korosensei excitedly explained, his tentacles were all over the place.

"What?" Now the class followed and snappily looked back to Gakushu, the strawberry blonde looked as if he was a deer caught in the head-lights, realizing of what he had just done. He should had realized that their reaction wouldn't be like Ren's.

"The Bear Grylls went to Eton College!" Karma exasperatedly exclaimed, he almost dropped his 3DS.

"Dude, that is the thing that you should be surprised about?" Kanzaki said.

"But you have to admit, the guy who drank his own piss for TV went to Eton College." Karma added.

"Karma, I'm going to Weston College…" Gakushu said but the other was busy rambling about the adventures of Bear Grylls. Like how he cut opened a dead camel and went inside the caress to avoid a sandstorm.

"Do you think your father would let you?" Rio asked the million-dollar question. "Is he even letting you!?"

"Ikeda is letting me." Gakushu answered.

"How does that even work?" Rio asked again. Everyone eagerly looked to Gakushu for the answer.

"If you see the papers, I listed Ikeda as… my replacing guardian over the Chairman." Even now, those words left a slight sour after-taste in his mouth. "And Ikeda being Ikeda, he is also financing my tuition."

"Is that even legal?" Karma voiced. "Actually, I can't even be surprised if Ikeda is involved.:

After yesterday's incident and a refreshment of previous incidents, the mention of Ikeda brought a bitter taste to the class. How Gakushu could trust the man was beyond them, but even so, the strawberry blonde boy had lived with his father for 14 years. Perhaps Gakushu viewed Ikeda as a step up, considering how the man doted on the boy. Korosensei took this in consideration and intended to speak with his father soon.

"You are still mad about yesterday?" Gakushu asked everyone. He already knew of their answers when taking in their worried expressions.
"I mean, kind of?" Rio said, she nervously scratched the back of her neck.

"Kind of, the guy literally threw a knife to your face."

"It was only batter." Gakushu rationalized.

"Throwing a knife at your face was batter!?"

"And I threw knifes at him back… We have really good knife skills?"

Gakushu let out a dragging sigh. "As much as he loves to grate on my nerves." He couldn't believe of what he was going to say next. "Don't you dare say this back to Ikeda, but I whole-heartedly trust. After everything he has done, how could I not."

"Can we please go back on the Drama Festival?" Gakushu slightly looked down shyly. "You are not going to change my mind about Ikeda. I see him as my brother."

"Yeah…"

Gakushu took a seat to do his own work, mainly continuing his investigation on Allen Williams. He checked his phone to see that his messages to Ren was still left unanswered. There wasn't even a 'seen' by the hazel-haired boy, although he could had easily checked them at the front screen and just ignored them.

"Nagisa! Nagisa!" Karma called out. "You should be our lead." He held out a sign that says 'Abe Sada' as an offer.

"Quit making all these sketchy offers!" Nagisa refused.

Gakushu stopped himself from looking for more articles on his phone. His interest and curiosity of his class-mates wanted him to watch the excitement of Class-E; of Nagisa continued refusal of Karma more suggestions or the exciting rambles from Rio.

"What about you Kayano?" Kanzaki said. "You were quite popular with the kids at that pre-school."

"Yeah, like that'd work on middle school students. You're only good at making babies get emotional." Terasake teased Kayano, he ruffled up her hair as he laughed to his hearts content. The green-haired girl looked visibly annoyed.

Gakushu swore that Kayano looked like that Japanese child-actress, Haruna Mase, he only remembered the actress because he recently watched a movie that starred her. Although he had to commend for her acting talent, she wasn't exactly memorable and she disappeared from public eye. They only watched the movie because Ikeda wanted to try something new and wanted to try out from Japanese movies.

'It must be the eyes.' He pondered in thought.

Kayano swatted Terasake with a broom on the head. "Maybe I'll work with the props or something."

Terasakae attempted to soothe away the pain. "How're you going to divide up the roles?" He turned to Koreosensei.

"Our Director will be Mimura.” Who which gave a thumbs-up. "-And Hazama will write the script." Who gave a slight nod.

"But what about the lead role?" A student asked.
"I wanna play..." Koresensei plucked up his lips and softly tapped around his chin with his wiggly fingers. "The lead role."

"..."

"..."

"..."

The class looked to their teacher unimpressed. Gakushu really wanted to laugh, he quickly covered up his mouth and muffled his laughter as the class retaliated against Koresensei. The entire class started to fire their anti-Korosensei weapons at him.

"Like hell you are! Mister International Secret!"

"Adults don't get to butt in!"

"Nyu-ya?!" The teacher exclaimed as he effortlessly dodged the bullets. "But come on! I've always wanted to be the lead role in a play. And I want to perform onstage with you guys!"

'How cute.' Gakushu thought as he watched.

Hazama let out a sigh as she flicked out her writing-pad and pen. "Fine. I will write you in and make you as the lead role." Korosensei was very happy about this as he cheered.

'Slow down you guys.' Gakushu really wanted to laugh out loud. 'This is going too fast, at least give me a chance to breathe.'

"Also, Sugino you're going to be a couple with Kanzaki." Hazami pointed with her pen.

"Really! You're okay with that Kanazki?" Sugino was flustered as he blushed.

Kanazki politely smiled to the boy. "I'm not terribly talented, but I hope that is okay?"

"I mean- I'll, perfectly happy with it."

"You know, everyone can hear you."

"My goal is to make all my partners in crime happy." Hazami was busy writing onto her pad. "All that takes is an assassin proficient in rhetoric."

Gakushu thought that he should contribute to the Festival somewhat. "What roles are there left? Gakushu asked Hazama as she tapped the pen on her lips.

"What role do you want Gakushu-san?"

"Can I just be backstage? I could even make cupcakes for your lunches-"

"Wait, Gakushu Asano not wanting to be at stage rocking out his guitar skills." Karma wrapped his around the strawberry blonde's shoulder. "What has the world coming to!?" He covered his eyes, slightly leaning back his head as he let out a dramatic cry.

"Please stop." Gakushu said dead-panned.

"You do know that cupcakes don't count as a full lunch?" Kayano noted.
"I can even do pudding-"

"I nominated Gakushu to prepare food for us!" Kayano loudly exclaimed as she swiftly lifted up her arm along with Gakushu's.

'Ha, that reminds me of a song.' Nagisa remembered.

"Well she was quickly won over." Sugino said.

"I mean, it is better than Karma's cooking…" Maehare noted. "Even without tasting it, I really want to eat Gakushu's cupcakes. I could already taste the heavenly sweetness"

"Usually I would take offence." Karma spoke in jest. "But I would have to agree, I really want to eat his cakes."

"But they are just so cute, it is so hard when they look so photogenic!" Nagisa said. He showed off the group of the cupcake Gakushu made with blue-icing shaped into a rose. The rims of the petals were darker than the main icing.

"Oh! I remember those!" Maehare looked in awe at the photo.

"Why the back-stage?" Isogai asked the strawberry blonde. "You could do both."

Gakushu nervously chuckled. "The thing is, La Morton is coming to visit for the Drama Festival and you know how… excitable they can get." He looked to the side with a crooked twitchy smile.

Everyone distinctively remembered the figurative and literally tug-o-war between the girls and the guys of La Morton, with Gakushu Asano at the center of attention. The attempts to get the youngest to join them in their teams and during lunch. La Morton seemed to embody the meaning of excitement despite its name was derived from a French word meaning death.

"Imagine that but me on stage."

'It would be a rave party.' The class collectively thought.

'I want to see that.' Karma thought.

"And I really want to test out a new pudding recipe." Gakushu said and Kayano was dancing for joy, she was about to drag him into the home-economics classroom when Nagisa interjects.

"But it would be really nice if you could do that pudding song again." Nagisa accidently thought out aloud.

"… The Pudding song?"

"-!" Nagisa was quickly quieted by Gakushu as he rushed to cover his mouth. All eyes were even more focused on the strawberry blonde. "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Oh yeah." Rio worded. "I remember that café group mention it a while ago."

"Café group?" Okuda cocked her head in confusion.

"Remember the people who threatened us during the Candy Fest concert, I see them around at that nearby café."

"Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh."
"Great, know I want to hear that song now." Karma pouted as he crossed his arms over his chest. "Well? Show us Strawberry."

"Akabane…" Gakushu growled as he pulled himself away from the blue-haired male. "Don't you dare…"

"Too late, the seed was planted before I butted in." The red-head returned a playful smirk. Gakushu seriously wanted to hide under his table or under someone's shirt, preferably Karasuma because he was the more grounded from this building.

"Do it. Do it. Do it." The class started to chant. "Do it. Do it. Do it."

Gakushu finally relented, he might as well get this over and done with.

"…Fine." The class cheered on as Gakushu groaned and he took in a deep breath. "Okay, don't you dare laugh about this!?"

"Cross our heart and hope to die." Karma crisscross with his finger over his heart and gave a cheeky smile to Gakushu. The strawberry blonde's glares were looking more and more cute than terrifying as they continue to learn more about him.

"In my right hand is cake~." He stretched out his right arm out, and then he stretched out his left arm. "In my left hand is pudding!"

"Pudding, p-pudding~ Pudding! Pudding! Parade!" He was doing a little dance, going along with his song.

"Off towards the enchanting world of sweets, my dear~" The strawberry-blonde did a little bow. "Take a bite of that sweet goodness, I can feel it bouncing off my spoon."

"But I really want to have cake as well…" Gakushu crossed his arms as he held a face that said he was in thought.

"Ah~ I won't give up! Let's have both instead!" Gakushu sang as he waved his arms around and cutely placed them on his hip.

"Let move forward! Bounce to-" He gave a little hop around. "-And around then spin like the Earth."

"Off we go! To the world of sweets~" Gakushu then did a twirl around.

"P-Pudding parade!" He finished the off song by creating a heart with his hands over the left side of his chest. His face was more red than Karma's shade of hair as he forced himself to look dead in the eye of his audience.

"…"

"…"

"…"

It would be an understatement for Gakushu to consider what happen next was a bloodbath. The girls and boys of Class-E all had blood dripping down from their nose, all readied their phones and perfectly captured the moment. Some however dropped to the floor because of the blood lost, nevertheless with a blissed out smile on their faces.

"My eyes! My eyes!" Korosensei fell to the ground as he covered his eyes with his tentacle arms and
started to roll around. "Cuteness overloading, cuteness overloading!" The teacher continued to repeat his words.

"I can die a happy man." Nagisa joyfully announced, as he laid on the floor while dying from blood lost. He was dragged off to the sides by Kayano and Rio who had recovered from the strawberry’s cuteness wave.

"… We should totally use this as our ultimate weapon." Karma calmly stated as he shoved some tissues into his nose.

After the dust settled, everyone went back to preparing for the Drama Festive. Gakushu was left in his secluded corner as he did his own business. He checked his phone once again to find that none of messages sent to Ren have been answered yet. However, this time they did indicate that the hazel haired male did saw the messages.

Gakushu slipped his phone back into his pockets and continued to do his investigation.

"What's going on there Shu?" Karma dragged a chair behind. The chair was sat on backwards and he leaned over its support. "What's the investigation about?"

"It a side thing." Gakushu shrugged his shoulders and he looked back to watch the interactions of Class-E. Everyone was pumping themselves up with excitement for the play. "You guys are really excitable."

"Would you say that it is on the same level as La Morton?" Karma gave him a lazy smile.

Gakushu let out a chuckle. "Okay, maybe not at the same level as La Morton." He turned to Karma with a smile. "This is really different from Class-A."

"Bruh." Karma gave him an unimpressed look. "You guys were such a stick in the mud, like you were constantly having a stick rammed up your asses."

"Thank-you for the imagery." Gakushu was barely keeping down the blush as he turned away from Karma's gaze.

"I can't stop thinking of how different we are…" The strawberry blonde spoke aloud.

"Yeah…" Karma worded. "That and we are given assassination training."

"I say it is a understatement." Gakushu returned back with an unimpressed look

"Touché."

He couldn't help but think that this would had never happen back in Class-A, this level of openness. And as he thought about his old class, he couldn't help but think about Ren. "Ren isn't at school today… I didn't see him this morning," Gakushu whispered. His happy mood turned somber.

The mention of Ren caused Karma to guiltily remember that he looked through the hazel-haired male's suitcase and finding his depressants. His mind concluded for the worse but he quickly changed his tune.

"… You don't think it was because of that fight." Karma said. "His mom was screaming, it was probably a lecture on him skipping school. Which caused him to maybe skip school, again?"

"You mean his aunt." Gakushu corrected. "And unlikely."
"Back when I was in the main building and had a lot of time on my hands, I logged into the school data-space. Nobody battled an eye because I was the son of the Chairman." Gakushu coolly said as he went back to his seat. "Although the Chairman said that he rather had me do it more discretely, like it was just a game to him."

"Ren isn't living with parents, he is living his with aunt and uncle; 'Avery' and 'Jones', I have seen his uncle around but the aunt, almost very rarely I got to see her. And when she does come in for parent-teacher interviews, if at all, she is always disguised." Gakushu remembered the meeting quite well, Avery was with her secretary and was conversing with Gakuhou.

He came in at the wrong time to give him some reports on clubs, but he could tell that Avery was very happy when she finally met the strawberry blonde. She wore sunglasses, even indoors.

"Why would the school would allow that?" Karma questioned.

"They would, if the parent or guardian is high-profiled." Gakushu explained. "It is measure to reduce kidnapping and ransoms."

"Geez." The red-head couldn't help but mutter.

Gakushu showed off a photo of that annual American trip Ren went to with his guardians from his phone. The recent one where they went to Disneyland, Ren gave a strained smile to the camera. All the while his uncle widely smile as he wrapped his arm around Ren. Even then, the man was wearing out his designer suit.

"He looks like he is itching to punch the guy." Karma snickered at the photo. However, he was still a bit surprised that even in photo-form, the look in Ren's hazel brown eyes was still intense and intimidating.

It even sends a chill down Karma's spine. 'How does he do that?'

"Lance A. Jones." Gakushu pointed to the man.

"Who?" Karma asked.

Gakushu took out a magazine from his bag, he flipped over to page 5. "-Avery Jona-Zwiers seen at café in Kungigaoko town with fiancé Lance A. Jones." A photo of a woman with silvery white hair kept in a bob-cut was sitting with a man whose lavender-purple hair was slinked back. "He is the son of a high-ranked general, he also quickly went up into the ranks in American government."

"I have to admit, I was an idiot for not realizing it sooner." Gakushu berated himself as he handed over the magazine. "I knew he was at least in some governmental position, never expected to be like this though."

"I can definitely see the resemble." Karma said, he looked to the Disneyland's photo and the magazine's photo.

Even without the same slinked hair-style, it was no coincident that the two happened to have the same shard of lavender purple, the piercing sea-blue eyes, same general structure of cheekbones and jawline and his smug smile. 'Unless it was his long-lost twin, this is definitely the same person.'

"Why is this important?" He asked.

"Ren's guardian is engaged with Avery Jona-Zwiers. High-profiled to say the least, she was once friends with Rilliane Williams, older sister of Allen." Gakushu knew that he should be careful on his
words about his friend and main senior, however, all of what he was saying was on public record and he wasn't giving too much away. Still, he made a mental note to himself to be tread lightly.

"Did I just hear about something with Allen Williams?" Itona perked up as soon as the name of the prodigy was voiced.

"Again, can I ask who?" Karma asked once more.

"Allen Williams, top-tier prodigy in the field of sciences, younger brother of Rilliane Williams, all record of him practically disappeared, vanished without a trace at like seven years old and hasn't been seen since!" Itona quickly and excitedly explained in one go, Karma was surprised that Itona didn't even took a moment to breath. "

"We don't even know what he looks like before and after the disappearance!"

Gakushu nodded. "Apparently Allen Williams was more reserved than his sister. He preferred to do his thing in the shadows. At least that is what the conspiracies says."

The strawberry blonde added. "And it is also mentioned that all of his records and photo have disappeared. No school photos, no family photos, nothing was left, including his birth certificate."

Karma was impressed as he whistled.

"So, what's Avery's connection with Allen Williams?" Itano curiosity asked as he glanced over the investigation notes. 'Wow, this is really neat and organized. As expected of Gakushu.'

"Avery had a friendship with his sister, so I decided to do some light reading in hopes that I come across anything on Allen, then I remembered that she had a sighting around town and found a tabloid article."

"Woah, aren't you the detective." "So, you are not mad that Ren hid all of- well that?" Karma gestured at the work.

"Yeah, I'm not surprised that he didn't tell me." "… I hid so many secrets from him, until this year…and besides, I'm sure he was only doing what his guardians thought of what was best for him. It was better that than him getting kidnapped and ransomed."

"I see…" Karma hummed.

"Where do you think Allen could be?" The red-head asked the billion-dollar question, to which Gakushu sadly didn't have an answer for.

"… Who knows." Gakushu shrugged as he flipped through another page. "That is what I'm trying to figure out."

School ended with the final bell and Gakushu waited for Ikeda to pick him up at the school parking-lot. He went on ahead of his class, saying that he should start on preparing on the class's snacks for tomorrow.

When he reached down from Class-E and watched as other students converse with their friends, stayed behind for club activities or left school premises. There was no hazel-haired boy with brown eyes to greet him.

‘… I should had expected this.’ Gakushu knew and yet with no Ren in sight, he couldn't help but feel a little bit sad about that. The phone in his pocket suddenly becoming heavy with every unanswered
messages.

He told himself that it was just karma at play, he did the same to Ren, so he should wait until his friend replied back. He barely noticed that Ikeda drove by in his black sudan car to pick up the strawberry blonde.

"Beep!" Ikeda pressed on the wheel, it startled and caught Gakushu's attention as the sharp sound cuts through the air. The strawberry blonde almost jumped.

The front passenger window slickly slides down. "Hey Shu." Ikeda said.

"Hey Ikeda…" Gakushu murmured. The boy opened the door and seated himself at the front. He quietly strapped in the seat-belt and swiftly they were out of the school grounds.

"Rough day at Shu?" He offered the strawberry blonde a small clear plastic container, inside was a red-velvet cupcake with a rich vanilla icing.

"It's Gakushu. Shit- I forgot to correct you the first time around…” He sighed, but he went and accepted the food nevertheless. He snapped opened the container, he delicately swing the icing with his pinkie and licked it. "Not necessarily, we did some planning for the Drama Festival."

"Cool, cool." Ikeda responded, and they stopped behind a red light.

Gakushu rose his eyebrow to the light-haired male who snickered to himself before he had to quickly muffle it and attempted to maintain a neutral expression. Gakushu could tell that all the man wanted to do was rest over the steering wheel and laugh his heart out."What are you plotting now Ikeda?"

Ikeda let out a sigh of relief. "Finally, you know me so well there Shu." His smile was wide and Gakushu scoffed.

"It's Gakushu."

"Kain came into town, so he's helping out." Ikeda said with glee in his cheeky smile as he carefully maneuver the car into the parking lot.

"Kain's back?" The strawberry blonde was pleasantly surprised. The white-haired male that was Kain was a friend closer with Ikeda's main group and with An. "Is it because they resumed surveillance on Class-E?"

"Basically yeah, it is now confirmed that it will be a joint surveillance operation with the Intelligence and Scientific Division. It will resume tomorrow, Ivan is leading the team again and as soon Lucia is discharged from the Ward, she will be working with her fellow alcoholic."

"And let me guess, there is more?" Gakushu knew Ikeda far too well.

"Which is why I'm here, to make a deal." Ikeda declared, his eyes focused on the road. "I came with a peace offer."

"What's the catch?" Gakushu questionably rose a brow.

"Fucking around with Kain's boyfriend, I need to catch up on the shovel talk-"

"I'm in." Gakushu said without a hint of hesitation. "You had me with cake from the start."

"I knew I could trust you." Ikeda laughed
Gakushu should had said it, as he knew Ikeda too well, Ikeda knew Gakushu too well also. Ikeda caught on what Gakushu was feeling about and acting upon it to distract him.

He should had said, 'thank you for distracting me Ikeda…’

Instead, he smiled as they drove together. And Ikeda smiled back.
Hello, sorry for the late and for the shorter chapter. I kind of wanted to make the Ikeda focus a bit more on Ikeda but I focused more on him near the end of this chapter.

Still on the 'Days Arc', but we are nearing the arc.

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Bygone days

Ikeda hummed as he relaxed at the secretly Department-run café of Kungigaoko Town. The day passing by, people went about their business. Ikeda was relaxing with a nice hot cup of freshly brewed coffee and a paper in hand. The mild aroma of Blue Mountain coffee filled his nose. Gakushu who sat beside him was busy going through his phone.

"Okay, what did I missed?" Kain popped out from the café, performing a balancing act with some sandwiches and carrot cake on each arm for his afternoon snack. Dressed in a turtle-neck sweater that help show off his lean muscular body, matched with black jeans before finally fitted with a pair of shiny black boots.

He sat at Gakushu and Ikeda's table, joining with him was Mark and James on their break. Also, Antonio who just finished his shift at the Team-Mart store and wanted to spend time with his best friend, Ikeda. Kain could also spot Lawrence by a table next to them, he was busy reading a book, of what Kain didn't know.

"Anything interesting in this town?" The white-haired male asked as he dove into his meal.

"Nothing much. Things are only now heating up a bit." Gakushu said as he munched on his much needed 'cake of the day'; Today's slice is from a rainbow layered cake.

"At least by Ikeda's standard." Antonio snarky remarked as he poked Ikeda's cheek.

Ikeda answered with a disinterested sigh. "You got that right. Last time I was here, I was catching potential-would-be-kidnappers and intercepting letter-bombs, but now I couldn't even find a single mouse."

"All I have is some serial killer strangling girls in the back alley." He grumbled as he laid across the table and something caught in the corner of his eye. Ikeda took a second longer to look at whatever he was looking at that it became noticeable.

"Still, it is better than being a janitor for some school." Kain said. "At least now, things are becoming a bit more interesting."

Everyone knew that surveillance had resumed at the school and it further expanded into the Main Building. Cameras were placed during La Morton's visit. This time around, Lucia and Ivan installed the latest Department-issued video camera technology to avoid the last mishap in Class-E.

"Lucia should be back on the job tomorrow. I heard she just got of the Ward today." James explained. Poor Lucia was barely coping and she desperately needed something to distract her for the time being. It was good that her good friend Ivan was by her side, seeing that the two are assigned together once again for the major operation.

"And looking after Shu is great too." Ikeda added, his chartreus phosphorescent eyes still never
leaving Kain as he reached over for his cup of freshly brewed black coffee. He was never one to wear colour contacts.

"It's Gakushu." He said, not looking up from his phone.

Ikeda was staring for too long, still holding his coffee mug to his mouth. "... What are you looking at?" Kain decided to ask, getting slightly unnerved by Ikeda's gaze.

"Don't look. Your boyfriend is hiding in those bushes." Ikeda softly whispered as he sipped his coffee.

".... I'm looking." And Kain quickly glanced behind his back. There he was, a man with short black hair becoming one with the bushes like his camo-hoodie, he held out branches as if his arms were an extension of the bush. Kain dragged his hand over his face when he turned back to Ikeda. He took a moment to gather his thoughts and he looked back, eying at the man who froze when he realized that he had been caught.

"Really Tobin?" Kain silently mouthed to his partner. The man was very well toned and muscular, the bush could barely cover him let alone hide him. There was an awkward silence before Kain turned back to the group who was gleefully smiling at him.

'Ooh we are going to have fun tonight.' Ikeda gleefully thought as he malicious smirked to the group.

'We so are going to fuck with him. Totally.' Mark's smile reaches wide to his ears. He almost hunched over to rub his hands together diabolically.

'I will enjoy the show.' Lawrence hide his smirk behind his beverage, watching from a table next to them. It was a good thing that An was still pre-occupied inside the café as she worked through her shift and wouldn't get in the way of 'bullying poor Tobin.'

'I knew I should had prepared the popcorn.' Antonio berated himself and he gave himself a slap to the forehead. 'Damnit, I have the sudden craving for buttered popcorn!'

'Let the games, begin!' Ikeda internally cheered as he nudged Mark with his knee. Mark received the signal and initiated the fun.

"Oh, I think the guy is jealous, especially when you are up against the almighty fabulous Ikeda!" Mark said a bit too loudly, loud enough for the man in hiding to hear his words and for the surrounding patrons to take note. To add more insult to injury, Ikeda flicked his hair as he smugly smiled on, he even added a blow-kiss to Kain. The guys were having a blast watching as the intensity of the glares from the man grew.


Gakushu meanwhile minded his own business as he ate his own cake and going through emails on his phone. At the same time, he was turning up the volume for his song louder and louder in his earphones.

"I'm just sad that I didn't even get to do some shovel talk." Ikeda pouted as he rested his cheek against his hand. "By the time I was back, you guys were already together. Bummer. All we could do was be a cock-block to the guy."

Tobin continue to glare more murderously at the fair-haired male while the surround café patrons snickered. Although, it didn't not have the intended effect Tobin desired as his face was a blushing
tomato. And even then, it probably won't affect the group into submission, they might even give him a smirk or some laughter that was begging to be force out of their silvery mouths.

"You came back during the Tokyo incident." Kain coolly explained, lazily smiling as he rested his cheek on his arm.

"Yeah, but I had to go be a dashing hero for the smol Shu here." Ikeda said and Gakushu didn't even react to his statement or to his nickname, as the music playing into his ears was masking the group's conversation.

'That can't be good for your ears…' Ikeda thought. The music played from the strawberry blonde's headphones was very loud to the point where even he could make out the song. It was 'Somebody that I used to know' by Gotye.

"And I thought brother-Ikeda was protective enough, it is nothing compared to daddy-Ikeda."
Antonio snickered along. Tobin chocked on his own saliva while looking murderous at the group. Again, it only made them smile even more.

'Oh~ This is fun.' Mark snickered to himself. "Correction, 'you guys were already fucking like rabbits.'" He remarked before he was slammed at the back of the head by James' palm.

"Owwwww, seriously James?" Mark cried out with crocodile tears as he hissed to his glaring friend. "You saw them buy a new bed because Kain was fucked so hard that it broke."

"Maaaa~ Mark, you have your way with words." Kain playfully sang, slapping lightly on the ice-blue haired male's shoulder. He was heavily blushing; however, it didn't compare with Tobin's burning face. From either embarrassment or anger, or maybe both?

"And I remember not saying that to Ikeda and Antonio." The white hair male reminded, tugging at the collar of his turtle-neck shirt.

"You also forgot Rilliane." Ikeda cockily smiled. "And we may or may not twisted up some of the details. But it did made it more plausible."

"At least make it less vulgar." James huffed, placing his tray under his arm. "You do know that the Strawberry is here, and you know how he would react such a thing."

On cue, the group turned to Gakushu who was sitting next to Ikeda, still absorbed into his phone. He who would normally be flustered and a blushing mess, was instead composed and scrolling through the Route with a bored dead-pan expression and occasional bites of his cake. He glanced up to the staring eyes, it was clear to group through his expression alone that he was saying 'what do you want?'

Everyone looked away from Gakushu. "So, I'm guessing that you are the bottom of the relationship." Lawrence casually said as he leaned over to the table from his seat. He was earlier eavesdropping and decided to join in on the scheme.

"That obvious? And you shouldn't be eavesdropping" Kain joked.

"Dude, your username on the Scroll is literally twinkdragoon." Mark sassily remarked. He displayed his phone with Kain's Death Scroll profile which was filled with photos of dogs and photos of his boyfriend. Much of the group awed at the photos.

"Awwww~." James looked at the post where Tobin was being buried under a mountain of corgis.
"Bruh, you have to give us details about your sex life." Mark asked so shamelessly that he couldn't avoid James' slap.

Suddenly Tobin stood up from the bush, covered in leaves and he walked over their table. "You…" Tobin finally, in all his glory stood before the group, towering over them with menacing eyes. Hands clenching that was hidden in his hoodie pockets.

"Oh hi Tobin!" James chirpy said, acting oblivious of his involvement. He answered Tobin's menacing eyes with a polite smile.

Mark gave out a wave. "Welcome to the party." He said while his mouth was stuffed with Kain's sandwiches.

"Hola~." Antonio acknowledged the man. "It is so nice of you to join us, luckily we have just one more seat next to Kain."

"Sup dude!" Ikeda casually greeted him as if earlier he was doing nothing wrong. "I see you haven't changed, not even a haircut. At least Mark over here spiced things up." He gave out a mock pout, while gesturing to said example.

Mark proceeded to flick his icy-blue dyed hair like he was in a shampoo commercial. "Or should I say, cooled down?" James looked dumbly at him. "Get it? Because blue is a cold colour."

James finally got the joke. "Oohhhhhhhhhhh."

"The rest of you haven't changed your appearances. At all." Tobin gave a strained smile to the group. 'Don't punch him in the face, don't punch him in the face.'

Ikeda widely smiled and Lawrence lazily smiled at the man as he leaned over his chair. Mark, James and Anontio were innocently whistling and diverting away from Tobin eyes. Tobin's eyebrow twitched, they weren't doing this because they were scared as seeing how they were still struggling to keep their laughter down.

"Hey! I'm just saying, I heard Kain is digging Mark's short hair." Ikeda smirked as he wildly ruffled up the ice-blue mop. Mark yelled out to the man not to mess up his beautiful hair as he spent hours getting the style right. And the intensity in Tobin's glare grew as Kain slightly blushed pink. "Oh, how possessive of you?"

"Shut up Ikeda!"

The only one person Tobin couldn't stay mad at was Gakushu, who was busy munching on his cake and focused on memorizing his collection book for his nightly shift.

"I can see that your raging boner is working fine." Lawrence said with a smirk and Tobin choked a bit.

"Oh' it does alright." Kain answered. "I couldn't walk properly for days-." In a snap, Tobin covered his hand over his partner's mouth. He glared at Kain, his face was as bright red as a tomato out of embarrassment. It made the glare rendered unaffected as Kain looked back with a half-lid bored stare and he sneakily licked Tobin's hand.

And the snickers from the others added more embarrassment. They were clearly having too much fun with this and the torment they cause upon him.

"Why were you following me?" Kain asked in a flat tone when he removed Tobin's hand.
"Ah you see-?"

Kain rose a brow, everyone else with smiles etched on their faces waited to see what Tobin will come put. The man of the hour eventually did and awkwardly took a seat beside Kain. All eyes but amethyst purple laid on the man with hair black as a raven, cut very short and simple.

"I wanted some caffeinated soup?" Tobin dumbly answered. The group, minus Gakushu could only blankly stare at the man.

"...."

"... You mean coffee?" Ikeda managed to response.

"... Yes."

"Woah, what a response." Mark remarked.

"I know I shouldn't say this but be thankful that Rilliane is a meeting." James added and Tobin flinched. The rest of the group shudder at the thought of the coffee-addict. "She loves her coffee, like really loves it."

"Ha. I guess coffee is caffeinated soup." James bubbly stated. "I mean, what separates soup from tea and coffee, I even drink soup from my mug too? But that also would make the same argument for tea, it would just leaf broth in that logic. Would lamb soup just really be lamb tea? That reminds me, there was that show where the guy made ham water." Everyone started to ignore James' rambling on his philosophical tangent on the inner workings of soup.

"Wait, if you fold a pizza in half, would it be a wrap, a taco or a sandwich? Are hot dogs sandwiches!?” Everyone started to numb out James' existential crisis.

"I will ask you again. Why were you following me?" Kain asked again in a more firmer tone after he recovered from such a response.

"Tobin was shy to ask you out on a date, so he decided to stalk you instead." Gakushu finally spoke out as he popped out the earphones.

Kain let out a sigh, however lovingly so. "Really Tobin? Why didn't you just say so?"

"I thought you hate Ikeda." Tobin looked to the boy as if he was betrayed. Ikeda didn't bother hiding the proud look on his face as he smirked at Tobin.

"Ikeda brought me some cake today, twice." Gakushu said while eating his sixth slice of cake. "And this is way more fun. By the way, Gretel is sitting behind you. If I wasn't going to say it, she would and in a much more flashier Gretel-way. You're welcome by the way."

The group turned to see a smiling Gretel, hand resting on one cheek, her other had her fingers wriggling to cheekily wave at them. "Hello~."

"… Um, thanks?" Tobin wasn't so sure if he would be thankful or not.

"Why do I feel like we are like characters in a comical sitcom?" James asked. "Since a sitcom is a situation comedy?"

"You mean like Brooklyn nine-nine?" Ikeda added. Much of the group hummed in agreement and nodded.
"Is it a good show? I should really catch up on my shows." Mark voiced to the group.

"Really good show, love it." Ikeda said and he took a bite of a bagel. "Binge-watch it at my place after Shu graduates from junior-high?"

"Agreed." James, Mark, Lawrence, Antonio and Kain worded.

"You're in Shu?" Ikeda asked the boy who still haven't lifted his head up from his phone.

"Yes, and it's Gakushu." The strawberry blonde corrected and he was off to finish the next slice of cake, this time it was a classic New York cheesecake.

Tobin looked at them and stared in shock, "Unbelievable…"

"Well−." Ikeda devilishly sang. "If you really think about it when you compare the years." He ignored the half-hearted glare from Tobin as he clicked his tongue. "You only been with us for like a year. Shu here is technically your senior and he is like 14. AKA, he has more authority than you junior."

"It's Gakushu." Gakushu was getting tired of having to correct Ikeda.

"Because this is our way of getting to do shovel talk, we are doing some catch-up." Ikeda explained, pointing his finger back and forth between Tobin and him.

"You did that in IKEA." Tobin darkly muttered, and Ikeda still gave him a bright cheeky smile. Unaffected by the murderous aura emulating from the new guest.

Ikeda playfully waved off to him. "Oh no, we were doing banter at that time and we were helping James out." And then he gestured to the fair-haired man with his pale complexion.

"That is true." James confirmed with a nod, much to Tobin's dismay. He muttered to himself that they all were ganging up on him.

"Yeah, that was the point." Mark stated and Tobin was close to punching someone's face, preferable Ikeda or Mark's.

Kain checked his watch, it matched with the watch on his partner's wrist. "I got an hour to spare before I have to review some tapes."

"Great because I just found out the best story I have heard today, you need to hear the story of Pablo Eskobear." Ikeda exclaimed excitedly, he almost leaped from his seat.

"What?" Antonio responded as he stared at his friend.

"Did you know that there was a bear who overdosed on cocaine? It consumed enough cocaine to kill an elephant, like 80 pounds of cocaine."

"Wait wait, a bear and cocaine?!" Mark had to reaffirmed his ears.

"Exactly." Ikeda affirmed and then everyone burst into laughter.

"Cocaine−" And Antonio struggled to breath from all the laughing. "Is. One. Hell… Of a- drug!"

"There was probably about six minutes- where the bear was the most- dangerous predator on the planet." James was laughing between breathes. He gestures his fingers to his mouth as if he was baring out his fangs.
"Bet cocaine bear was LIT AS FUCK before his death." Mark was laughing to the point of tears and clutching onto his stomach for dear life.

"No wait! There's more." Ikeda's shoulder's were shaking, as much as the rest of the group who were struggling to not burst out laughing and rolling around in the public pathways. Tobin joined with them, despite of what just happened earlier.

"So there was a medical examiner who performed the procedure, noting-." Ikeda couldn't barely stop himself from laughing, he took a deep breath and exhaled as he prepared himself to read the autopsy report while a wide grin.

"Its' stomach was literally packed to the brim with cocaine. There isn't a mammal on the planet that could survive that. Cerebral hemorrhaging, respiratory failure, hyperthermia, renal failure, heart failure stroke. You name it, that bear had it. End quote."

The guys were having the time of their lives, Kain almost choked on his sandwich, Mark was pounding his fist down the table, as if it was supposed to calm down his own laughter. And Ikeda just wanted to roll on the ground in laughter until he was crying from the pain.

James hunched over, hands clutching his stomach as he laughed. Lawrence besides him snickered as he took in the medical details. Ikeda was truly having the time of his life. He was with his friends, all of them together, laughing and-

"Ikeda?" A new voice called out. Everyone immediately stopped laughing. They all turned to a man looking god-smacked as he only focused on Ikeda.

Ikeda looked to find an unkempt man who stared at him with fish-wide eyes. The powerful and unpleasant smell entered his nose and he caught himself from quickly covering up his nose. However, he was itching to act so rude because of the newcomer's odor. Gakushu next to him subtly covered up his nose, by resting his hand on his chin in part take it could partly cover up while he scrolls through his phone. Or at least he was scrolling through the Scroll, as he looked up to the man.

Mark was openly disgusted, he didn't bother to be subtle in his expression as he furrowed his brows and covered up his nose. James tried to be polite as he could, retaining his gentle smile. The rest looked as if they weren't bothered by the smell, still retaining a neutral expression as they looked to the uninvited guest.

Ikeda was very tempted to rudely ask, 'Do I know you?'. However before he said anything, the man went in first. "No, that can't be." The man pathetically whimpered. "You're dead, you're dead."

Mark and James slightly panicked at the sentence, they looked back and forth between Ikeda and the unknown man. James' hands on his lap was clenched tightly and shook. Lawrence watched from another table and was intrigued at the reaction. 'Does he know something? But this was James and he cares very much for his friends.' Lawrence thought. 'But I should ask him later on.'

"You know him Ikeda?" Antonio softly whispered to his friend.

In that split second, Ikeda decided his next course of action. If the man did know him, then he will have to rectify it as not to bring attention onto himself. As much as he would complain or jest, he still have a job to do in this town. 'As boring as it was, this guy will get in the way.

Ikeda slightly shook his head and he responded in French. "I don't know, I have never seen him before."

Antonio was taken aback by the response. His expression was carried onto the man, he too was
surprised and looked to Ikeda oddly, there was hesitation in his body language now. The Spaniard quickly realised of what his friend was doing, and he followed his lead. 'Oh Ikeda, serious about your dispatch now aren't you.'

"It sure doesn't look like it for him." Antonio spoke back in French.

"He probably mistake me for someone else. There are many Ikedas out there in the world." Ikeda confidently remarked.

Gakushu who was still quietly observing the situation couldn't help but think that Ikeda's accent was flawless and sexy. He quickly berated himself and grumpily took a bite of his cake. He then took in Mark's expression in particular, the man with dyed ice-blue hair looked as if he was slapped in the face and was growing increasingly worried as the interaction carried on. The strawberry blonde wondered why for Mark's reaction, there were many possibilities that ran in this boy's mind of the reasons why.

'Maybe it was because he was worried for Ikeda? Maybe Mark knows him? Maybe this guy would just get in Ikeda's way?'

"Do you think it is one of the guys I threatened with a spoon?" The man didn't look like he understood what he was saying, so Ikeda decided to maintain his foreigner persona. Although it was very fitting, as he didn't really that have many jobs and assignments in Japan and he usually comes by to visit Shu and An, that is if they were not in the Department.

"Probably, I wasn't there." Kain too replied back in French, taking another bite of his sandwich. There was some sauce caught under the corner of his lip, Tobin had a napkin in ready.

Ikeda hummed for a bit, behind was a lover's moment of Tobin wiping away at Kain's lips, Ikeda's green eyes never left the quivering man. They remained on him since his arrival at the table, like he had them bored into the man's very soul. The man called out his name, there was no mistake with his enhancing reaper hearing. However, there are many Ikeda's out there in the world and there is always the chance that there was another Ikeda who looked like him.

But there was one crucial piece, the man thought Ikeda was dead. When Antonio remembered this crucial word, he became as worried as Mark and James were although he was far better at hiding his emotions. He almost gasped but he forced himself to play along with Ikeda.

Ikeda let out a tiresome sign. He leaned closer to the man, the stench grew and he caught on the smell of alcohol and vomit. He looked at him, dead in the eye, as the other quivered under his gaze. Ikeda's expression remained to be neutral, not saying anything for a good couple of seconds, taking in the man's quivering body.

"Boo."

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!" And the man screamed his lungs out.

Everyone quickly turned to the screams. Ikeda was surprised by the sudden outburst, he barely did anything yet. He snapped away from the screaming, hands covering his ears and ears numbly rang. Everyone watched as the man ran off, scared for his life and screaming for forgiveness.

"Who was that? You sure you don't know him Ikeda?" Kain asked with intrigue as they watched the man ran for his life. Ikeda didn't even use his creative threats to scare the man, he didn't even glare, and the men was already running.

"Do you think he knew me?" Ikeda asked the table in a whisper. "Like, from before?"
"You mean from the before-before?" Tobin whispered back as he huddled closer over the table.

"Maybe, we can't discount the possibility of it." Antonio said as he intently watched the man.

"Maybe he was a bully?" Ikeda suggested, he watched as the man was then followed with two others, looking back at Ikeda like he was a delusion. James fidgeted a bit and Mark's looked like he was physically ill.

"You think?" Tobin mused as he rose his eyebrow.

"I mean, I hate bullies." Ikeda firmly stated as he crossed his arms. "It's like an instinct at this point. It's like my radar whenever someone else thinks of hooking up with An."

"Could be?" Mark leaned back into his chair and stirred around his cold soda drink with his straw. Ice clanking at the glass. He wanted to get away from the table now. James did, he got up and said that he needed to go the bathroom for a bit. He looked more paler than he normally was.

"You still haven't learned about why you came the way you did?" Kain asked. During the process of being reborn, some memories or all could be lost when becoming what can be considered a supernatural being. It wasn't always the perfect process, transferring a soul who committed the unforgivable act into the new vessel of a reaper.

Kain didn't missed the uncomfortable looks from Mark and Antonio. But seeing that the subject matter can be messed up, it would make sense. That or Ikeda's An radar, Mark does like to compliment An's legs.

Ikeda snorted. Indeed, he could learn more of his past, of his death and why he wanted to go out the way he did. He could retrieve for the files from the Identification and Intelligence Division, or in the Archives. Made readily available to open hands, especially after their soul was collected. Although depending on the individual, not all information was given out as it could be used to influence the outside world.

"What difference would it make?" Ikeda was content with his role as a Grim Reaper, as disturbing that fact can be sometimes. "Even if I knew the details, I would still be like this." He gestured himself with a dismissively handwave.

He was the boy with no memories, no recollection of his past and yet he retained concepts or leftover traits that was engrained in him. Strange wasn't it, even if you lose all your human memories, your human tendencies and teachings would stay with you. He knew that he couldn't stand bullies, he had a sense of humor, he had a strong sense of justice and a very lax demeanor at times.

When he first arrived at the Department, he was awoken to the sad smile of An who sat by his bedside surrounded by a blurring mess of blinding white. He remembered feeling her gentle hands as she placed his new glasses on his face. When his eyes became clear, she looked like an angel, looking down at him but her black attire says anything but. He looked in awe of his surroundings, of the white room and of his soon to be main senior. Like he was blissfully unaware of what just moments before happened to him.

He thought to himself that he never wanted her to have that expression ever again. 'I don't need to know why I did it. It had to be bad that I wanted to die by my own hand.'

Ikeda kept at least one human memory at An's recommendation, his first name. He didn't bother to learn about his full name, 'Ikeda' was more than enough for him. And besides, saying reaper no. 2780-2356-1928 would be a mouthful every-time.
"Strive forward." Ikeda added so matter of fact, his arms crossed and back leaned up against the chair. "We continued forward and continuously worked. You don't look back, for what is done is done." And he will gladly do so, with a smile and no regrets. For the past is the past, so don't fret. That was his philosophy, the perfect poster child of the Department's collective mentality.

Forward they said. For death is trivial, it must be viewed as such as that its members wouldn't be driven mad. No matter how horrifying, gruesome or heartbreaking some may or will be, it must be done in a collected and neutral manner. Ikeda was also a posterchild of that approach. He strives forward without looking back, he could easily go through deaths with a joke or a dose of laughter.

Or he will slip away into his job, donning on a mask. How easy for him to slip out in and slip out effortlessly. Unlike Gakushu, his mask is just another extension to true side to him, it is only there when he needs them to be. He was only serious when he needed to be.

"You can be scary sometimes, like chillingly scary." Tobin described as he took in Ikeda's words and a shiver went down his spine. The other smiled and gave him a shrug as he took another sip of his coffee. Mark and Antonio remained silent, as if sombre from Ikeda's words.

"Maaaa~ You really are the Department's poster child." Kain coolly commented, he took a sip of Tobin's green tea. "Well, now that I had a closer look. I have seen them around the place back in the previous town I was stationed, drug and gambling addicts with a dash of alcoholism."

"How lovely." Tobin scrunched up his nose. "I should had known why they were so familiar. I was with you."

"I could see why it would take a while, such unremarkable characters." Lawrence added from across the table, watching the scene at a distance with a bored look. The man was long gone by now.

"I think he just saw a ghost." Tobin said. Antonio wasn't too hungry anymore, his appetite lost as he played around with his food. The fork playing around the cold pasta, crushing the white chucks of fetta.

"Probably?" Ikeda passively responded.

"Yeah but isn't it best change up a bit? I think it is a bad idea for you to go out so undisguised. Like how Rilliane goes out in public in her pink wig and stuff?" Tobin helpfully suggested. Ikeda did think hard about this, maybe he should because it had only been ten years since his suicide and there are people that are bound to catch him on the street, that is if he wasn't wearing his Department clothing.

"Rilliane is different, she was quite the celebrity back in the day. But I will kindly take to heart your suggestion." Ikeda gave his best smile to Tobin, while the other answered back with the stink-eye.

"You're welcome, I guess?" Tobin dubiously looked at Ikeda.

"Looks like I will be whipping out my really casual-casual clothes." Ikeda widely smiled as he thought back to his other get-up; the camouflage hoodie, the black tank-top, white jeans and the silver neck-chain. 'Maybe I should style up my hair, like how I did it back when I was spying Project A-M1010.'

Gakushu thought that the man saw a ghost, he worryingly eyed to Ikeda. However, Ikeda only smiled and shrugged his shoulders as he took his seat. He peered back from his shoulders. There was some sort of dark satisfaction of comparing himself with the poor struggling former bully or bullies, that is if they were. And he the rich reaper who has money to spend on a whim. Of what he could
possibility want.

Despite of Ikeda's position in the Department and its true nature, he moved forward and completed what he was set out to do, not looking back in the past. He had enough control over his emotions so that it won't cloud his judgement. However, deep in his heart, he couldn't help but ease some part of that control.

And that smile etched into a sneering smirk.

"Man, don't you just love karma."

End Notes

Check out: http://sommerannie.tumblr.com/ got my art. I upload art for 'Until the day I'm Forgiven' over there.

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