Snow Leopard Not Lion

by RinRin

Summary

After Kaguya, Tobirama never expected to waken again, let alone as a child with strange non-chakra flames. The mafia didn't expect to find a ninja in the place of a civilian when they came to call.

Or: When Tsuna's Flames were sealed, cutting off part of his soul, something else (someone else) woke up to fill the empty space.
Notes

Special thanks to Wandering_Shadows for beta-ing this for me.

I will try to keep posting on a set schedule of once a week, but that might change when I get a job.

Please leave a review!

See the end of the work for more notes.
The Snow Leopard Awakens

Chapter 1: The Snow Leopard Awakens

This is how it starts, two men, one a complete stranger, the other all but, look upon a child and decide to cripple him. They might not put it quite like that, but what else do you call stealing away a piece of a child that they rely on so heavily? To take what you would never take from an adult? No, Timoteo Vongola and Iemitsu Sawada went to cripple a child. What they did was waken something deep within him.

Between death and rebirth there is paradoxically no time at all and all of the time in the world. When the resurrections that can happen between are added, so much can happen in no time. These were the thoughts of the brunet who opened his eyes days after the betrayal done by Timoteo Vongola and Iemitsu Sawada. When he had still trusted those men he had been Tsunayoshi Sawada, who would one day become the Decimo of the Vongola- not that many even knew of that fact of the future. When he opened his eyes, he was someone else. A life that, it could be said, had been cut short. The man that awoke in the boy was once a great leader. One that had created infrastructure in his home, who was a genius and an inventor. A man who was a great fighter, second in his life only to his brother and his brother’s best friend. This man had no time to wallow in what had happened. Tobirama Senju had always known his own body, how it should act and what it could do. He could feel the oppressive push at his core that was the seal over the new energy. The energy wasn’t chakra, but was similar enough that Tobirama could use his still active chakra to attack the seal. It was foreign to his body, and had evidently knocked him out for far too long. The former Hokage gathered his chakra (less than what it could be, but still more that the average person) and pushed. His body rushed with heat, and as he opened his eyes, he could see flames dancing on his hands and flickering on the upper edges of his vision. Well, he thought, this is certainly different.

Due to the short coma that had overcome Tsuna before Tobirama awoke, his mother (his mother, oh gods, his mother was still alive, she wasn’t forced to fight, she could be whatever she wanted) kept him home for a few more days, after a trip to the doctors’ (apparently his father hadn’t thought a coma warranted a doctor, what the fuck was wrong with him) just to make sure he was actually fine. It was because of this that it took a few days for Tobirama to realize that there was a slight problem with his new life. That is, upon returning to school, Tobirama realized that there was an Uchiha in his class. And not just any Uchiha, the one that was the cause of all of that complete bullshit that Madara put them all through. Izuna Uchiha was here, and even worse, he was popular and well liked. Tobirama did not want to deal with this. And then he glanced out the window and had to do a double take. Was that? No. Please merciful gods, no. He couldn’t deal with this. He could not deal with Madara Uchiha being here. And, he observed, taking on some perverted peace-keeping duties. Tobirama groaned.

“Sawada-san?” a girl, no, he knew her, admired her even (he knew this person), Kyoko Sasagawa, the school idol for all that they were in Elementary School, asked with a concerned frown. “Are you alright?”

He barely could muster up a smile for her, but hey, he was an elite ninja no matter what the Uchiha had spread after his death, he could show emotion.

“Ah, yes. I’m just not looking forward to having to catch up from my days absent.” Her frown turned into a relieved smile.
“Hana-chan and I could help you!” she offered quickly. The second girl startled at her name.

“What? Don’t just volunteer me to help the monkeys without asking first!” she sputtered.

“You can come over after school today!” Kyoko continued on as if Hana hadn’t said a thing. Tobirama stopped himself from suppressing an amused smile before nodding as the teacher walked in. Well, at least he had a distraction from the two reincarnated Uchiha brothers.

He found that he liked to spend time with the two girls. Even after he caught up on the work he missed, they continued to hang out. Kyoko was more than happy to join him on his new daily runs, saying something about how this meant that she could spend more time with her brother. Hana was not as enthusiastic. So Tobirama broke into her room each morning to wake her and demand she join them. Her parents laughed at her monkey like shrieks. Tobirama found it enjoyable to have friends to talk with this time around as he advanced his studies. While he could have advanced them enough to skip some grades, he held back so that he could remain with his friends. And if being advanced in his studies freed him to train his body, well. No one said he shouldn’t.

The combination of rebuilding his strength and the monotony of life in a small town in a world without ninja had calmed him. He no longer was jumping at shadows, waiting for the shoe to drop. As Tobirama calmed down from his initial panic over what those two men had done, over what had happened to wake him from within his reincarnation, he started to act as a child once more. A very precocious child, but still a child. He found that he enjoyed video games and manga. Some of his favorite times were going to the arcade with Hana and beating the high scores of the older arcade goers, and checking out the manga shops for the latest in their favorite series with Kyoko-the two would read them and then swap stories. This lead to both reading manga they otherwise would not have picked up. Tobirama had a weakness for fantasy shojo manga, while Kyoko adored sports manga which Tobirama hadn’t even bothered to look at- he didn’t care for sports in real life, why would he want to read about them? But Kyoko liked them and he liked sharing them with her, to the point where he found that he began to enjoy them as well.

With both of the girls he liked to go to a quiet little tea shop and just sit and talk. They had snacks and drank the tea and simply talked. It was on his way home from one such get together that he found the final piece that let him completely settle back into his new life (with some improvements). He heard the sounds of civilians trying to be quiet from down an alleyway and peered into it. He saw a group of older kids crowding around a box, one of them holding a stick. He narrowed his eyes.

“Hello Hibari-san.” He pitched his voice to carry clearly down the alley. The group scattered without a single glance. Tobirama didn’t bother to hold back his contemptuous snort as he calmly walked to the box. He peered into it to see what had so captivated those idiots and saw two bright blue eyes staring back at him from a tawny face with dark patches at the ears, nose, paws, and tail. She was a fluffy little thing, and a master thief, for she stole his heart with one look. He gently reached into the box and pulled her out, noting the ‘FREE!’ written on the side. He cradled her to his chest, gently petting her.

“Hello sweetheart, do you want to come home with me?” She started to purr in response. Tsuna melted.
Each chapter will include a snippet about the cat Tsuna found. Here's the first one.

Climbing the Stairs

She was so happy to be brought to the Warm Place by the nice human that had scared off the hurtscarywon'tleavepleasestop. His gentle hands had carried her far from the alley way. When they entered the Warm Place, her human looked down at her with a smile.

“I need to talk with Mama, you stay here, okay?” He gave her head a gentle scratch and then set her down. She panically cut off her purr and gave a pitiful meow at him. Please no, don't leave me! He ran his warm hand down her back before moving from the room. She watched as he went up different levels of ground with each step. She had to follow him! She had to make sure he wasn't abandoning her! With determination she moved after him. With some apprehension she looked at what he had gone up. She tried to place her front paws on the next level, but couldn't reach. She gave a little kitten huff, and stared at it. Maybe she could just? She wiggled her butt a bit and squished her body down. She pushed off with her hind legs and reached. Her front paws hooked on the next level and she scrambled with her hind legs to push off of the side and push up. Almost, almost, and she did it! Now she just had to keep doing it. She stared up with determination. There were a few insistence where she didn't quite make it up the next level and tumbled back, but she made it up to where her human went! Now to find him.

“Oh, Tsu-kun, she's precious. Look, she followed you up the stairs!” She saw an even taller human that kind of looked like her human standing next to him. She gave a happy meow and started to run to him.

“I don't think she would let you give her up. So, welcome home kitty.” The taller human smiled down at her as her human picked her up. She gave a purr. “What will you call her Tsu-kun?”

“Considering how smart she is, and given that she'll one day be even prettier than she already is… Michiko.”

Her Tsu-kun smiled down at Michiko.
A Genius Gets A Tutor

Chapter Notes

So, I now do have a job guys! Hurray! It will be a couple of weeks before I know what my schedule will look like, so for now it'll still be one a week. A huge thank you to everyone who's reviewed, bookmarked, or left kudos. You guys have made me so happy, seeing how many people enjoy this.

Chapter Two: A Genius gets a Tutor

A person the size of a very young child stepped out of a bus in Namimori. He didn’t even bother to look around to determine where to go before heading straight to his destination, pulling his luggage behind him. He paused outside of one of the identical houses and stepped on top of his luggage to tuck a flyer into the mailbox. He slipped out of sight as a dark haired boy jogged by towards the school. He would wait out of sight for the call so he could ‘arrive’. Thus he missed what came after.

Tsuna slowly angled the mirror to follow the small person as they ducked into cover. He had been woken by the stranger coming into town. At first he had ignored this strangely strong stranger, who’s near-chakra sense was the strongest he had ever sensed save Kawahira-san who ran an antiques shop in town and had the feel of old shinobi who had seen it all and were never surprised. But then the stranger started to move closer and closer to his house. Tsuna may have relaxed a great deal from when he first awoke with his memories of being Tobirama Senju, but that did not mean that he would be negligent with the safety of his mother, his friends, or himself. He did not turn on any lights, quietly slipping out of bed and over to the window, snagging a hand mirror off his nightstand. As he stayed out of sight from the window, he observed the stranger via the mirror and kept track of him with his sensor ability before and after the stranger came into view. Tsuna scoffed as Yamamoto jogged passed his house.

Tsuna slipped silently through the house and out the door before his mother finished getting dressed so as to get the newspaper and whatever the stranger had put in the mailbox. Michiko, the kitten that he had found all those years ago, padding out after him. He quickly checked over the flyer before returning inside to show it to his mother, unconcerned with what was on said flyer.

“Tsu-kun? Did you get the newspaper?” she asked as he walked to the cabinet holding Michiko’s food. He placed both the flyer and the newspaper on the counter as he passed it.

“Un. There was something else with it as well.” He bent down and fed his darling cat, giving her a loving pet as he stood back up. He walked over to the table to share a quick breakfast with Nana. “I’m off to meet with the girls. Ittekimasu.”

“Itterasshai.” Nana absentmindedly answered. Tsuna left the house to meet up with Kyoko and wake Hana, who still didn’t get up early like the other two tended to do. After their morning jog, Tsuna returned to his house to shower and change into his school uniform. As he walked in, he noticed luggage just inside the door.

“Tadaima.” Mama, why is there luggage here?” he called out to his mother, growing worried.
“Okaeri, Tsu-kun!” Nana slipped out of the kitchen, “I looked at that flyer you brought in; it said that they would train you to be a leader of tomorrow! I know how bored you get at school, but that you want to stay with Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan, so I thought a tutor could work! They could teach you more advanced things than what you’re learning at school, but you’d still be with Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan! Isn’t that wonderful?” Tsuna looked at Nana speechless.

“But, I don’t need a tutor. I’m top of my class—” He got out before having to twist to the side, avoiding the sudden kick from the stranger from this morning. Tsuna scowled at the stranger.

“Who do you think you are, attacking someone in their own home?” He demanded, ignoring the small voice in the back of his head that reminded him that he had done such things on a much deadlier scale when he had been a ninja.

“Ciao-su. I am the home tutor Reborn. A gentleman is always polite and kind to the women in his life.” The stranger told him, looking at Tsuna with dark, calculating eyes. Tsuna’s eye twitched.

“I don’t have time for this. Mama, can we talk about this later? I need to get ready for school.” With that Tsuna rushed upstairs and to the bathroom, only stopping by his room to snag his school uniform on his way. After a quick rinse to remove the sweat on his body, Tsuna was back out the door and off towards Namimori Middle School.

“What a strange person,” he murmured.

“That’s because I’m a hitman,” came the reply. Tsuna stopped and sent a cutting glare at the miniature hitman.

“It is not polite to follow someone,” Tsuna snapped, before a growl alerted him to exactly where he had stopped. On top of the tail of the neighbor’s tiny, yappy dog. With nary a thought, he sent a jolt of Killing Intent towards the annoying mutt causing it to quiet down with a whimper. Reborn raised an eyebrow at him and Tsuna mentally cursed. He doubted the hitman was going to ignore that. Luckily for Tsuna, Kyoko ran up to him.

“Ah, Tsuna-kun! Who’s this?” She knelt down to be at the same level as Reborn, just as a girl from one of the other schools came close as well. “I didn’t think you had any young relatives? Why are you in a suit?” she directed the last question to Reborn.

“Because I’m in the mafia,” Reborn replied. Tsuna shot a look at the pseudo-child.

“He’s not a relative of mine Kyoko-chan. Apparently he’s some sort of elite tutor who only looks like a child,” Kyoko looked at him confused at that, but only shrugged in acceptance. He waved her off when she stood and made a motion towards the school. “Go on ahead, I’ll catch up.” She and the other girl went off with polite goodbyes.

“Who was that?” Reborn asked. Tsuna raised an eyebrow, but decided to see where the hitman was going with this.

“The school idol, Kyoko Sasagawa.” Tsuna’s lips quirked at his friend’s name.

“Oh, so you’ve got the hots for her, right?” Reborn smirked.

“What.” It came out more as a statement than as a question. “That’s -” he could only gape at Reborn.

“Ah, so you won’t confess to her thinking that it’s pointless.” Reborn nodded to himself and reached up to the chameleon that was perched on his hat. Tsuna could only watch in shock as it
transformed into a gun.

Here’s the thing, ninja in Tobirama’s time, and even after, trained themselves so that even when they were in complete shock certain instincts would take over. No ninja wanted to die because they were stupid enough to be unable to move due to shock. Even half-dead Tobirama’s body would be able to manage to dodge a single projectile going barely a fraction of his slowest shunshin. So even as he was reeling from the very idea that he could have a crush on his dear friend (and a girl in general), he easily dodged the bullet that Reborn shot at him from his transformed companion. Tsuna’s glare from earlier returned at full force towards Reborn for this. Reborn, on the other hand, stared blankly at where Tsuna had been.

“What is wrong with you,” Tsuna hissed. If there was one thing that he had thought he could rely on in this new world, it had been the idea that no one would be trying to openly kill him for reasons that were not due to his own actions at least until he was an adult. And Reborn was proving that assumption to be false.

Reborn’s eyes snapped to Tsuna’s new position, with his gun-lizard following seconds after. Reborn shot again. Again Tsuna dodged. Over and over this happened until they were in front of the school and it seemed that Reborn had run out of bullets. Tsuna barely noticed that his final landing had thrown another student through the open gate to be caught by Yamamoto. As it was, Tsuna barely managed to catch Kyoko, who he had knocked off balance, before she fell to the ground.

“Herbivores,” came a growled command. Tsuna shot a glare at the prefect, which was ignored by everyone around him as par for the course at this point. Tsuna helped Kyoko regain her balance and the two of them straightened their uniforms before walking through the gates.

The only thing that stopped Reborn from following Tsuna and Kyoko into the school was the challenging stare of one Kyoya Hibari, and only because Reborn was trying to figure out how Tsuna could have dodged all of those shots.

Hana joined them when they entered the building, tossing her long hair over one shoulder.

“How in the world you can act so monkey-like after those hell-spawned morning runs is what I don’t understand,” she grumbled. “Anyway, are we still on for tea and cake today?” Kyoko gave her confirmation to the previously discussed plans before the girls glanced at Tsuna.

“You’ll have to go without me today. Mama wants to hire a tutor to keep me from being bored and I told her we should talk about it after school.” Both the girls pouted at him for that, but sighed and nodded.

When they entered the classroom, Tsuna couldn’t help but glare at Yamamoto. Hana sighed next to him.

“Honestly Tsuna-kun, I don’t understand what it is you have against Yamamoto-kun. He’s been perfectly polite to you the entire time that I’ve known both of you,” she complained as they congregated at Kyoko’s desk. He just gave a “tch” and looked away. One of the other girls wandered over to them as one of the boys grabbed Tsuna’s arm and pulled him away to whisper something to him.

“Sasagawa-chan, I heard from a friend that Mochida-senpai is going to challenge Sawada-kun over his treatment of you this morning at lunch. What did Sawada-kun do?” the girl asked.
“What? Tsuna-kun only caught me when I lost my balance? Why would Mochida-senpai think that would be cause for a fight?” Kyoko stared in disbelief at the girl, who only shrugged in response.

“Well, maybe because the two of you are…” the other girl gave an approving hum at the end.

“It’s not like that,” Kyoko protested, “we’re just on the same committee.”

Tsuna gave a sigh and nodded in thanks to the classmate that warned him about Mochida’s plans. Honestly he was surprised that it had taken this long for Mochida to finally do something, given that Tsuna had been sabotaging the older boy’s efforts to try to ask out Kyoko. Because the only thing Kyoko felt for him was respect for an elder, Tsuna had no problem with keeping the arrogant teen from dating his friend. That being said, Tsuna had no plans to actually fight Mochida. He thought that there was no real reason to fight the other given that the actual person Mochida was using as an excuse had not expressed displeasure at his actions. It was because of this thought process that the lunch break found him in the bathroom as opposed to going straight to the gym to fight Mochida. It wasn’t like his not going was going to affect anything.

“I didn’t take you for a coward.” Of course the miniature hitman couldn’t leave him alone.

“It’s not that. I simply don’t see a reason to go through with this farce.” Tsuna thought about leaning out of the window to see what Reborn had tied the other end of the rope to, but decided that he didn’t want to get that close to the trigger-happy pseudo infant.

“All I’m hearing is an excuse. You must know that you’ll lose if you go up against your senpai,” Reborn continued blithely, “I wonder what Kyoko-chan will think of this.”

Tsuna stilled at that. It wasn’t so much that he wanted Kyoko to think well of him (she already did), or that he thought this would somehow make her like him (he didn’t care for her in that way), but rather what message it sent to that sleezy rat, Mochida. Mochida who already seemed to think of Kyoko as some sort of prize to be won. A prize to be won... No, he wouldn’t. Would he? Tsuna hurried out to the gym, Reborn’s smirk dogging his steps.

When Tsuna walked in, the obnoxious laughter of Mochida cut off.

“So here you are perverted stalker! The heavens may forgive scum like you but I will not! I shall punish you!” Tsuna raised both eyebrows, so this was the excuse the rat was going with.

“That’s not what happened,” Tsuna bluntly stated.

“I will take no excuses!” Tsuna held back a sigh. “As you are a novice, you only need to get one hit on me in ten minutes. If you can’t I win,” Mochida twisted to point his shinai at Kyoko, “The prize is Kyoko Sasagawa!”

Hana had to grab Kyoko as the other girl tried to lunge at Mochida. Tsuna let the coldness Tobirama had been known for in battle settle over him.

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“Let’s go!” Mochida said. Tobirama had noticed the smug look Mochida had sent to the proctor-no doubt that was a member of the Kendo club or otherwise a friend of Mochida’s and would not call any hits that Tobirama made. He also noticed that Mochida was getting ready to attack him without giving Tobirama a shinai.
Tsuna!” Yamamoto called out and Tobirama spared a moment to glance his way. The baseball ace tossed a shinai to him. Tobirama held back his surprise at the aid coming from someone that he regularly was rude to and snatched the shinai out of the air and swung it up to face the kendo captain.

Mochida had a look of shock, but quickly recovered. To him, it didn’t matter that his opponent had any talent with a shinai; he was a champion kendo captain, and he would beat a novice.

Tobirama, on the other hand, could already see some openings in Mochida’s stance. The older boy may have been skilled for his age bracket at competitions, but Tobirama had used skills not unlike kendo to protect his very life for many years. To him this was nothing. Still, he waited for Mochida to take the first move. Let this be a lesson to all to not underestimate Tobirama, and a specific lesson to Mochida to not presume what a woman should do.

Mochida rushed in to attack Tobirama, believing that a hard hit would be enough to force his kohai to forfeit the match. If it wasn’t, then he could beat the other for the rest of the ten minutes.

Tobirama angled the shinai, catching the downward swing, and pushed back. After a moment, Mochida jumped back to disengage the surprisingly strong Tobirama.

In the crowd Kyoko, Hana, their classmates, and Ryohei cheered for Tsuna.

Mochida had not been expecting a skilled opponent and any strategy flew from his mind in surprise. Tobirama rushed forward in the wake of Mochida’s retreat and swung at the older boy’s side. When the shinai hit and no sound came from the proctor, Tobirama side-stepped and swung again, hitting Mochida’s back. Still no sound from the proctor, though angry grumbling started to come from the crowd.

Tobirama did not notice, but Hibari started to move towards the proctor.

Disgruntled now, Tobirama moved in a swift circle around Mochida, regularly hitting him in obvious moves. Right before coming back to in front of the other, who at this point was trying to defend, Tobirama dropped down and swept Mochida’s feet out from under him. Tobirama placed one foot on Mochida’s chest, tapped said chest, and raised the shinai up above his head, locking eyes with Mochida.

“P-point to Sawada!” the proctor quickly called.

“And that is why we don’t cheat like that, Mochida-senpai.” Tobirama cocked his head to assess the other as he stepped back, giving room for Mochida to get up. “I also fail to see how my keeping my friend from falling to the ground is a) any of your business given that you are only acquainted with her due to a committee, and b) perverted in any way. Further, Kyoko-chan is not and never shall be a prize to be won. Kyoko-chan?” Tobirama looked at his friend and a sly smile came over Tsuna’s face as he flipped the shinai around so that he could offer it handle first to Kyoko.

Kyoko looked at the shinai, then back at Mochida. Without saying a word she accepted the shinai and brought it down on Mochida’s back as he tried to get up, knocking him back to the ground.

“Tsuna-kun, we should go and eat before the break is over.” She stepped over the groaning male below her and started for the exit, Hana and Tsuna falling in with her.

Elsewhere:
A boy with silver hair stood outside the gym, hidden by the nearly closed doors as he watched the fight inside.

“So that is the Decimo candidate. Let’s see what you can do.”

That night, after yet another race between hitman and target via bullets, Reborn explained why he was in Namimori to Tsuna. To teach Tsuna how to be the next boss of the Vongola Mafia Family.

“And why didn’t my father come to tell Mama and I about this himself?” Tsuna raised one eyebrow at Reborn.

“He is busy. Don’t worry, I’ll teach you how to be a strong mafia boss,” Reborn shrugged as he rolled up the condensed family tree before jumping into Tsuna’s bed.

“That is my bed,” Tsuna followed him over, only stopping at the trip wires.

“I forgot to tell you, if you disturb my sleep the booby traps will blow up.” With that Reborn fell asleep. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at what was obviously a tactic to get him off balance and knelt down. He quickly and confidently disarmed the traps and removed Reborn from his bed, placing the other on a large pillow that Kyoko usually used when she came over to share manga.

With that done, Tsuna slipped into his bed and fell into the type of sleep that Tobirama had used when out on a mission so as to not be caught off guard should someone try to sneak up on him.

Michiko Explores!

Michiko Goes to School Part 1

Michiko meowed as her Tsu-kun sat down and started to put on the shoes with the dangly-bits. Almost everyday since she was brought home, her Tsu-kun would leave for most of the day. It just wasn’t right! He should be home where she could cuddle with him and he could give her all of the nice pets. She moved to his side and pushed up to his arm.

“Michiko-chan, I have to go to school. I promise that I’ll cuddle you when I get back.” Her Tsu-kun gave her ears a gentle scratch before he stood up and opened the door, keeping an eye on her to make sure she didn’t dart out after him.

Michiko stared at the closed door for a moment before a slight movement in her peripheral vision caught her attention. The window was open for once. Michiko cocked her head to the side, looking at what was under the window. She could climb up the blanket that was draped over the side of the chair, use the chair to jump onto the table that ran under the window, and walk over to the window. Yes, that could work.

When she got to the window, she peered out and saw that a bucket was overturned not too far from the window, well within her jumping abilities. She used the bucket to jump down and then hurried after her Tsu-kun. Several times it was only due to her nose that she knew where her Tsu-kun was going.

Soon enough, she found herself in front of a large building with a lot of windows. She cocked her head. Her Tsu-kun was in there somewhere. She just had to find him. She snuck inside at the heels of another human whom hadn’t noticed her. Once inside, she realized that her mission was
so much harder than she had realized. Obviously a great number of humans were in this place. Michiko gave a huff and started down the hall, sniffing for her Tsu-kun as she went. At times the scent of her Tsu-kun would branch off into multiple hallways. She would follow one only to come to the end of the scent trail to find no Tsu-kun, forcing her to backtrack to the other trail and follow that one.

1. "I'm leaving for now", something said when a person leaves
2. "Have a safe trip", a response to Ittekimasu
3. "I'm back", said when returning home
4. "Welcome home", a response to Tadaime
5. Mochida’s dialog is paraphrased/quoted from the anime
Chapter 3: Explosive Greetings

Chapter Notes

I went to all that trouble of finding out how to do hover-text, and I don't need them for this chapter. Kinda amused by that.
As always, thank you all so much for the reviews, kudos, and bookmarks! You all rock!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Explosive Greetings

Reborn woke up disoriented. He wasn't where he had fallen asleep- how did? It couldn't have been? This doesn't make sense! He got up from the pillow that he had been placed on and look over at the bed. Thank God, the kid was still asleep. He could at least have this. He walked over to the bed and peered at the occupant.

“Tsuna, it's time to wake up,” he whispered with a smirk, “it looks like I'll have to use the traditional Vongola wake up method.” He started to lean down to get the defibrillator.

“And what is that?” Tsuna asked watching him. Reborn jerked in shock. Tsuna had turned on his side and was propping his head up with his hand.

“Electrocution,” he finally answered.

Tsuna hummed, “seems messy.” Reborn stared at the boy as he reached into one of the drawers on the nightstand and pulled out a medical book. In silence, Tsuna flipped through it until he got to a certain page. He read the page and gave an understanding hum.

“It would also seem that that is a good way to give someone cardiac arrest or otherwise damage their chest muscles. I thought you were suppose to be training me, not trying to kill me.” With that Tsuna slid out of bed and stretched. “Please look away. I am not comfortable with a grown man observing me change no matter how old he looks.”

Reborn sputtered, but turned around, facing the door. After an absurdly long time, during which there was no sound from Tsuna, Reborn risked turning around only to find that Tsuna was not there.

“But, where?” he gaped at the empty room. Behind him, the door opened.

“Oh? Did Tsu-kun already leave for his morning run?” Nana asked. Reborn shrugged, unsure as to what was happening. “Well then, why don’t you come down and help me make breakfast for when he gets back. Honestly, that boy…”

After successfully avoiding Reborn, Tsuna arrived at school. Tsuna withheld a dark chuckle as he switched to his school slippers.

“Tsuna-kun! Did you hear?” Kyoko ran up to Tsuna.
“Heard what Kyoko-chan?”

“I heard from Usami-chan that we’re getting a transfer student today!” Tsuna waited as Kyoko changed her shoes. Tsuna raised an eyebrow. Kyoko giggled and looped her arm with Tsuna’s to walk to their classroom.

A tall boy with silver hair and wearing silver jewelry followed the teacher in. He looked over the class with a pissed off expression.

“Class, please welcome Gokudera Hayato. He’s just arrived from Italy.” Tsuna could hear various girls in the class whisper to each other about how hot they found the Italian.

As the new student walked back to his seat, he stopped in front of Tsuna and kicked over Tsuna’s desk. Just in the nick of time, Tsuna shoved himself and his chair back to avoid being knocked to the ground with his desk.

“How boorish.” Tsuna snapped as he jerked his desk up and into place.

“Gokudera-san! Your seat is in the back!” the teacher yelped. Gokudera continued to the back, Tsuna’s eyes on him the whole way. Tsuna was not the only one that watched him. Yamamoto stared over his shoulder, contemplating the silver haired boy.

After class was over, Yamamoto walked up to Tsuna with two other boys. Tsuna glared, but as always Yamamoto seemed to ignore it.

“Yo, Tsuna! Did you hear about most of the volleyball team?” the baseball star asked, and then continued on ignoring Tsuna’s protest to not be so informal with him, “They all got food poisoning so you’re playing today. We’ll be counting on you!” he grinned at Tsuna.

“...right.” Tsuna’s eyebrow twitched.

“That bastard.

“Maa, maa. You’re always so grumpy with me.” Yamamoto’s voice was curious. It gave Tsuna pause. Yes he was, as Yamamoto put it, *grumpy* with the other boy, and only because he had realized that Yamamoto was Izuna. Even then, Izuna hadn’t really done anything other than be the reason Madara had gone off the rails. He turned away from the other, deciding to try to get over his dislike. Tsuna excused himself to go talk to Reborn. He stalked down the halls until he came across the fire extinguisher station that he could sense Reborn in.

What in the world? He could also smell coffee coming from the box. Tsuna knelt and gave a sharp knock. The front fell down to show a miniature room, where Reborn was relaxing on an armchair with a cup of espresso. Tsuna gave no reaction to the scene.

“I take it you had something to do with the volleyball team’s unfortunate food poisoning? I have no interest in sports, that is why I am so far down in the lineup.” Reborn only shrugged at him. Tsuna narrowed his eyes before standing up and placing the front back on. He took a few steps away and then quickly turned and kicked the side, smirking at the yelp that resonated from within.

Tsuna arrived at the gym to most of the school already there and his team waiting for him. He joined his teammates as they discussed the strategy for the game. To Tsuna’s displeasure not only was Yamamoto on his team, so was the new student. Towards the end of the game Tsuna had to
suddenly drop to the floor so as to avoid the bullets that Reborn shot towards him. Tsuna took a moment to glare at the hitman before returning his attention to the game. In the end his team won by a decent margin. Tsuna smirked, always glad to win. The team all congregated in a loose circle, congratulating each other.

“You really are amazing, Tsuna!” Yamamoto grinned.

“Don’t—” Tsuna cut himself off, giving a heavy breath through his nose. Remember, Izuna was an excuse and Yamamoto has done nothing to you. Yamamoto grinned.

“I haven’t accepted you as Decimo yet.” Gokudera hissed suddenly. “Come with me and we’ll see if you can prove yourself.” With that Gokudera stalked out of the gym. Tsuna blinked at the other, uncaring, but chose to follow him anyway. Behind them, the abandoned Yamamoto watched them leave curiously.

“What, exactly, is it that you want Gokudera-san.” Tsuna raised an eyebrow.

“If someone like you is named Decimo, then it will be the end of the Vongola for sure,” Gokudera snapped.

“And how exactly do you know about the Vongola?” Tsuna crossed his arms and waited for an explanation.

“You’re an eyesore. Die.” Gokudera held up dynamite. Tsuna called on the coldness of Tobirama and slid a foot back in preparation for an attack.

“That was sooner than I expected,” came Reborn’s voice from in a tree. Tobirama chose to keep his eyes on the more immediate threat of Gokudera, though he shifted so that if need be he could react to an attack from the hitman. Gokudera straightened and looked up as part of the tree opened like an elevator to show Reborn. When Reborn went to jump onto Tobirama’s head, he sidestepped so that Reborn ended up on the ground. Reborn shot him a glare while Gokudera looked reluctantly impressed.

“Gokudera Hayato.” Reborn paused as if waiting for Tobirama to respond in some way. When he didn’t, Reborn sulkily continued, “He’s a member of the Family that I called from Italy. This is the first time that I’ve met him.” Tobirama snorted. Honestly, trusting someone you don’t know to get a job done is why there were ninja.

“So you’re Nono’s most trusted hitman, Reborn. I’ve heard stories about you,” Gokudera acknowledged Reborn. Tobirama stored that knowledge away for later. “Is it true that if I kill this kid, I’ll be Decimo?” Tobirama’s eyes narrowed, so that’s your plan Reborn.

“Yeah, it’s true.” Reborn nodded with a smirk.

“I don’t care about the mafia.” Tobirama deadpanned, starting to let go of the coldness as he turned and began to walk away. Only for it to snap back in place when a stick of dynamite landed in front of him and he had to jump back. He looked back at Gokudera and Reborn contemptuously.

“Hold it.” Gokudera stood at what would have been Tobirama’s back, holding up more dynamite. Tobirama’s eyes narrowed.

“Gokudera Hayato is an explosive expert that keeps dynamite secreted away on his body,” Reborn reported as if he was reading out of a textbook. Bingo Books are much more useful Tobirama scoffed mentally.
“They call me Hurricane Bomb Hayato,” Gokudera bragged. “Prepare yourself.” With that he lit the dynamite. Tobirama rushed back, wanting to gain some space so as to get a better perspective for how Gokudera fought. As he moved away, he chose to ignore the girl that was trying to peek over the wall. When one of the sticks that Gokudera was throwing went off somewhat close to her location, Tobirama heard a trash can fall over and muffled complaining. As he moved, he ripped part of his shirt to create make-shift gloves to protect his hands.

Tobirama moved to put the school at his back. Structural damage to the building would bring it down on both of them, but he was confident he could dodge if need be. Gokudera had been mostly standing in place with his feet planted and thus would have a harder time moving. Even if none of the explosions actually damaged the building, it would be a good thing to push off of to move from evasion to attack.

“I’ll finish you with the next one,” Gokudera growled. Tobirama could not hold back a snort at that. He had dodged every one of Gokudera’s throws thus far and had herded the other into a position of his choosing. He was winning this fight even if Gokudera did not realize it.

“Oi, Tsuna.” Tobirama snapped his head in the direction of the voice. He couldn’t be that much of an idiot, could he? Sure enough, Yamamoto was walking towards them.

“When are you doing?” Trust Yamamoto to ignore everything around him.

“This will be your end!” Gokudera threw a batch of dynamite, and Tobirama moved, he had to put out the dynamite before it exploded so close to either himself or Yamamoto, who obviously was too dense to realize that he should be running in the opposite direction. His quick movements also meant that he had yet again dodged one of Reborn’s bullets. Tobirama snatched the dynamite out of Yamamoto’s hands and snuffed it out, glaring at the other boy who only grinned naively at him.

“Double Bomb!” Gokudera doubled the number of sticks he threw this time.

Tsuna gave a hiss and a glare towards the bomber and moved to snuff out those as well, kicking the ones he couldn’t into the air where they did no damage. Gokudera, at this point, had reached the stage where he was desperate but still angry, and went to use an unmastered trick he had. He tripled the amount of dynamite from his original number and held them up.

“Triple Bo-” one stick slipped, only for more to fall until all of the sticks of dynamite were on the ground at his feet. “Crap,” he murmured.

Tobirama bit back his own curse and dove for Gokudera. He quickly grabbed the Italian and dragged him along as Tobirama got out of range of the dynamite.

When Tobirama looked over at Gokudera, the two locked eyes. Instead of any of the emotions that Tobirama would expect to see from either a foe or someone that he had just saved the life of, he saw shock, happiness, shame, confusion, and familial adoration. In the next instant, he could feel for the first time in this life an active chakra presence. Not only that, but it was a familiar one that was doing the active fluctuations that his dearest friends and family members would do to either get his attention or simply use to let him know that they were there and to acknowledge that they knew he was, too. Tobirama felt a tug at his lips.

“You win.” Touka grinned at Tobirama through the face of Gokudera Hayato.

“The loser serves the winner. It’s our Family Code.” Reborn came up to explain, frowning at the
lackluster concession given by the young hitman. Touka just nodded at her once Hokage and cousin.

“Congratulations, due to your strength, you’ve recruited Gokudera as a soldier. You pass for the day.” Reborn made a note in a notebook that was comically large in proportion to his body. Tobirama raised an eyebrow at him and gave a snort. He hoped that Reborn didn’t plan on pulling this over and over again until he had whatever number of “soldiers” that Reborn thought was acceptable.

Yamamoto gave a laugh as he hurried over to them and threw an arm around Tobirama’s shoulders. Touka stiffened, and shot a glare at Yamamoto.

“You’re a funny guy, Tsuna!” Yamamoto ignored the ticking time bomb that was Touka, “let me join too!”

“Get off me.” Tobirama shot a glare of his own at Yamamoto, who as usual ignored him. Tobirama held back a sigh.

“You’re the boss right?” Tobirama paused, wondering at how Madara would take his precious little brother calling his most despised foe “boss” if Madara ever awoke. Touka apparently did not care for some stranger not only acting so familiar with her once cousin, but also ignoring his obvious wish for a cease of physical contact between the two.

“Don’t be so familiar with him,” she hissed. Yamamoto just grinned, though he looked at Touka with some consideration, the expression on his face one that Tobirama had not seen before.

“Oi! What was with all the noise?” They all turned to see a group of third years at the corner of the school looking at them.

Tobirama shook off Yamamoto’s arm and stepped forward to grab Touka’s arm.

“Hey! We asked you a question-” the third year cut himself off at Tobirama and Touka sent a death glare to him in unison, both automatically giving a very small spike of Killing Intent. Reborn gave both a short, confused look. Tobirama turned his back on the third years.

“Come home with me, Gokudera,” his voice was level. Tobirama glanced over at Yamamoto. “Don’t you have practice to get to, Yamamoto-san?” he hinted. Yamamoto gave a small jerk, but nodded and peeled off of them as they got near the baseball field. The other three continued on.

When the three got to the Sawada house, Tsuna pulled Touka through the doorway.

“Tadaima! Mama! I’ve a new friend I would like to introduce to you!” Tsuna called you. Nana looked down from the top of the stairs.

“Okaeri!” She hurried down. She beamed at the trio, always excited to meet someone that her precious son deemed a friend.

“Mama, this is Gokudera Hayato; he just moved here from Italy. We're going to go do our homework, okay?” Tsuna raised his eyebrows and gave a mischievous smile as he locked eyes with Nana. Nana reached up with her right hand and tucked her hair behind her ear.

“Ne, Reborn-san, why don't you help me start dinner- didn't you say that you wanted to make sure Tsu-kun had a correctly balanced diet so as to succeed in life?” Reborn blinked at her and followed
her towards the kitchen. At the doorway he paused to turn back to the children and let them know he would be coming up soon to check on them. Instead of seeing them standing on the stairs or even rushing up, the two were gone. But, his brow furrowed, how? In the kitchen, Nana quietly giggled.

Some Time Later At Gokudera’s Apartment:

“Tobirama, what is going on?” Touka stared down the former Hokage as they both sat at the kitchen table.

“It’s Tsuna now. Remember?” Tsuna gave her a look that conveyed that he knew that she knew. She just visibly set her jaw. Tsuna sighed. “Obviously we’ve been reincarnated.”

“Obviously.” Touka mocked him.

“Don’t interrupt me. While I am loath to make a pattern from only two points of data, there should be some connection between what woke each of us up. What were you feeling in the moment that you remembered?” Tsuna gave her a steady look as Touka sucked in a deep breath.

“I just. It was my end and I knew it. As Hayato I knew about a . . . thing in the mafia. Um,” she paused, trying to find the words.

“A fire that comes from within? Not unlike chakra for all that it is not?” Tsuna offered.

“Yes, exactly, though in the mafia we just call them Flames. Most of the time even if I feel like giving up, my Flames try to, I don’t know, escape? Retaliate? Survive, maybe? But this time,” she sighed, “this time I knew that there was nothing to be done. Every part of me knew that and my Flames just… You know how when there’s a fire and it goes down to just the embers? It was like that but in my soul. In that moment, my chakra rushed forward as if to fill the gap and,” she shrugged, “I remembered. What happened with you?”

“My father and his boss sealed my Flames.” Tsuna wryly stated. Touka looked shocked. “It knocked me out for a few days and when I awoke I had my memories and chakra.”

“Damn. That’s…” Touka didn’t have words for it.

“I know. By the way, how are you dealing with the different body?”

“Oh this? Well, it doesn’t exactly feel wrong, but it also doesn’t really feel right. Of course before I remembered in this life and back in the last I felt that way so…” Tobirama raised an eyebrow at she shrugged. Touka scowled at him, “alright, fine. As Hayato I did try to figure out what was up with me. It’s called being genderfluid. Sometimes I feel more like a guy, sometimes more like a gal.”

“So long as you understand yourself,” Tsuna allowed. Touka smiled at him.

“I’ll let you know what I’m feeling each day. I think as a gal I’ll use Touka…” Touka mused. Tsuna hummed. They both brought out their homework to work on. After a while Tsuna spoke up in an offhand manner.

“By the way, Uchiha Madara and Uchiha Izuna are here too.”

“What?!”
“Relax. They don’t remember. I’ve felt a few other familiar people, but it’s all the same. No one remembers but you and I.”

1. Reborn and Gokudera’s dialog is quoted/paraphrased from the anime.---

Michiko Explores!

Michiko Goes to School Part 2

Suddenly, a dark shadow fell over her. Michiko whirled around to see what had snuck up on her as she concentrated on her Tsu-kun’s scent. It was another human, taller than her Tsu-kun and had darker fur on top of his head. He knelt down so that he was closer to her level.

“Little animal, what are you doing here?” he murmured, stretching out a hand towards her, “This is no place for you. The Herbivores will trample you when they come out of class.”

Michiko’s eyes narrowed as she realized that he was reaching to pet her. Only Tsu-kun and his Mama could do that. With a flash she swiped at the offending hand, leaving behind four small red scratches. The human froze staring down at her. Michiko realized what she had done and panicked herself—what if this human hurt her like those boys with sticks used to before her Tsu-kun? She jumped when a bell rang and the noise from within the rooms became louder. Someone opened a door and there was a gasp.

“Hibari-san?” someone yelped. Michiko started to back away, her ears flattening, a soft growl coming from her to warn away these people.

“Michiko?” It was soft, but that was definitely her Tsu-kun. She just wasn’t sure if he was close enough to stop anyone, so she continued to back up, though she did stop her growls. The one called Hibari-san still hadn’t moved and the others were making a lot of noise. Michiko felt hands close around her and twisted to swipe at this person as well. She froze when she registered that it was her Tsu-kun. Michiko relaxed and started to purr, happy to be with her Tsu-kun.

“Michiko, what are you doing here? You should be at home with Mama.” Her Tsu-kun cuddled her close and ran his knuckles over her head. She pushed into him. “Ah, I guess you wanted to be with me.” Michiko didn’t understand why her Tsu-kun sounded so bemused. Of course she wanted to be with her Tsu-kun, he was hers and she was his. One of the girls standing next to her Tsu-kun, the one that always smelled of books and milk and lingering sweat, giggled.

“I think she doesn’t like Hibari-senpai.” The girl, Kyoko-chan, if Michiko remembered right, whispered to her Tsu-kun.

“Well,” her Tsu-kun sounded amused, “she does have good taste.”

Michiko spent the rest of the day curled up on her Tsu-kun’s desk, or in his bag as he ran around with the other humans.

Chapter End Notes

You’ll notice that I’ve updated the tags to include relevant information on
Gokudera/Touka. This will be done each time someone new remembers, so keep an eye out!
Also, while I will continue to answer any and all reviews, if you want to discuss the story with me with the knowledge of potential spoilers, please contact me on my tumblr rinrinp42
Chapter 4: Scarecrows and Cooking

Chapter Notes

So, this chapter apparently wanted to be posted before I was done with the footnotes, which I have to do here as opposed to outside of AO3, so I apologize if you got the update notice before I fixed it. There should be hoverovers for certain words now, but if you prefer footnotes, the footnotes have more information than a ruff translation. As always, thank you all so much for the reviews, kudos, and bookmarks. If you see a problem in the text, let me know.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 4: Scarecrows and Cooking

In a town not far from Namimori, a plane landed and a young woman with long dark pink hair got off, ready to head for Namimori after the man she loved. Unnoticed by anyone, a small child in a cow-print onesie snuck out after her.

In the Sawada Household some time later:

An explosion went off just outside of Tsuna’s bedroom window.

“One would think that you would give up with bringing these explosions into the house,” Tsuna commented to Reborn, who stared moodily out the window where Tsuna had just thrown the most recent of Reborn’s explosions. The hitman had been trying again and again to be the one to wake Tsuna and to introduce the middle-schooler to his mafia-style tutoring.

“Wah!” Both of them noticed the small child in the tree. “Reborn! You have already spotted the great Lambo-sama!”

“Hm. Friend of yours?” Tsuna asked, disinterested as he finished changing into his uniform. Reborn ignored the question and went to kick his reluctant student. Tsuna casually leaned back, avoiding the kick as he tucked in his shirt. The door opened and the child stood there.

“The great Lambo-sama who is a 5 years old hitman and loves grape candy has been sent by his family to take you out, Reborn!” the child announced. Reborn once more ignored him. Lambo’s eyes teared up, “hold…it…in…in…”

Lambo pulled a pink grenade out of his afro and threw it. Tsuna’s leg snapped up and he kicked the grenade out of the window.

“No explosions in the house!” Tsuna said waspishly, “Reborn, control your friends if they come to visit.”

“He’s part of the Bovino famiglia. I don’t associate with the lower class famiglia,” Reborn turned away from the sniffling Lambo. Tsuna narrowed his eyes at Reborn, unhappy with that attitude. After a moment, Tsuna gave a huff and headed out.

As Tsuna walked towards the school, a person in leathers on a bicycle was riding towards him. She pulled up just in front of Tsuna and took off her helmet, letting her long pink hair tumble
down her back.

“You look thirsty. Here.” She tossed him a can of orange soda, and biked off. Tsuna snorted and threw the can back at her.

“I don’t take food from strangers,” he muttered as he continued to school. He ignored the yelp that came from behind him with a smirk.

Hayato was waiting at the door to the classroom for Tsuna. He greeted Tsuna with a grin. Yamamoto ran up and threw an arm around Tsuna.

“Hey, Tsuna!” as always Yamamoto ignored Tsuna’s grumbling to get off of him. “How’re you today?”

“Stop being so familiar with him!” Hayato glared Yamamoto. Yamamoto laughed at him. Tsuna rolled his eyes at the two of them for all that he was thankful for someone else telling Yamamoto to at least remember to not use Tsuna’s given name.

“Good morning, Tsuna-kun!” Kyoko and Hana walked up, giving a smile to him. She then glanced down and paused. “Uh, Tsuna-kun, why is there a child on your leg?”

Hayato and Yamamoto both paused and looked down, seeing the young child clinging to Tsuna’s leg.

“He claims to be a friend of the tutor my mother hired. Reborn claims to not be associated with him. His name is Lambo.” Kyoko, Hana, and Hayato noticed the displeasure in Tsuna’s voice. Tsuna gave a sigh and picked up Lambo. The hall behind Kyoko and Hana suddenly became hushed. The students still milling about with their friends separated as if they were the Red Sea and Moses had raised his staff. Much as that Biblical story was held up as an act of God, the students and staff of Namimori Middle School would claim that the cause of this was as much an act of god or gods. Tsuna could see the glower sent towards his group from half-way down the hall. Hibari was not happy with such a young and noisy herbivore being in his main territory. Tsuna sent his own glare back down the hall before turning sharply around and heading away, calling, “I’m going to take Lambo out to the field and figure out why he latched onto me,” over his shoulder.

“I’ll come with you!” Hayato fell in step with Tsuna. The other three watched them go. Hibari turned away and headed off.

“Just be back in time for class!” Yamamoto yelled after them, ignoring the low growl that came from the opposite direction.

Tsuna set Lambo down by the sinks and stared at him.

“Your name is Lambo, right? What are you doing here?” The child started to tear up, and rubbed at his eyes.

“I was,” he sniffled, “looking for Reborn.”

“So you’re lost,” Tsuna deadpanned as Hayato crouched down to look at the child as well, exchanging looks with Tsuna. There was a mechanical sound as the sinks opened up and Reborn came out on a chair that was on a rail. Hayato closed his eyes and mumbled a prayer for strength.

“Tsuna, classes are starting soon; you should get back.” Reborn’s eyes gleamed with pleasure at finding something to berate his reluctant student on.
“Plenty of time still,” Tsuna absentmindedly murmured as he stood up, watching Lambo for his reaction to Reborn. Amused, he let the child climb up his front to balance on his head, moving his hands up to catch him should he falter. *What is wrong with him that he is so small and light?* Tsuna couldn’t help but wonder.

“Haha! You fell for it, Reborn!” Lambo gave a childish grin, “Everything up until now was staged to get you to come out!”

Hayato let out a long even breath, indicating he was holding back laughter.

“Those were real tears,” Tsuna reminded Lambo. The child froze for a moment, shocked, before returning to his one-sided confrontation with Reborn. Hayato stood up as well.

“Brace yourself, Reborn!” Lambo jumped back off of Tsuna’s head as he pulled out an RPG and took aim at Reborn. Hayato’s eyes widened before snapping his head around to address Reborn.

“Is this kid-”

“He’s a hitman from the Bovino family,” Reborn interrupted him. Hayato turned to face Lambo.

“Kumichou¹, I can take him out fast,” Hayato said as she let the refined sharpness of Touka fall over her. Tsuna gave a hum, letting his once-cousin do as she wished. With regards to the fact that Reborn was watching intently, Touka pulled out some low strength explosives, not wishing to actually hurt the child for all that he and Reborn claimed that Lambo was a hitman. When she threw the explosives, she knocked back Lambo and the RPG fell from his hands.

Once more Lambo’s eyes started to water.

“Hold…it…in…” he sniffled before crying out, “I can’t!” Tsuna’s eyes widened in alarm and shock as Lambo pulled a purple bazooka out of his afro. When Lambo jumps *into* the bazooka, both Tsuna and Hayato take a worried step forward. A pink cloud encases the area before clearing. A tall teenager dressed in dark slacks and a turtleneck stands there. His lower face is covered by a scarf and his one eye is covered by his semi-long wavy hair.

“Oro? Is it this time now? Maa, maa, how lucky. Ni-sama² and his Kirin³, you both are so cute at this age.” Touka’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion, reflected in the air around Reborn. Tsuna raised an eyebrow.

“So the cow is a scarecrow. How uninspiring,” Tsuna intoned, a smirk tugging at his lips.

“Maa, maa, you’re so mean, Ni-sama,” his visible eye twinkled with humor, “I have no idea how he puts up with such an uncute lover.”

Tsuna’s smirk dropped and his eyes widened. “What. Who are you-“

“Maa, maa, the switch only lasts five minutes before young me comes back. That will make me late to the meeting with, well. You know.” Kakabo⁴ gave a look of comradery to Reborn, who only stared back. “Well, might as well kill some time,” with that Kakabo pulled out an orange book. Tsuna’s eyes narrowed, and he scooped up a pebble.

“Don’t read such things on school grounds!” Tsuna snapped as he threw the pebble at him. It hit the teen’s forehead.
“Oww!” Kakabo pouted at Tsuna. “Reborn-chan! Ni-sama’s so mean, isn’t he?” Reborn twitched.

“Don’t call me that.”

“Don’t call you what, Reborn-chan? I don’t understand Reborn-chan?” Kakabo teases. Reborn stood up from his chair, Leon transforming into a pistol as he did.

“Explain,” Reborn growled, aiming Leon at Kakabo. The visible eye crinkled into a crescent, showing Kakabo’s amusement.

“It would seem that our time is almost up. Ni-sama, Kirin, shouldn’t you get back to class?” With that pink smoke covered the teen’s form, and, when it cleared, child Lambo was there instead, looking confused. Tsuna gave a sigh, and turned to head to class, Hayato falling in step with him, Touka’s mindset long settled.

On the Roof at Lunch:

Tsuna, Hayato, Hana, Kyoko, and Yamamoto settled down to eat together on the roof, the girls shooting confused looks between Tsuna and Yamamoto. They never thought that Tsuna could go so long without trying to kill Yamamoto with his eyes as to share lunch with the baseball star. Hayato, on the other hand, noticed that Tsuna had placed the bento Nana had packed him to the side and had bought a lunch instead.

“Kumichou, why did you buy a lunch? Didn’t you bring one?” he asked, pointing to the now abandoned bento. The others looked to Tsuna, their confusion mirroring Hayato’s.

“Oh, that?” Tsuna glanced down at said bento. “Something about it has felt off ever since this morning when I ran into this strange pink-haired woman who tried to give me a soda.”

Hayato’s eyes widened at the sparse description of the woman.

“You didn’t drink it, did you?” He asked, worried. Tsuna shot him a confused look, concerned at the reaction from Hayato.

“No, I don’t take food from strangers unless it is their job to feed me,” Tsuna kept his eyes on Hayato as the other let out a relieved breath.

“And even then,” Hana added with a smirk, “sometimes you refuse for no good reason.”

“Only if they do something concerning,” Tsuna sniffed in reply, causing both girls to giggle. Yamamoto looked on, more than a bit lost.

“Well, maybe she somehow switched her lunch for yours,” he offered, reaching for the bento to open it and examine the inside. When he did, a fume of stench rose up and knocked out three crows that had been flying overhead. Everyone’s eyes snapped from the downed birds to the now open bento in horror.

“That’s not Sawada-san’s cooking…” Kyoko stated quietly in shock.

“This is…” Hayato mumbled.

“It’s best if you don’t eat that. One bite could send you to heaven,” Reborn stated from above them. Tsuna sensed someone else was close, the pink-haired stranger from that morning. Reborn continued talking, “I know you’re there, Bianchi.”
The door down to the rest of the school opened, revealing the stranger.

“Big Sis,” Hayato mumbled as he clutched his stomach and mouth at the sight of her. Tsuna glanced at the other to make sure he was alright before refocusing on the woman.

As she walked forward, she spoke to her sibling, “It’s been a while, Hayato.” She smiled as if nothing was wrong. Tsuna’s eyes narrowed at her, letting the ice of Tobirama take over. He would need it to deal with someone so callous about their own family. Everyone, with the exceptions of Hayato, who was desperately trying not to throw up, and Tobirama, who refused to look away from Bianchi, looked up at Reborn as he greeted Bianchi.

“Reborn!” Bianchi said with a sigh and a blush, causing Tobirama’s eyes to narrow, unhappy with her response. “I’ve come for you,” she fiddled with a strand of her hair, “Let’s work big hits together again. That’s where you belong, Reborn.”

“I made it clear, Bianchi,” Reborn ignored the fact that civilians were there, “My job is to train Tsuna to be the next Vongola Boss.” Bianchi teared up.

“My poor Reborn, unless the Tenth Vongola Boss candidate dies from an accident,” she pointed to Tobirama, who crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow at her, “You won’t be free!”

*Just try it*, Tobirama mentally dared her. He would be asking Hayato for any information on her fighting style as soon as the other had calmed his nausea. Bianchi started to walk away.

“Just wait, I’ll return when I’ve killed,” she paused and glanced over her shoulder at the group, “I mean, when the Tenth Vongola Boss candidate is dead.”

Everyone was silent for a moment, before Yamamoto’s stomach growled. Hayato straightened up, swallowing.

“You’re seriously hungry right now?” he demanded to know, staring hard at Yamamoto.

“What? I’m a growing boy!” Yamamoto protested. He then paused looking to where Bianchi had just been before turning back to Hayato, “You have a lovely sister.”

“Hayato, what was that?” Tobirama demanded, ignoring Yamamoto with ease.

“My sister is a freelance hitwoman going by the name Poison Scorpion Bianchi. She specializes in poison cooking,” Hayato glanced at Reborn causing Tobirama to raise an eyebrow in question, “apparently she and Reborn are romantically involved.” Tobirama, Hana, and Kyoko couldn’t help their frowns at that. “When we were children, before anyone knew about her gift for poisoning any food she touched, she would make me cookies before I would give piano recitals for our father’s guests. People liked the results, so our father decided that I had to eat them. As a result I get sick when I see her face.”

“Tsuna-kun, what is going on?” Kyoko asked in a low voice.

Tobirama shook his head, “I’ll tell you later,” he shot a telling glance in the direction of Reborn. Kyoko nodded, she knew that Tsuna would explain as soon as he could. With that they headed back to class.

The next few hours had no hint of the Poison Scorpion, but Tobirama kept his ice, wary of the assassin out for his blood. Hayato’s sister made her move when the girls of the class came back from Home Ec. with cakes for the boys. Most of the boys were talking over which girl they hoped would give them a cake.
“Who are you hoping gives you a cake, Tsuna?” Yamamoto asked with a grin.

“Kyoko always gives me something. That way she doesn’t have to worry about someone thinking she has a crush on them,” Tobirama said absently as he scanned the room for the assassin he knew was there. *There!* She was moving within the crowd of girls, getting closer and closer to Kyoko. Tobirama tensed. As she reached for Kyoko’s cake, the girl dodged around one of the other girls to move closer to Tsuna. Bianchi’s eyes narrowed. She tried again to get close enough to Kyoko’s cake. Kyoko slipped around one of the girls that was already giving her cake to one of the boys, once more moving out of range of Bianchi. Kyoko handed the cake to Tobirama, a sparkle in her eye. Tobirama smirked. Those that thought Kyoko was an oblivious ditz obviously didn’t know the girl. Still, Bianchi was nearly at her bursting point. Tobirama did not want his class to be collateral damage, but how to save them… He cast his eyes around, trying to figure it out.

“Let’s have an eating contest! First one to finish their cake wins!” Yamamoto suddenly announced. Tobirama looked at him surprised, but as the rest of the boys made noises of agreement, he had to quickly eat. When he finished, he looked up and locked eyes with Yamamoto. The baseball star gave him a smile, knowledge gleaming in his eyes, and nodded. Tobirama couldn’t help but nod back.

A wail of “I can’t!” came from the hall before a cloud of pink smoke appeared. As it cleared, Kakabo stood there looking unfazed. He stared into the room, unconcerned with what had happened.

“In that case,” was heard from down the hall, “I’ll feed you my special cake!”

Kakabo turned to see who was speaking. Bianchi came to a halt, staring at him.

“You look familiar…” she said softly. Kakabo blinked at her before looking over the poisonous three-tier cake that she held.

“Maa, maa. No need to be so rude to an in-law. Ah, the whole Kurama line is so excitable. How Ni-sama can stand that you’ve married into his family I’ll never know. He takes it so easily. I always thought the saying was opposites attract…” Kakabo shook his head in mock sadness.

“How?” Kakabo tilted his head as he noticed one slice of cake hadn’t yet been eaten. “I did miss lunch today because I was helping an old lady,” here he glanced at Bianchi with humor, “cross the street.” Bianchi let out a screech and threw the cake at Kakabo. He dodged it by taking a step into the room and picking up the leftover cake piece. He lifted the cake to his face with a hum as Bianchi stalked off.

Somehow each and every member of the class suddenly tensed, leaning forward to watch as the stranger ate the cake. Kakabo reached up to his scarf, hooking one finger on it, preparing to pull down. A sudden breeze sent some papers flying in the air, a few of them obscuring Kakabo’s face. When they cleared the cake was gone. The class couldn’t help but feel cheated. Kakabo beamed at them behind his scarf before the pink smoke enveloped him, replacing him with Lambo.

After School, at the Sawada House:

“Tadaima!” Tobirama called as he and Hayato entered the house.

“Okaeri! Reborn-san and your new tutor are waiting for you upstairs!” Nana said as she walked out of the kitchen. “I’ll call you down after a couple of minutes,” she whispered to Tobirama, her
eyes twinkling. Tobirama replied with a smirk before the two teens walked up to Tobirama’s room.

“Okaeri.” Bianchi smirked at the two of them when they opened the door. Hayato stumbled back holding his mouth. Michiko rubbed up against him, purring to comfort one of her Tsu-kun’s people.

“Why?” Tobirama’s query almost wasn’t a question.

“For love,” was Bianchi’s answer.

“For work,” Reborn corrected her, “Bianchi will be serving as your tutor in Home Ec. and Art.” Tobirama let go of his ice, and Tsuna rolled his eyes.

“I have no need for a tutor in either of those subjects.”

“Tsu-kun! Gokudera-kun! I have snacks ready!” Nana called up the stairs. Tsuna gave a sharp nod to the pair and dragged Hayato with him as he went down the stairs. Right as they came to the bottom, the doorbell rang. Nana and Tsuna exchanged glances, before Nana went to open the door. Standing there was Lambo.

“Oh, it’s Reborn-san’s little friend from earlier. Please come in, Bianchi just finished snacks for everyone.” Nana smiled at the child before picking him up, ignoring his yelling in horror at the idea of eating any of Bianchi’s food. As if I would feed anyone that wasn’t an enemy that slop, Nana thought amused. Under the distraction of Lambo’s yelling, Tsuna and Hayato slipped out of the house without Reborn noticing.

“Where are we going Itoko?” Hayato asked as they walked.

“Hana-chan’s place. Both her parents will still be at work and she’s an only child so it should just be her and Kyoko-chan there,” Tsuna explained as he led the way.

“So we’re explaining everything to them?” Hayato frowned in thought. Tsuna gave a snort.

“No, do you really think that anyone is going to believe the truth of our past unless they have lived anything like it?” Tsuna shook his head and continued on, “I’m going to tell them about the mafia, though.”

1. literally Family Head, used by Yakuza as the title for the head of the group along with Oyabun.
2. A horrible mutilation of Nidaime-sama, used purely to give Reborn the assumption that he said Nii-sama which would be a respectable way to refer to one’s big brother (I’m sorry)
3. A mythical chimera creature, said to be protective
4. A portmanteau of Kakashi and Lambo, used here to depict the difference between the child Lambo and his Ten Years Later self. (in addition Wandering_Shadows and I both think that TLY Lambo is the most integrated of all of the reincarnations at this point)
5. cousin

Michiko Does Not Approve

There was a stranger in Michiko’s home. A human closer to her size than even her Tsu-kun was when he first found her. He wore a strange hat and a green… lizard thing was always on or around
him. She had even seen the lizard thing change shape. He was an intruder and she had seen him try to harm her Tsu-kun. This was not acceptable, and Michiko did not approve.

Michiko followed the intruder as he wandered around the house. She would make sure someone was watching him at all times. He would start every time he turned around and saw her.

(“You were not there when I walked in here. I closed the door when I came in!” Reborn yelped as he turned around in the small front room and Michiko stared at him from the center of the room)

She would find the best places to watch him from.

(“How are you on top of the bookcase?! Last I checked you were downstairs getting fed?!?!” Reborn tugged at his hair seeing the cream colored cat in Tsuna's room, staring down at him.)

(“Let's see what Tsuna's hiding under his be- HOLY SHIT!” Reborn hit his head when he started at suddenly coming face to face with Michiko when he went to check under Tsuna's bed.)

She would follow him wherever he went.

(Reborn resisted the urge to sigh as he entered one of his secret passages at Namimori. No demon cat here he thought smugly.

“Meowr.” Came from behind him.

“Yes, I'm going to see what Tsuna-” he stopped himself. His face paling, he turned around. Behind him, staring up at him as if she wanted to pounce, was Michiko. “How?!?!”)

Yes. She would watch the stranger.

Chapter End Notes

come chat with me on this on my tumblr, rinrinp42
Destroy a Ninja’s Heart!

Chapter Notes

Confession time: I started this fic already having written a couple of the chapters so I was going to stay ahead of what I was posting by, like, at least two. Then this chapter happened. I had such a hard time writing this one guys, it didn't want to happen. Then add in getting a job, for all that I'm still in training for it (it's complicated as to why that is), especially as the training is all day, then there was my cousin's wedding (which inspired the MadaTobi wedding phone fic on my Tumblr), Labor day weekend was full of doing things with my family, my car's battery died and I had to go into the shop for it, and work needed extra people this past weekend. Given that before I write each chapter I watch the corresponding KHR episode and take notes, I have to set aside time for that (it ends up taking longer than 30 minutes) along with figuring out what Michiko is doing that chapter. In short, as much as I would love to post a chapter a week, it's becoming too stressful to do. Instead, I will be trying to post once every two weeks. Don't worry, I won't be abandoning this, just stretching it out some. Also, a heads up, I'm doing NaNoWriMo this year with an original story, so in November the writing might halt, or be sporadic updates, but after that I will return. Also, the sub I've been using spells Haru's last name as Myuura, and I'm too lazy to go and fix it. I might in future chapters.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 5: Destroy a Ninja’s Heart!

Reborn walked next to Tsuna on the wall as Tsuna headed towards school. The two paused as a young girl in a Midori Middle School outfit walked up in front of Reborn and greeted them.

“Caoi-su,” Reborn greeted her with a smirk. Perhaps he could use this strange girl to provoke a reaction from Tsuna that was more in line with the original report he had been given. Tsuna blinked at her, recognizing the girl as the one in the background that first day that Reborn followed him to school.

“I'm Myuura Haru!” She squatted down to talk to Reborn. “Will you be my friend?”

“Sure,” Reborn answered. The girl squealed and started to fall. Tsuna made an aborted move to try to catch her, but her acrobatic moves showed it was not necessary.

“Can I hug you?” She beamed at the small hitman. Leon transformed in Reborn's hands into a gun.

“Don't be so familiar with me,” he told her as he aimed at her, “I am a hitman for the Mafia and am very dangerous.”

Tsuna couldn't help but give Reborn an incredulous look. Had he never heard of discretion? Tsuna had to jerk his head back suddenly to avoid the slap by Myuura.

“What was that for?” he demanded with a glare.
“Babies are angelic with hearts of pure white! How dare you try to corrupt him!” she scolded him.

“You've obviously never spent long with any child,” Tsuna said under his breath. Myuura ignored him.

“I'll squeeze you later!” she shot at Reborn, “But first I need to punish him!” With that, she launched herself towards Tsuna. Tsuna sidestepped her and turned, following her path with his eyes. She stumbled and started to turn when a laugh from above caught all of their attention. All three looked up. Above their heads, using the phone lines like a tight-rope, was Lambo.

“Reborn! I am here to -” he slipped. Tsuna cursed and darted forward. He used the wall to launch upwards as he reached out for the child. When he was close enough, he curled his upper body around Lambo, and landed with barely a sound.

“He's so cute!” Myuura squealed. Tsuna shot a poisonous look towards her.

“Unbelievable,” he growled lowly.

“What?” She cocked her head to the side in question. Tsuna snorted and started to walk passed her, carrying a still shaken Lambo.

“I'm going to school. You should as well,” he snarled as he walked. She bristled in anger, but followed his lead. When he got to school he made a beeline for the nurse's office to drop off Lambo to be checked over and ask them to watch the boy until Tsuna could take him home.

Later, In Class:

They were getting back their math tests today, so the class sat there quietly waiting for the teacher to call out their name and score. Gokudera, to the surprise of many, got a 100%. Tsuna got his expected 100%, Hana and Kyoko getting respectable grades as well. Yamamoto got a 20%. As a result, he had extra homework for that night. Tsuna winced in sympathy; Nezu-sensei hated anyone with low grades and probably made the work extra hard. If there was anyone in this school that Tsuna would gladly take a contract on, it would be Nezu-sensei. He even would take D-rank pay for it.

Later, Walking Home:

Tsuna was walking home, still angry that the school nurse had lost sight of Lambo.

“Tsuna!” came from behind him. Tsuna stopped and turned.

“How many times have I told you, Yamamoto! Don't call me that!” He snapped, his anger slipping through.

“I was hoping that you could help me with this worksheet.” Yamamoto grinned at him.

“...fine. I'll help you,” Tsuna sighed.

“Do it at Tsuna's house.” Reborn's voice came out of a potted bush. Yamamoto blinked in surprise while Tsuna sighed, frustrated. Reborn turned around, revealing his disguise.

“Sure, why not,” he grumbled before turning to Yamamoto. “Is it okay if we work at my house?
My mom won't mind.”

“Sure! Who's the kid?”

“I'm his tutor.”

“You're a menace.” Tsuna shot back without missing a beat.

“Haha, that kid sure is strange!” Yamamoto laughed.

Of course he thinks it's a joke. Tsuna thought derisively.

Less than an hour later, Yamamoto stood in front of the Sawada house, joined by Gokudera, who was there to give support. Both of them in casual clothing of tee shirts and jeans with Gokudera having a plethora of silver jewelry on as well. Yamamoto looked at the house a bit nervously. Gokudera snorted and gave him a nudge. Yamamoto stumbled closer to the house and the front door was opened.

“Gokudera-kun! And this must be Yamamoto-kun! Tsu-kun told me you would be coming! He’s waiting upstairs; I’ll send up some snacks as soon as they’re ready!” Nana beamed at them, ushering them in. The two walked up the stairs and went to Tsuna’s room. Tsuna was waiting for them at a low table he had set up to help tutor Yamamoto. Much like the other two, he was in jeans and a tee shirt.

“Boss,” Gokudera stared at the shirt, “what is on your shirt?”

“Hello Kitty. Kyoko-chan gave it to me,” he shrugged, unconcerned, “Anyway, we should get started. Yamamoto, please get out the worksheet and your math book. I went back to the school and got a copy of the worksheet for myself, along with some extras just in case.”

“How did you manage that? I wouldn’t think that Nezu-sensei would have given any to you?” Yamamoto asked as he sat down and got comfortable.

“I… asked… a DC member for his aid,” Tsuna hedged, petting a purring Michiko who was pressed up against his side.

“Kumichou is quite resourceful,” Gokudera smirked.

“Yes, I am. It’s Touka today right?” Tsuna gave Gokudera an inquiring look.

“It is and you know it.” Touka looked amused. Yamamoto looked confused, so Touka gave a huff and explained, “I’m genderfluid. Some days I’m a guy and some days I’m a girl. When I’m a girl I go by Touka. Boss was making it clear what you were to call me if you insist on ignoring all propriety.”

Yamamoto gave a slow nod, processing that knowledge.

“Let’s get started. I’ll explain what we were suppose to learn for this test, then you try the problems. We’ll see where you need help from there.” Tsuna opened the math book and placed it in front of Yamamoto.

After a while, Yamamoto beamed at both of them.

“You both are so helpful with this...” Yamamoto finished the statement with a short laugh. “Once
you explained it, I understood.”

“Kumichou is really smart and he knows how to teach!” Touka bragged. Tsuna let out a sigh, Yamamoto obviously had just not applied himself before.

“Let me see.” Tsuna took the worksheet from Yamamoto, absentmindedly sensing the girl from that morning, Myuura Haru, coming closer to his house. When nothing more came from her beyond him sensing her going into the kitchen with Nana and Bianchi, he elected to ignore her. Tsuna looked over the problem and gave a nod. “It’s right.”

“Haha, but I didn’t get problem 7.” Yamamoto grinned at Tsuna.

“Of course you didn’t, baka!” Touka taunted the boy. Tsuna shot a reproachful look at her.

“Don’t call my student ‘baka’, Touka,” he reprimanded her. Touka jerked back in mild shock. Reborn, sitting to the side, next to the window, gave a smirk.

“Ah, r-right. Sorry.” Touka had an embarrassed blush on her face.

“Let’s look over the problem. ‘If you had a stack of 100 sheets of 11.5cm² papers, that are dropped together from a height of three meters, prove that when they fall to the ground, the stack will not fall apart.’ So, how would you do so?” Tsuna read off the problem. Before Yamamoto could answer, the door opened.

“Here’s some food!” Myuura Haru grinned as she stood in the door. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at the girl.

“Why are you here?” he asked with a slight frown.

“I’m making sure there are no bad influences around Reborn-chan!” she declared with a glare. Tsuna barely stopped himself from rolling his eyes.

“And was it necessary to do that?” he asked, gesturing to the handkerchief she had tied under her nose and partially covering her hair. Her response was to glare at him as she moved to put the snacks and drinks down at the table. Touka’s eyes narrowed at her. Yamamoto remained visibly ignorant of the tension in the room. When she sat down on the fourth side of the table, she whipped the handkerchief off.

“Ah, how do you know someone from Midori Middle School, Tsuna?” Yamamoto asked after he took a drink of orange juice.

“She is stalking my tutor,” Tsuna bluntly stated right before Touka spoke up.

“Midori Middle School?” she asked the boys with a confused look. Tsuna and Yamamoto paused and looked to her.

“That’s right, you wouldn’t know given that you’ve just moved here…” Yamamoto mused, looking upwards.

“Midori Middle School is a prestigious all girls school. It’s supposed to be very hard to get into,” Tsuna explained. Touka blinked, taking in the knowledge.

“So she might know the answer to question seven?” she asked. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at his once-cousin, but nodded.
“I understand,” Myuura leaned forward with an intense look, “If I’m able to solve the problem, you will never involve yourself with Reborn-chan again!”

“That’s for him to decide,” Touka muttered, crossing her arms.

“Hm. Reborn does what he wants, but how about this. You solve it, I will encourage Reborn to go and live with you. If Yamamoto solves it, I will allow him to call me by my first name without complaining. In fact, I will even be friendly with him.” Tsuna looked at both of them with a smirk. The two looked at him in shock, before getting intense looks on their faces. Both teens grabbed a copy of the problem to try to solve.

“Uh, Kumichou,” Touka leaned close to Tsuna with a concerned look on her face, “are you sure that’s wise?”

“I want to see how they do with proper motivation. I doubt that either will get it right.” They’re looking at it from the wrong direction anyway. He thought but did not say. He also ignored Reborn playing with a shapeshifting Leon. Touka gave an unsure nod.

After a while, Myuura exclaimed that she could see the answer, which led to Yamamoto scowling down at his paper. After some more time, Yamamoto leaned back with a disgusted huff and Myuura started to tear up.

“I can’t do it!” she wailed, “I’m sorry!”

“I thought you said you could!” Touka snapped, jumping to her feet with a glare.

“I said I could see it! You’re calling me a liar,” she slumped forward as if about to cry. Tsuna snatched the paper out from under her hands just in case.

“You shouldn’t make her cry,” Yamamoto turned to Touka, his manners shining through.

“Shes right you know,” Tsuna added, bored, “She didn’t say she could solve it.”

“A true mafia member treats a woman with respect,” Reborn smirked up at Touka.

“Then you must not be one,” Tsuna snorted at Reborn, thinking of Bianchi and the situation between the two of them. Reborn looked at him shocked.

“Ah, sorry,” Touka leaned over the other girl.

From the window came a sound.

“~Who are you?~I’m Lambo.~Who am I?~You’re Lambo!~I’m Lambo!~” The child hitman did a small dance to get down from Tsuna’s window ledge, ending with him looking over his shoulder. He froze at Touka’s glare. “I, um, only happened to be passing by…” Lambo started to walk towards the door, but stopped when he spotted the cookies. He jumped up onto the table and started to eat some, before Tsuna snatched the tray away.

“It is way too late for you to be eating these. Go, expend that energy.” Tsuna ignored Lambo’s pout and Myuura’s gasp of outrage. The baby-obsessed girl gathered Lambo in her arms, ignoring the shock from his horns.

“Myuura-san. Please put him down and let him tire himself out. Don’t you have a problem to try to solve? Unless you are forfeiting?” Tsuna raised an eyebrow at her. She pouted, but sighed and put down Lambo. The child stomped over to Tsuna and demanded more cookies, but interrupted
himself with a yawn. Tsuna handed the tray to Touka and scooped Lambo up.

“You can sleep in my bed tonight,” Tsuna told him as he placed the child down on his pillow. There was no way he was letting this disaster child go off on his own at this hour. He would have to talk to Nana about taking in the little brat.

After he fell asleep the teens got back to work on the problem.

“Oh!” Myuura exclaimed in delight, “Because it’s a middle school problem, an adult should be able to solve it!”

Yamamoto beamed at that, before scowling that his opponent thought of it first.

“I even met someone earlier in your kitchen that could help! She seemed really nice,” Myuura smiled at them, pleased with herself. Tsuna gave her a horrified look, frantically searching for where Bianchi was-

She heading towards my door!

“Touka! The door!” Touka immediately sprang for the door, shoving at it with her body to try to keep it closed. Yamamoto looked at them both with a concerned face. Myuura looked confused.

“Here’s a midnight snack,” came from the other side of the door and Yamamoto’s face cleared with understanding, “Let me in.” Bianchi managed to get the door somewhat open and was peering in.

“Hey,” Yamamoto greeted her with his usual smile.

“Don’t just go along and greet her!” Touka snapped, looking back at him.

“Hayato, you are taking the gender of your older sister too much into consideration.” At the older girl’s words, Yamamoto scowled. Tsuna looked at him, disturbed.

“No! I’m not!” Touka scowled and gave a harder push at the door and shoved it close. She leaned against it, panting.

“Haha! You must win a lot of games against your sister!” Yamamoto looked at Touka. Touka stared back in disbelief before giving a yelp as the handle melted. Bianchi pushed the door open.

“How do you like my poison cooking?” she asked with a smirk. Touka stumbled back, trying not to throw up and getting dizzy. Yamamoto sprang up and caught her as she stumbled.

“Here, put her in my bed. She can sleep this off for a bit.” Tsuna pulled down the covers and gently moved Lambo to the side of the pillow. Bianchi shot him a bemused look, missing the death glare Yamamoto gave her as he helped Touka over to the bed. Myuura looked on, uncomfortable without knowing why.

“A-anyway, Bianchi-san, could you help us with this math problem?” she held her paper up to show the unsolved problem to Bianchi. The older woman sat down at Touka’s seat and looked over the problem. Tsuna and Yamamoto both returned to their seats, a cold look on Tsuna’s face and a blank one on the usually smiling face of Yamamoto.

“Hmm,” Bianchi made a thoughtful sound. Behind her, Reborn got ready for bed.

“I-if Bianchi-san can solve it, then I win for suggesting her!” Myuura gained back her confidence as they refocused on the math problem. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at that.
“You can’t just change the rules in the middle!” Yamamoto glared at her. Myuura sniffed, confident in getting her way. Tsuna ignored them and watched Bianchi as she studied the problem. The hitwoman picked up the paper with a smile.

“That’s right, I don’t care about this,” she said with a smile as she ripped up Myuura’s paper. Myuura and Yamamoto looked at her in shock. Tsuna glared at her as she stood up. “It has no love. It has nothing to do with me anyway.”

“No wonder Touka can’t stand her,” Yamamoto grumbled. With satisfaction Tsuna watches as she stiffens, but she still leaves.

“Oh right!” Myuura suddenly exclaims, “I saw this in a book my dad was reading!” The boys looked back at her, surprised.

Thus, they called Myuura’s father. Said man arrived and looked over the problem, ignoring the smug look that Myuura was giving Yamamoto.

“My dad’s a university professor,” she bragged. Yamamoto shot her a poisonous look.

“So, you could have called him earlier,” Tsuna deadpanned. Myuura paled at that.

“There’s no problem with you not being able to solve this problem,” Myuura-sensei looked up at them, “This is a very hard, university-level question. You cannot solve it because it cannot happen.”

“No, it can be proven,” Reborn spoke up, getting down from the hammock that he had put up after the first night, warily glancing at Michiko as he did so. The cat stared at him. Reborn continued, trying to ignore her as he did so, “If, at first, the papers had glue on them, then when they fell, the glue would stick them together.”

“I wouldn’t have thought…” Myuura-sensei murmured in shock.

“Or you could just stab them right as they started to fall,” Tsuna said as he gave Michiko head skritches. Both Yamamoto and Myuura looked at him in shock. “And it’s not a math problem, it’s a logic problem masquerading as a math problem. The only way to solve the problem is to use logic. It has nothing to do with math, but the inclusion of the dimensions of the paper and the height at which they are dropped make it seem as if you need that information.”

“You mean that you’ve had the answer this whole time?” Myuura asked shocked.

“Does that mean that I win?” Yamamoto wanted to know.

“Yes, I’ve had the answer all along. I wanted to see where you two went with it. Besides, neither of you asked if I knew the answer,” Tsuna shrugged, “And no, Yamamoto, you don’t win.”

Myuura-sensei shuffled his daughter out of the Sawada house, slightly embarrassed and vowing to not assume when it came to problems anymore. Myuura, who had asked Reborn to come with her despite losing, was in shock over his answer that he could not leave until he had made Tsuna into the a great tenth generation mafia boss.

“Ah, thank you for your help, Tsuna-kun,” Yamamoto grinned at his classmate, before shooting a concerned look over at Touka, “Will she be fine getting back home?”

“Baka. Don’t talk about me as if I’m not in the room,” Touka grumbled as she woozily stood up.
“She should be fine, but just in case, could you walk her home? I would do it, but she would probably worry herself over my safety coming back,” Tsuna asked, delighted and worried at having the two of them spend time alone with each other. Yamamoto nodded with a grin and slipped Touka’s arm over his shoulder.

The Next Morning:

Tsuna’s eye twitched as he felt and heard his novice stalker. As if he didn’t have to deal with enough. In an effort to avoid the whole issue, he started a light jog to try to get her to give up. She simply followed him until they reached the bridge. He finally paused long enough to let her catch up and turned.

“Is there something that you need, Myuura-san?” He eyed her make-shift armour with distaste. She was panting hard.

“Good morning, Tsuna-san.” She missed his glare as she pulled off the motorcycle helmet she was wearing, revealing dark circles under her eyes. “I was thinking too much last night and didn’t get enough sleep.”

“You dress up like that when you don’t get enough sleep?” Tsuna muttered under his breath.

“If Reborn-chan is really a hitman and you’re going to be a tenth generation mafia boss, then you must be really strong,” she went on as if she didn’t hear him, and placed her helmet back on, “If you win, I’ll accept everything.” With that she lunged at him with a hockey stick. Tsuna raised an eyebrow and stepped to the side. He had no desire to fight her, and no reason to do more than dodge. Again and again she tried to hit him, and again and again he dodged her.

“Kumichou!” came the cry of Gokudera from the street before the bridge, “Look out!” This was accompanied by the bomber throwing a large amount of dynamite into the air towards the two on the bridge. Tsuna dived out of the way of the blast zone.

When the smoke cleared, Tsuna shot a look of disappointment towards Gokudera who was running up with Yamamoto. Not far behind them was Kyoko and Hana, looking alarmed.

“Kumichou, are you alright?” Gokudera asked, a sweeping gaze checking the former Hokage for any injuries.

“I’m fine, she barely knew how to-” Tsuna cut himself off, eyes darting across the bridge, searching. “Where’s Myuura-san?” he demanded.

“What?” Gokudera looked at the other shocked. A scream from over the side of the bridge caught their attention and all three hurried to the side. In the river, desperately trying to keep her head above the rushing water, was Myuura. A coldness settled over him. Without a second thought, Tobirama climbed over the railing and jumped in after her.

Tobirama swam with the current, letting it carry him to Myuura even faster. He let out a grunt as he wrapped an arm around her chest and took on some of the weight of her armour.

“We have to get to the side!” he yelled over the rushing water, aiming them at the bank at an angle, “You have to swim with me!”

Terrified, the girl complied with his orders.
When they got close enough to the bank, Gokudera and Yamamoto grabbed Myuura, combining their strengths to pull the water-logged girl in armour out, while Kyoko and Hana grabbed the more coherent Tobirama and helped him out of the river.

All of the teens panted, the two wet teens as they lay there and the other four as they stood near them. Tobirama sat up, a relieved smile on his face and caught Kyoko’s eye. This had the result of causing Tobirama and Kyoko to break out into relieved laughter, their friends soon joining them. Yamamoto pulled Tobirama up from the ground with a smile. Hana’s laughter abruptly cut off as she glanced behind Tobirama at the girl from Midori. The other’s laughter died off and they turned to see what had caught the attention of Hana.

Myuura was in a seiza bow facing them.

“Hanshi, this one is sorry for the trouble that this one has caused. This one is beyond happy to see your face once more in person.” She did not come out of the seiza bow as she spoke. Tobirama observed her for a moment, narrowing his eyes in thought.

“I had thought that you were smarter than what you have shown me,” he finally said. Myuura’s head jerked up, the rest of her upper body following in shock.

“H-Hanshi!” she gasped.

“At least that monkey of a teammate of yours did some good,” he grumbled. Yamamoto, Hana, and Kyoko gave Tobirama confused looks. Gokudera choked on spit.

“P-please! Let me make it up to you! I want to be by your side!” Myuura pleaded. Tobirama huffed and rolled his eyes. He let his coldness go before holding out a hand to her.

“Well, you can’t do that by sitting around now can you, Haru-chan?” She beamed at him and took the hand. The other’s smiled at them, a little confused, but accepting of the newcomer to their group. They crowded around, asking each other questions, and sharing little facts of their lives.

Above them, on the bridge, Hibari Kyoya stared down at the group, a considering look on his face, but his posture was one of contempt. Yamamoto watched as he turned away from the group and walked away. The baseball star was hit with the sudden urge to keep Tsuna and Hibari as far away from one another as possible, but to his shock he felt the need to do so for Hibari’s sake, not Tsuna’s.

Michiko Explores!

Michiko Meets the Girls: Part One, Kyoko-chan

The day after her Tsu-kun brought her home, he woke up before the sun was even up. Michiko was sleepily curious as to what he was doing. She was more concerned with going back to sleep through, so as he moved around his room with the lights on, she burrowed into a strange soft short fabric tunnel to hide from the light. She wanted to sleep! She was woken from her dozing off by her tunnel lifting off the ground and swinging around.

Paralyzed by fear, she latched onto the bottom of the tunnel with her claws. She couldn't make a sound, too shocked to manage it.

The tunnel bounced, getting lower each time. Then the pattern changed to swinging forwards and backwards. Michiko calmed a bit at the repetitive motion and relaxed a little. After a short period of time the swinging slowed and then stopped. Outside of the tunnel Michiko could hear voices,
one she didn't recognize but the other was her Tsu-kun!

Michiko wiggled her way over to one of the openings and poked her head out with a tiny meow.

“Tsuna-kun, you, ah, seem to have a passenger,” the girl giggled. Michiko sniffed her when she bent and offered her hand. The girl smelled of books and cakes and lingering sweat. There was also a very faint smell of ozone that Michiko guessed came from being around her Tsu-kun.

“This is Michiko, I found her yesterday. I don't know what she was doing in my hoodie pocket,” her Tsu-kun gently pulled her out of the tunnel, no pocket, “Michiko, this is Kyoko-chan, one of my friends.”

Kyoko-chan lightly scratched Michiko's head. Michiko gave a purr.

“Do we need to go back to your house then Tsuna-kun?” Kyoko-chan asked, looking up.

“Actually, do you have some safety pins?” Tsu-kun asked instead.

“Yes, what are you thinking?” Kyoko-chan said slowly. Tsu-kun handed Michiko over to Kyoko-chan and turned the hoodie around so that the hood part was in front.

“She can ride in the hood, but I want to make sure it won't swing around or that it's too easy to get out of.” Tsu-kun took Michiko back as Kyoko-chan ran back inside her house and after a bit came back out with a handful of small silver items. She came in close to Tsu-kun and Michiko and did something with the silver objects and Tsu-kun’s hoodie.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! Please leave a review, or a kudos, or even a bookmark (yes I check those too) before you leave. If you want to scream at me more, or just chat about this or other things, my Tumblr is available at rinrinp42.
A Head Prefect’s Annoyance

Chapter Notes

Thank you everyone for the reviews, kudos, and bookmarks! Now, I really want to do a piece of calligraphy art for this, but I’m not really sure what line or phrase would be best (don’t ask me to choose a favorite! That’s like asking me to choose a favorite child if I had children!), so I’m asking you, dear readers, let me know what you would love to see as a combination water color and calligraphy. If you don’t want to leave it as a review, drop by my Tumblr and leave it in my ask box.

Chapter 6: A Head Prefect’s Annoyance

Tsuna hurried down to the kitchen post his change into the school uniform. He stopped as he entered the kitchen. Sitting at the breakfast table was not only his mother and Reborn, but Bianchi and Lambo as well.

“Why are you here?” he asked Bianchi. She ignored him to feed Reborn as if the hitman was a baby.

“Lambo loves gratin!” the actual child cheered before taking a bite. He immediately dropped his spoon and started to jump around, chanting that it was hot. “I dropped my spoon,” he realized mournfully. Nana giggled, and handed him a glass of water. The child chugged the water, cooling his mouth.

“You need to blow on the food first to let it cool down,” she told him, doing so for him using her own spoon. Tsuna let a small smile grace his face; he knew that his mother had wanted a large family, but his father had only given her him. It was… nice, to see her able to be a mother to a child that didn’t have the memories of a bloody life before this one- at least, he didn’t have the memories yet. The smile slipped from his face as Bianchi spoke up.

“Ah! That’s right!” She blew on the spoon that she had gratin on and feed it to Reborn. Tsuna’s face twisted as if he had smelled something disgusting as Reborn let the older teen feed him.

“Just remember, Lambo-chan, once you’re an adult, unless a disease affects you, you should feed yourself,” Nana seemed to ignore the other two, but Tsuna knew his mother. “Tsu-kun, sit down and eat your breakfast with us today. You’ve been running off to school before we could lately,” Nana looked at him imploringly.

“Sorry, Mama, but I have to hurry if I don’t want to be late. I’ll just take some toast.” Nana sighed and pointed to the plate that held some buttered toast and a few slices of bacon. Tsuna beamed at her and slipped around the table to grab the breakfast and give her a peck on the cheek in thanks.

Tsuna grabbed his school bag and rushed from the house. Behind him, Reborn hastily swallowed his mouthful of gratin and jumped down from the table to follow after his student, plans of punishment running through his mind.

For all of his athleticism, Reborn did have a body not unlike that of a toddler and was unable to keep up with an extraordinarily athletic teenager who had the home-field advantage.
“At least,” he grumbled as he set a gruelling pace towards Namimori Middle, “I know where he’s going.”

A little before the school came into view, Reborn saw Miura Haru standing at a crossroads, biting her lip and looking nervous.

“How’s he going?” he slowed down, his ingrained gentleman coming out. That’s fine, he thought, I know where he’s going, I can pause for a moment.

“Reborn-chan! I was hoping for Hanshi- that is, I was trying to decide if it would be better to wait by Kumichou’s house or by the school. I have a bento for him,” she explained. He looked at her. She had longer legs and, for all her abysmal fighting skills, was a decent runner given how she had kept up with Tsuna two days previous.

“He headed to the school already. I was going to catch up with him. You can come with me,” he offered. She beamed at him and bent down to reduce the distance he needed to jump.

Once they reached the school, Reborn directed her to Tsuna’s classroom, but upon arrival, they did not see him there.

“Strange. I did not think that he went anywhere else before school,” Reborn murmured with a frown.

Haru bit her lip again. As Koharu, she had not developed the skills necessary for sensing, instead she had concentrated on learning traps and how to use her wires. She wished that she had done more now. No wonder Hanshi is disappointed in me, I could have been so much better than I was, she wailed in her head.

She ignored Reborn’s muttering and started to head to the entrance, she had no idea where Tsuna might be, but maybe she could find him tomorrow.

“Huh?” a voice interrupted her brooding, “Miura Haru, right? What are you doing here?”

Haru looked up from the bento, realizing that her feet had taken her back to the entrance while she moped. Reborn gave an irritated huff.

“I was hoping to give Kumichou this bento,” she confessed, “But he’s not in what Reborn-chan said was his classroom.”

“Of course he’s not in the classroom, it’s the fourth,” she looked at the two of them as if they were stupid. At their confused looks, she gave a sigh and walked past them, “Follow me.”

She led them through the school, out onto the track field, and to the equipment shed out near it. She walked around to the side that was facing away from the school building and climbed the tree next to it, swinging from the tree to the roof of the shed.

“Come on,” she called them up. With a confused blink, Haru followed her, straining more than the other girl to pull herself up. Reborn just hung onto Haru. On the roof, Tsuna was laying on his stomach, holding a pair of binoculars to his face. Kyoko shook her head in exasperation. Reborn and Haru looked at Tsuna in askance.

“Tsuna-kun, you really need to stop this,” Kyoko sighed as she settled down next to him, pulling out some of her own homework that wasn’t due for a few days to work on. When Haru and Reborn copied her in settling down, she reached over and handed Haru another pair of binoculars. Haru took them and looked in the same direction as Tsuna, Reborn doing the same with his own pair of
binoculars. After a bit of searching, Haru landed on the window that Tsuna was looking in.

“Is, is that Hibari-san? As in the Hibari-san that attacks everyone?” Haru asked bewildered. Tsuna made an affirmative noise.

“Ever since we were children, Tsuna-kun’s hated Hibari-senpai,” Kyoko explained.

“I don’t hate him. I’m reasonably cautious,” Tsuna interrupted with a grumble.

“You glare at him all the time and basically stalk him. You did the same to a lesser extent to Yamamoto-kun until recently. Everyone in class thought you hated him. I’m pretty sure he was the only one who didn’t,” Kyoko retorted, “Well, him and Hana-chan and me. But Hana-chan and I have accepted that you dislike any form of a lack of manners that you don’t initiate.”

“Just because I believe in social rules,” Tsuna grumbled. Kyoko rolled her eyes at him and snorted.

“Whatever. What’s going on this month at the Committee Meeting?”

“Well, for some bizarre reason, the Planting Committee is almost all there. Most of them are just standing there behind their representative. One of the representatives of another committee wanted to know which group had the Reception Room. When another explained that it was the Disciplinary Committee’s she backed down. Hibari-senpai gave her a smile, I’m guessing. Apparently he accepted her apology. Wait,” Tsuna’s head jerked back in shock, “Are they really that stupid?” he asked in disbelief. Kyoko put down her pencil, keeping a hand on the work as she turned her head to Tsuna.

“What? What’s happening?” She turned to Haru, “Here, share the binoculars with me.” Haru silently moved closer and put the binoculars so that they each could use one half.

“The Tree Planting Committee is challenging Hibari,” Tsuna reported and then started to relay what was being said, “‘We’re against the Disciplinary Committee getting special treatment.’ The rest of the committee agrees, Hibari-senpai said something, I don’t have a good angle for it and somebody vetoed my planting microphones in the room.”

“It’s illegal,” Kyoko deadpanned.

“‘The Tree Planting Committee is different. We have to deal with issues such as global warming. We are very conscious, aren’t we?’ How pretentious of them. Hibari-senpai looks peeved. Oh, look, some of the Disciplinary Committee were waiting outside. How convenient.” Tsuna put the binoculars in his bag and moved into a crouch.

“You’re leaving?” Reborn frowned at him.

“Yeah. The Disciplinary Committee is going to bring the Tree Planting Committee here, and frankly, I don’t want to be here when they do. They’ll probably claim I’m doing something to break the rules,” Tsuna told him as he swung down from the tree. Kyoko gathered her homework and followed him.

“Well, if you didn’t seem to disrespect Hibari-senpai all the time, his loyal lapdogs wouldn’t try to take you down as a show of loyalty to him,” she told him. Haru and Reborn were silent as they got down.

“What are you doing here anyway Haru-chan?” Tsuna asked when they were all on the ground once more. The girl looked a bit startled at his question.
“I, uh, wanted to give you this!” She thrust the bento into his hands. He looked down at the bento, bemused.

“Thanks,” he finally said, “You should probably head out.” Haru nodded and rushed out. Tsuna watched her leave before turning to Kyoko, Reborn having disappeared once more. “We should probably get to class.”

Kyoko snorted.

At Lunch:

Reborn stopped Gokudera and Yamamoto as they started to walk towards the roof to meet with Tsuna, Kyoko, and Hana for lunch. The three original friends had all brought their lunches, or in Tsuna’s case, been given a lunch, while the two newcomers to the group had either needed to buy one (Gokudera) or had already eaten theirs in the morning and thus needed another (Yamamoto).

“Tsuna decided it would be best to eat lunch inside today; there seems to be a storm brewing,” the hitman lied to them. They blinked at him. Hayato’s brow furrowed.

“Does Tsuna have somewhere in mind?” Yamamoto asked, cocking his head to the side.

“Yes. Here are the directions.” Yamamoto had a contemplative look as the two followed his directions.

On the Roof:

“I'm just saying,” Kyoko said around eating, “You should back off before Hibari-senpai finally decides he's had enough of your stalking and glares.”

“So what if he does?” Tsuna snorted. Kyoko rolled her eyes.

“You've obviously changed your mind about Yamamoto-kun, so maybe, for all that he is extremely violent, you are wrong about Hibari-senpai,” Kyoko pointed out.

“Wha- when did I ever say that I was wrong about Yamamoto?!” Tsuna sputtered.

“We're waiting for him and the new kid,” Kyoko deadpanned.

“Speaking of tolerable monkeys,” Hana interrupted, “where are they?”

“So you noticed,” Reborn came out, dressed as a sea urchin and rolling towards Tsuna. Tsuna's eye twitched as he did a backwards roll to avoid the hitman. Kyoko and Hana stared.

“...Why are you dressed like that?” Hana finally asked. Reborn stared at her with a vacant smile. Her eye twitched in annoyance, but it was Tsuna that interrupted.

“What is the point of dressing as a sea urchin?” Reborn pouted at his correct guess.

“It’s for spying on people who commute on long distance trains,” he finally admitted. Tsuna raised an eyebrow in disbelief.

“Where would one even get a sea urchin costume?” Kyoko wondered, frowning into the distance.
“Bianchi made it for me as a Home Economics project when she was in Elementary School,” Reborn smirked in delight.  *Just a little bit longer now.*

“You knew Bianchi-san when she was in Elementary School?” Tsuna demanded with a look of disgust, but interrupted Reborn before he could respond, “And what do you mean, ‘so you noticed’? What did you do to Yamamoto and Hayato-kun?”

“I simply told them that you wanted to eat inside today and directed them to a suitable room.” Kyoko and Tsuna simultaneously sucked in a shocked breath. Hana looked at them both confused.

“What am I missing?” she demanded of her friends.

“This morning, I led Haru-chan and Reborn-san to the shed by the track field,” Kyoko replied grim-faced as she and Tsuna hurried to pack up the remains of their lunches. Hana paled and hurried to help them.

The three hurried down from the roof and through the school towards the Reception Room.

“Why did that Lion Monkey even do this?” Hana huffed as they ran past some of their classmates.

“Probably because I keep dodging his training,” Tsuna responded grimly, “I'll talk to him about it later.”

“You better,” Hana growled, angry at the situation.

When they got to the Reception Room, they found a pile of unconscious Disciplinary Committee members right inside the door.

“Go, monkeys,” Hana murmured, “I may have to start using your names.”

Kyoko let out a soft growl as her eyes landed on the unconscious Hayato sprawled behind the couch.

Tsuna let himself grow icy as his eyes landed on the last two people in the room. Yamamoto was fighting Hibari, if you can call dodging all hits fighting. Tobirama let himself be impressed and felt a sliver of pride. Yamamoto was keeping himself out of reach of Hibari and his tonfa. But as he was processing what was happening, Hibari suddenly switched where he was aiming and managed to knock Yamamoto back into the couch, where he hit his head and was knocked out. Hibari advanced on the two unconscious students. He stopped as something flew past his face. He turned his head to look at the pencil now imbedded in the wall, before turning to look at Tobirama.

“Don’t you go near them,” the younger male hissed with a glare. Hibari took a step forward and Tobirama tensed, his eyes trained on Hibari’s chest to watch for tells on what the Head of the Disciplinary Committee would do. Before taking a step closer to Hibari, Tobirama whispered to the girls to go and collect their friends and get them out of Hibari’s warpath.

Tobirama tensed and put his weight on the balls of his feet, readying himself for lunging forward. A bloodthirsty smile overcame Hibari’s face as he started to move forwards at Tobirama. Tobirama moved and brought his arm up to punch downwards at Hibari’s head, only giving a momentary thought to the bullet that whizzed through the place where his head had just been. Before his hand closed all the way, something slipped into it. Tobirama took it in with his
peripheral vision. A green slipper? No, Leon. The shape shifting chameleon had decided to be his weapon and Tobirama would use him to the full extent, even if the shape was ridiculous.

He brought it down on Hibari, who was stunned by the sheer audacity of someone actually hitting him with a slipper. Hibari quickly recovered and retaliated against Tobirama, swinging a tonfa up to catch Tobirama in the side.

Tobirama danced back and out of the path of the tonfa, and risked a glance to the girls who were trying to pull the other two out of the room. There were now more Disciplinary Committee members at the door.

“Kyoko-chan! Hana-chan! The window!” Tobirama had to duck to keep the tonfa from hitting his head, and refocused on his fight against the Committee Head. He swung the arm with the Leon-slipper up, trying to direct the still swinging arm back into Hibari. But Hibari had already started to move, his body was no longer where it was when he had tried to hit Tobirama’s head. Instead of Tobirama’s arm hitting Hibari’s arm, Tobirama’s arm swung up and

\textbf{Thwack!}

For a moment, Tobirama could only stare up into the shocked dark eyes of Hibari, his own eyes drawn to the bright red mark he had made upon the older male’s cheek.

But Tobirama had trained himself to react quickly even in shock, and he darted past the still stunned Hibari towards the girls who were looking unsure as to what to do now that they were at the window. As Tobirama passed Reborn, the hitman jumped and Tobirama let him land on his head.

“Out the window!” Tobirama snapped at his friends before glancing at the green slipper in his hand, “Help us out, Leon?”

The slipper started to glow and just as Tobirama jumped out of the window after his friends, it changed shape into a hang-glider. Holding on with one hand, Tobirama reached down and caught Kyoko’s free hand with the other as she kept a death grip on Yamamoto and swung a foot to Hana for her to latch onto with the arm not clinging to Hayato. Tobirama struggled to aim the hang-glider, but managed to at least aim them towards the pool.

“Hana! If you get close enough to the ground, let go of either me or Hayato!” Tobirama yelled down to his friend, foregoing the proper suffixes in lieu of quickly giving instructions, “Same to you, Kyoko!”

Both girls yelled back an affirmative and kept their eyes on the ground as it rose up to meet them. Hana let go of Tobirama as she tried to make sure that Hayato landed at least somewhat softly.

At the edge of the pool, Reborn jumped off of Tsuna’s head and Leon started to glow once more.

“You’ve got to be-” Tobirama was able to hiss out before he, Kyoko, and Yamamoto hit the water.

Tsuna came up coughing, and swam over to where Kyoko was holding up the still unconscious Yamamoto. Together they pulled him over to the edge and then out of the pool. By this point, both he and Hayato were starting to regain consciousness.

“What happened?” Hayato muttered as he looked around. Yamamoto simply made an inquisitory sound with a matching smile. Kyoko and Hana hit both of them upside the head.
Tsuna scowled at them both.

“What made you ever even consider going into the Reception Room?” he demanded, “That is Disciplinary Committee turf! Even if Hayato didn’t know, you sure as hell should have Yamamoto!”

“You mean… you didn’t send us there?” Hayato frowned up at him. Tsuna set his jaw and gave a sharp shake of his head in the negative, before transferring his glare over to Reborn.

The hitman ignored him, staring back up at the room they had just come from, and at the dark haired boy staring out of it’s window. *Interesting.*

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1. So, I’m going to have Hana give specific monkey names to those that she views as more tolerable/has to spend a lot of time around. She called Reborn a Lion Monkey as in Golden Lion Tamarin, a fairly small species of monkey.

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**Michiko Meets The Girls: Part Two, Hana-chan**

Tsu-kun, Kyoko-chan, and Michiko set out on a light jog away from Kyoko-chan’s house. After a while, during which Michiko was able to see where her Tsu-kun was going, they came up to another house. Michiko twisted around to look up at her Tsu-kun and gave a questioning meow.

“Shh,” he shushed her as he knocked on the door. It opened to show a man roughly the same age as Mama.

“Good morning, Tsuna-kun, Kyoko-chan,” he greeted them, “Ah, I see you’ve recruited someone else for your runs. What is their name?”

“Her name is Michiko,” her Tsu-kun answered, and the man reached out and gently scratched her head, “Is Hana-chan up yet?”

The man laughed and shook his head, “Somehow she still hasn't managed. Go on up.”

Michiko looked around curiously as her Tsu-kun bounded up the stairs, Kyoko-chan giggling as she followed them. As they came closer to a door, to their destination, her Tsu-kun shushed Kyoko-chan.

At the door, her Tsu-kun slowly turned the handle and pushed the door open. The room was dark. Her Tsu-kun gently pulled her from the hood and handed her to Kyoko-chan.

Her Tsu-kun slipped through the room, coming to a stop next to the bed in the room. Michiko and Kyoko-chan stayed in the doorway. Her Tsu-kun glanced back to Kyoko-chan and gave a nod. With repressed laughter the girl flipped the light switch and her Tsu-kun yelled.

“Get Up! There’s a giant nine-tailed demon fox attacking!”

The lump on the bed jerked up with a yelp, revealing a girl with long wavy hair.

“Wha-! Where-!” she scrambled off of the bed, “Sawada! Why do you keep doing this?!”

“You agreed to go on runs with us every morning. It’s not my fault that you are incapable of waking up before we get here,” her Tsu-kun’s voice was filled with mirth.

“You- argh!” the girl threw up her arms, turning away from her Tsu-kun, “Huh? Kyoko-chan,
what’s that you’re holding?”

Kyoko-chan lifted her up a bit to show her to the stranger.

“This is Michiko! She’s Tsuna-kun’s,” Kyoko-chan happily informed. Her Tsu-kun walked over and took Michiko back from Kyoko-chan.

“Michiko, this is Hana-chan, we like to make her life a bit more interesting,” her Tsu-kun told her as he stepped out of the room, ignoring Hana-chan as she screeched like a monkey as he closed the door.
Chapter Notes

And now Wandering_Shadows has looked it over, and I have made the needed changes, yay!
Thank you to those of you who did review, left kudos, or bookmarked this! I love to see/read the feedback that you all send in!
If you'll check, you will see that I've updated the tags once more- but I would suggest not checking them until the end :3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 7: Ninja vs Gyoza Fist!

When Tsuna returned home post his usual morning run with Kyoko and Hana, where they had been recently joined by Gokudera, he found both bathrooms occupied. One by Bianchi taking a shower, and the other by Lambo. Why are they even here? I can understand Lambo, he’s a child, but didn’t Bianchi make her own living arrangements? Tsuna gave a disgruntled huff and gathered a washcloth and wet it in the kitchen. At the very least he would be able to wipe off the sweat.

When Tsuna entered the kitchen, Reborn, Bianchi, and Lambo were sitting at the table with food placed in front of them as Nana cooked. Tsuna eyed the older two as they did nothing to offer to help Nana.

“I’ll be done in a minute, Tsu-kun,” Nana smiled at her son, “Why don’t you go and sit down?”

Tsuna returned her smile and picked up the plate with the croissant on it as he made his way to the table.

“Mama, did you get up early to make these?” he asked, having not seen her when he left this morning on his run.

“Ah, no, I ran out and picked them up from the bakery yesterday afternoon. I just had to reheat them,” Nana replied as she walked over with a small plate of fried eggs to place in front of Tsuna. He smiled at her as he picked up his fork, “Itadakimasu."” Without looking, Tsuna stabbed the fork into the table, just missing Reborn’s hand, before lifting the fork and beginning to eat the eggs. Reborn glowered at Tsuna, who was ignoring him as he ate.

“And how am I to train you if I cannot show you the hardships of life?” Reborn said waspishly.

“What does you stealing food from a growing boy have to do with the Mafia? You haven't actually tried to teach me a thing, just shot at me and now you're trying to steal my food.”

“Tsunayoshi! Reborn is our guest!” Nana snapped, giving Tsuna a reproachful look.

“... right, I apologize. I'm going to head out to school now,” Tsuna looked away from Nana as he got back up and left the house with a muttered “Itterasshai.”

Tsuna gave a sigh as he closed the gate behind him. He hated disappointing Nana, but he couldn't
stand Reborn’s presumption that teaching was not explaining anything; the man had only ever explained the reason he was here! Tobirama couldn’t imagine doing that to any of his students. Tsuna paused as he saw a new Chinese snack stand in the neighborhood. A small child was sitting on one of the stools. Tsuna side-tracked to the stand and ordered some gyoza[^2], watching the child from the corner of his eye as the owner handed over a folder and some food. Tsuna had no reason to stay at the stand after getting his food, so he headed on to school. As Tsuna came close to the neighbor’s house, he heard a whine.

The chihuahua was eyeing the gyoza in Tsuna’s hand, and Tsuna gave a smirk.

“You want this? Too bad. This is my breakfast,” he taunted the dog as it gave another whine. A deeper growl interrupted his taunting. Tsuna’s eyebrows shot up in surprise, Since when did they get a doberman? Said doberman nosed open the gate and came out into the street, growling at Tsuna. Before Tsuna could do anything, the child from the Chinese stand jumped out in front of him. Tsuna's eyes widened in alarm and he started to reach for the child. The child circled their arms around their body, creating the illusion of a circle, slightly turned while pulling back their right hand, curling the fingers in as they did so along with sucking in a breath of air. Their right hand twisted sharply down and out as they gave a “ha!” and a gust of air swept past the doberman.

Tsuna paused, confused as to what the child was doing. Suddenly, the dog was in the air and the child twitched their right hand that was now straight and in front of their face. The doberman floated above the open gate and was set down in a sitting position, looking startled. The child ran over to the gate and closed and locked it. Tsuna looked down at the child, curiously.

“What exactly did you do, kid?” he asked, starting to squat so as to be on the same level as the strange child. They just bowed to him and ran off. Tsuna blinked after them, but he had to get to class and did not have the time to run after strange children with strange techniques.

At Namimori Middle School:

“I'm not sure what the kid did, but it did take care of the doberman,” Tsuna spread his hands out in front of himself, showing that he did not have any more answers for his friends. Hana and Yamamoto looked only vaguely interested, Hayato looked thoughtful, Kyoko had a look of shock on her face.

“Your neighbors have a doberman now? And they forgot to lock their gate? What if a child walked by? It obviously has socialization issues!” The girl ranted. Tsuna smiled at her indulgently.

“Haha! You're more concerned with the dog than the psychic kid Tsuna met?” Yamamoto grinned at her. Hayato huffed at the baseball star.

“I highly doubt that the kid's psychic,” Hayato sniffed derisively.

“Well, we don't actually know one way or another,” Tsuna shrugged, thinking of all of the things he had seen as Tobirama that could not be explained with science.

“Really, Tsunayoshi, believing in psychics,” Reborn taunted from Tsuna's desk, popping his head out to smirk at his wayward student. With an irritated look, Tsuna pushed Reborn back into the desk.

“People who believe in magical Mafia Flames shouldn't make fun of other beliefs, especially when they are more likely than magical flames that don't burn and are named after weather.
phenomenons,” Tsuna hissed as he slammed his desk close. Hana shook her head with an amused smile, Hayato gave a considering frown acknowledging Tsuna's point, Kyoko smirked, and Yamamoto looked at them all bemused.

“Speaking of Flames, it really isn't fair that something called Flames doesn't burn,” Kyoko said offhandedly. Yamamoto and Hayato gave her alarmed looks, but Hana and Tsuna just rolled their eyes.

“I will never understand your pyromaniacal tendencies,” Hana informed her oldest friend. Yamamoto and Hayato both raised their eyebrows in surprise.

“You’re a pyromaniac?” Yamamoto asked, observing Kyoko with new eyes.

“No! Well, kind of? I just like to watch fire and enjoy the properties of it, that’s all,” Kyoko explained. Hayato gave her a skeptical look as Hana and Tsuna ignored Kyoko to compare their homework.

“It is quite enchanting, isn’t it?” Yamamoto grinned at her with understanding. Before Kyoko could respond, their teacher came in calling the class to order and started the day’s lessons.

At the end of the day, Tsuna was on cleanup duty and Kyoko and Hana were waiting for him. Yamamoto had to leave for baseball practice and Hayato had to run a quick errand, but swore that he would return as soon as he was done. While Tsuna was focused on sweeping the hall in front of their classroom, he saw from the corner of his eye the child from that morning talking to the girls. Both of the girls shook their heads at the child’s question. The child caught sight of him and rushed over. She said something to him in what most likely was Chinese, and Tsuna cursed that he hadn't yet tried to learn the language, having been more focused on English and Italian- the first because it was spoken in places all over the world and the second because that was what his father and false grandfather spoke Before. However, he was able to get an idea of what they were saying when they pointed upwards before running off.

“Tsuna-kun?” Kyoko ask as she and Hana walked up, “Do you know that child?”

“No. But I have run into them before,” he replied, staring after the child, “This morning.”

The girls nodded in understanding.

“Are you going to see what they want?” Hana asked, ignoring the burn of a glare coming from behind her; she really did not want to know.

“Of course,” Tsuna replied also ignoring the dark figure glaring around the corner at him. He smiled at his two friends, “Could one of you take over for me?”

Hana gave a sharp nod, taking the broom from him, “Go talk to the Squirrel Monkey[^4].”

On the roof:

Tsuna walked onto the roof, saw the child and couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow. The child stood on one foot, body perpendicular to the side fence, and consequently Tsuna once he turned to face them. Their left leg, the one in front, was bent up so that their foot was by their right knee. Their left arm was straightened out and bent at the wrist with their palm facing out. Their right wrist was
lined up with their left and in their left hand they held a gyoza bun, which they were eating.

“You’ve come. Now I’ll defeat you!” Their voice was high pitched, and they pointed at Tsuna with their left hand.

“Why?” Tsuna asked, his brow furrowing; he could think of nothing that would have made this child wish to fight him. The child did remind Tsuna a little of the child-soldiers from before Konoha. If this child was some sort of killer then they might be after him because he was the Decimo candidate, but if that was the case then the Vongola as a whole had much to answer for.

“This morning I did not notice your face and ignorantly helped you,” the child said instead of answering, “But this time, I’ll defeat you!”

Tsuna resisted the urge to roll his eyes at the child, and stared impassively at them. From above them both came Reborn’s voice and Tsuna turned to face him.

“That is the so called hitman with the deadly arm, I-Pin.”

“Is that so?” Tsuna drawled, glancing over to child assassin.

“The kid’s other name is ‘The Human Bomb,’” Reborn continued as I-Pin finished off the gyoza.

I-Pin moved from the pose to a similar one only with their body turned towards Tsuna and the left hand out in front. With a frown Tsuna, let the coldness of Tobirama wash over him.

“Ready?” I-Pin called out, “Brace yourself!”

I-Pin seemed to glow, and Tobirama’s eyes widened. Is that chakra? The child repeated the moves that they had done that morning to move the dog. Tobirama could feel the technique washing over him, trying to latch on and he channeled chakra to his feet to keep him on the roof, but he was too late. Tobirama rose into the air, and moved as I-Pin directed. Tobirama grit his teeth and tried to focus on the feel of the technique, to find the weakness he could use to break out of I-Pin’s control. Just as Tobirama pushed back against I-Pin’s control with his chakra, Reborn shot a gas bullet filled with garlic smoke between the two of them.

Tobirama held his nose and frowned at the dissipating cloud.

“Why the garlic?” he asked, assuming that the smoke was for coverage and breaking I-Pin’s visual lock onto their opponent.

“The gaseous body you saw was thrown and shattered,” Reborn started to explain, “That is the true form of that technique, which is called the Gyoza Fist,” Tobirama raised both eyebrows and hummed, listening to Reborn but not taking his eyes off of I-Pin. “I-Pin compresses the stinky breath from eating all of those gyoza buns and throws it at an opponent’s nose. This causes the brain to be paralyzed and the muscles to move freely, making it seem as if you are controlled.”

Tobirama spared a second to throw a disbelieving look at Reborn.

“You can not possibly believe that that is at all how the technique works. That makes no sense at all and is more than a little ridiculous,” Tobirama thought of the one clan that he knew of that had anything at all related to food, the Akimichi, but even they did not have techniques that actually used food in such a way, “What if someone enjoyed the smell? Or was used to it? How could one’s brain be paralyzed and they didn’t die? It simply does not make any sense,” he continued, more than a little disgruntled at his so-called tutor believing such nonsense. It was far more likely that whomever had created the technique had tapped into chakra or something similar and used it to
control their opponents, not unlike the use of chakra strings by puppeteers or other enterprising nin.

A frustrated whine came from the child assassin as they started to sweat. Tobirama looked at them concerned. Tobirama jerked his head back in surprise when eight pinzu\[^4\] symbols appeared on their head. Reborn jumped down to stand next to Tobirama and started to explain.

“The countdown of the Pinzu Time Bomb has started. I-Pin is an extremely shy person, and when I-Pin reaches that limit, nine pinzu appear on the forehead. The number of pinzu will decrease until there is only one. At that point, gyoza gas will escape all parts of the body and a huge explosion will occur.”

Tobirama held back a sigh, *they are most definitely using some form of chakra*. Tobirama stiffened in alarm as he sensed someone coming up to the roof.

“Excuse me,” Kyoko power walked towards I-Pin, “You forgot this.” Kyoko held out a bag on a stick to I-Pin.

“Kyoko-chan!” Tobirama called out in alarm. Kyoko’s eyes widened as she caught sight of the pinzu on I-Pin’s forehead and she took a step back, only for I-Pin to latch onto her leg, the pinzu changing to the configuration for seven.

“During the Pinzu Countdown, I-Pin tends to edge towards people out of shyness,” Reborn said offhandedly as he watched the scene in front of him and Tobirama with a calculating gleam in his eyes.

Tobirama grit his teeth and ran to Kyoko’s side. He gripped I-Pin and tried to pull the human time bomb off of Kyoko.

“Tsuna-kun, what-”

“Human explosion of some sort. Not clear on all the details as I-Pin would need to survive doing so, but I doubt other people would,” Tobirama curtly interrupted her. Kyoko’s eyes widened and she sucked in a quick breath. Tobirama finally pulled I-Pin off and tossed the child away from them both, towards the door, as the countdown changed to six.

“Ah, Kumichou, there you are,” Hayato called out as he walked onto the roof and caught I-Pin as the pinzu changed to five.

Tobirama and Kyoko looked at Hayato in horror.

“Hayato! The kid!” Tobirama started to warn Hayato, to get the former nin to toss I-Pin away from any of them, but Hayato reacted too fast for Tobirama to finish and threw I-Pin back to Tobirama. When Tobirama caught the child, the pinzu were at four.

This time Tobirama tossed I-Pin away from the group, only for Reborn, dressed as a soccer player, to kick the child back at Tobirama. Tobirama pushed I-Pin away as the pinzu changed to three.

Yamamoto walked onto the roof and into the direct path of I-Pin.

“Yo, Tsuna, we’ve got repair work duty again,” he greeted them all with a smile.

“Yamamoto!” Tobirama barked out in warning. The baseball star finally noticed the child coming towards him, but due to the angle and the fact that I-Pin’s head was shaved, he mistook the assassin for a ball and caught and threw I-Pin back towards Tobirama and Kyoko as the pinzu changed to two.
Reborn aimed at Tobirama and took a shot. Instinctively, Tobirama dodged out of the way of the bullet, but that placed him out of reach of the child assassin. Kyoko’s eyes sharpened, her honey eyes taking on a red hue as she seemed to take in the entire situation as if time had slowed down for her. She redirected Yamamoto’s powerful throw so that I-Pin was headed into the open air above them.

I-Pin cleared them all just as the pinzu reached one and an out pour of energy created an explosion around the child.

As I-Pin started to fall back to the roof, Tobirama jumped into the air and caught the child, landing carefully and placing them on the ground.

“Hayato, do you have any rope?” he asked as he scanned I-Pin visually for any injuries.

“Ah, yes, here,” the former nin rummaged in his bag and pulled out some rope, remarking “Never know when you might need rope,” as he did so.

Tobirama nodded and took the rope to securely tie up I-Pin, pulling out the photograph that I-Pin had shown Kyoko and Hana earlier.

“That was a lucky move you made there Kyoko-chan,” Hayato remarked as Tobirama moved over to them. Kyoko gave him a narrowed eyed look.

“What can I say, sometimes you just have to be observant,” the girl replied, hidden meaning in her voice.

“Hayato, be nice. Kyoko’s younger than you,” Tobirama chided them both. Yamamoto looked between them, confused.

“It would only be by a few months though…” the baseball star murmured to himself. Tobirama ignored this and held the photograph out for all of them to look at. It was a man with a pear shaped head, short spiky brown hair only on the top, with small eyes, and smoking a cigar.

“...who is this suppose to be?” Hayato asked, brow furrowing in confusion.

“That is you!” I-Pin called out to Tobirama, “I will defeat you!”

The teens looked over to the child bewildered. Tobirama sighed and let go of his coldness.

Tsuna turned to Hayato, “You have some reading glasses in your bag right? Would you mind letting I-Pin borrow them for a moment?”

“Uh, yeah, sure,” Hayato looked away from the child assassin with his eyebrows still raised in disbelief. He pulled out his reading glasses and squatted in front of I-Pin to slip them on carefully. Once that was done, Tsuna held the photo up to show it to I-Pin. The child looked between Tsuna and the photo aghast.

“I-Pin wrong….” the child admitted after an outburst of Chinese. Hayato scowled at her, opening his mouth, but Tsuna interrupted him before he could say anything.

“It’s alright, I-Pin. You weren’t given the tools that you needed to properly do what was expected of you. That’s not on you. As it stands, I would like to offer for you to live with me while you are here in Namimori. We have the room, and we can go and get you a proper pair of glasses tomorrow. Does that sound good?” Tsuna crouched down next to I-Pin and gently untied the assassin. I-Pin looked at him in amazement.
“I-Pin would like that very much,” was the reply given.

At the Sawada House The Next Morning:

Tsuna, I-Pin, Reborn, and Bianchi sat at the table as Nana brought over dinner, having told them all to sit down while she brought over the food. Unlike Reborn and Bianchi, I-Pin actually thanked Nana as she placed the food down, granted the thanks was given in Chinese, but Tsuna thought that it still counted for the actual child having better manners than the grown man and the older teen.

“Ah, I-Pin, how long do you think you will be staying in Namimori?” Tsuna asked curiously.

“I-Pin has no job, but I-Pin has decided to stay in Japan and train,” the assassin explained, and Tsuna gave a hum of understanding.

“Nyahahaha! Lambo-san appears!” came the loud call from Lambo as he stood at the end of the table, “See, Lambo-san came to eat breakfast!”

The cow obsessed child looked more than pleased with himself. Tsuna rolled his eyes at the child’s attitude, but his attention was drawn to I-Pin who had jumped up onto the table, landing on Tsuna’s soup bowl and upsetting it. Tsuna hissed as the hot soup hit him, but looked at I-Pin in concern.

“What is it, I-Pin?” he asked, resisting the urge to reach for the child.

“You’re dull, Tsuna; protect your own food,” Reborn chided from across the table where he was holding his bowls of food off of the counter.

“I’m more concerned with I-Pin than my food!” Tsuna snapped back at the hitman.

“There is a strange broccoli monster!” I-Pin declared pointing at Lambo. Tsuna’s eyebrows rose and he looked to Lambo who hung his head in despair. *We really need to get glasses.*

“Not quite,” Tsuna murmured with humor at I-Pin before turning to Lambo, “Don’t take it too hard Lambo,” he started, but was interrupted by Lambo lifting his head and assuming a ridiculous countenance.

“It’s. A. Monster,” he drawled out in a lower voice. Tsuna’s lips twitched. *It would seem,* he thought, *that Lambo would very much like a playmate.* Lambo jumped up onto the table and repeated himself, before starting to chase I-Pin around. Tsuna gave a short laugh and pulled his and I-Pin’s food off the table and out of the way. As Lambo and I-Pin ran around, he carried the food back to the counter where Nana was.

“It looks like we won’t be eating at the table today, Mama,” Tsuna gave her a small grin.

“So it would seem. You might want to make sure that they don’t step on Michiko-chan on accident,” Nana pointed out with a smile. Tsuna nodded and scooped up his beloved cat who was watching the chase curiously. As he did so, the doorbell rang. When Tsuna opened the door, he saw Kyoko, Hana, Yamamoto, and Hayato standing there.

“Yo, Tsuna, Gokudera seemed bored so I suggested we come over here!” Yamamoto grinned. Hayato gave the baseball star a glare.
“We both thought we should hang out with you and bumped into each other on the way,” Hayato explained, shooting a confused look over to the girls after he finished.

“We’re here because we had plans with Tsuna-kun,” Kyoko gave him a smug smile and Hana rolled her eyes at her friend.

“Well, I have to take I-Pin to the doctor’s later, so why don’t we just all hang out in my room,” Tsuna sighed and motioned them in. Right before they were able to enter Tsuna’s room, Lambo and I-Pin ran in and chased each other around. Hayato frowned at this and picked up Lambo by the collar of his cow suit so as to stop the chase.

“Hey! Let Lambo-san go!” the child yelled at Hayato.

“Gokudera! That is not how you treat kids!” The sharp reprimand came from behind them, and the group turned to see Haru standing behind them.

“Why are you even here?” Hana raised an eyebrow at the other girl.

“I wanted to spend time with Kumichou,” Haru’s eyes darted to Tsuna, who was putting Michiko down outside of his room and shooing her away, and then back at Hana, before she caught sight of I-Pin, “Oh, another cute one!”

I-Pin stared at her and then pointed a finger at Haru, “A dumpling monster.”

Haru gasped. Lambo got up from where Hayato had dropped him, and dazedly looked towards I-Pin.

“I’m broccoli,” he muttered, trying to go back to their game. I-Pin turned to face him, at this point more annoyed than anything else.

“Go away!” I-Pin yelled at him, before using Gyoza Fist to drive the point home. After Lambo regained his bearings, his eyes were full of tears.

“Lambo-san with his bushy head won’t be beaten by someone like you with a freakish head!”

“Lambo, stop it!” Tsuna snapped, but was ignored by the child.

“You’re just a tail-head!” Lambo wailed.

On I-Pin’s forehead, the Pinzu Time Bomb Countdown began. Tsuna, Kyoko, Hayato, and Yamamoto’s eyes widened in alarm.

“Oh no,” Tsuna said, glancing around to try to find out how to stop I-Pin’s explosion or where to let it happen where it would not harm anyone or anything.

Lambo was still crying over his treatment by I-Pin, and was beginning to pull the Ten Year Bazooka out of his afro. Reborn snuck in and behind Lambo, and kicked him so that the Ten Year Bazooka landed on I-Pin and pulled the trigger.

“Reborn! Don’t kick him!” Haru scolded the hitman as smoke covered the room. When it cleared, there stood a teenage girl with two long braids and fairly long, choppy bangs. She was wearing a red and tan Tang style jacket over a fishnet high collar undershirt, with loose tan pants, and was holding a take-out box.

“Aww, all of you look so cute!” She grinned at them after a moment, “I could just eat you!” She
crackled as if she had made some sort of joke.

“Um, what just happened?” Haru asked, staring at the woman as if she was trying to place her.

“Lambo has a bazooka that makes people switch places with their future selves for five minutes,” Tsuna said absently as he reached out with his chakra and tried to figure out if the future I-Pin was a danger.

“Huh, what was it that ol’ one eye likes to call you?” the teen assassin pondered, and then snapped her fingers, “That’s right! Ni-sama! I don’t get it, but hey, it works well enough,” she shrugged, before pursing her lips for a moment at Haru, who’s eyes widened in shock. “Yeah, you still owe me so much dango by the way.”

“Anko?” Haru whispered under her breath as she looked at the future teen.

“Don’t you already have food?” Kyoko asked, amused as she pointed to the take-out box.

“What this? Nah, I’m not a fan of ramen like some people’s offspring. This is for Kawahira-san. I have to run deliveries for him because Ni-sama’s koibito is a fucking dick and doesn’t appreciate my hard work,” she complained, ignoring how Tsuna stiffened, “Man, you are way more relaxed than the rest of your family,” An-Pin continued now looking only at Kyoko, who raised her eyebrows.

“You are not the first to express that sentiment,” Kyoko replied amused, “Hanshi said it fairly often, which might be why some misconstrued him as hating my family.”

An-Pin looked around at all of them amused, “I think that’s it for me then, kiddos.” And pink smoke once more filled the room. When it cleared, the child I-Pin sat in the middle of the floor looking confused and clutching a snake plushie.

Kyoko raised her eyebrows in amusement, while Haru looked very concerned.

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1 Literally ‘I will receive’. Basically a way of saying thank you to all that had any part in the making of the food, kind of like the blessing/prayer Christians automatically do before food only more secular at this point.

2 Jiaozi, a Chinese dumpling typically consisting of ground meat and/or vegetable filling wrapped into a thinly rolled piece of dough that is sealed by pinching together the edges and cooked via boiled, steamed, or pan fried. Traditionally eaten on the Chinese New Year and year round in the northern provinces.

3 A New World species of monkey, ranging from 25 to 35 cm long, plus a 35 to 42 cm tail.

4 Pinzu are a numerical set of Mahjong numbering from 1 to nine, they are a five point flower in a circle. I-Pin’s numbers seem to start at 8.

5 Lover or Sweetheart.

6 A portmanteau of Anko and I-Pin, used in the same way as Kakabo to distinguish between the present and the future versions of them

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Michiko Explores!
Michiko Goes Shopping

Michiko glowered at the door, willing her Tsu-kun to come back to take her with him to school. As had been true for several years now, he did not appear. She would have snuck out after him, but Mama and her Tsu-kun had wised up to her ways and installed screens in the windows to keep her in. It wasn't fair. She only wanted to make sure that her Tsu-kun knew that she loved him and that he could pet her. What if that one boy, the one that had tried to pet her, decided to go after her Tsu-kun? The other boy was so much bigger than her Tsu-kun! She gave a disgusted huff and flopped down.

“Oh, Michiko,” Mama knelt down next to her, “I know that you want to be with Tsu-kun, but he has school.” The woman stood up, brushing off her knees. Michiko watched curiously as Mama walked over to the closet and pulled out a large bag.

“Mroew?” Michiko meowed in question.

“I know that it wouldn’t be the same, but how about you come shopping with me today? I want to make something special for Tsu-kun, and you can help me.” Mama placed the bag down in front of Michiko. Michiko looked up at Mama, then at the bag, and jumped in with another meow. Mama gave a laugh and picked up the bag. The two of them left the house and headed in the opposite direction from her Tsu-kun’s school. Still, at least she was now seeing something that isn’t the house that she now calls home.

As Mama walks around the market, picking up different items, sometimes putting them back, sometimes handing over money to the people manning the booths and placing the items in a different bag than the one that Michiko was in, Michiko sniffs the air and glances around, taking in everything. One day, Michiko decides, she’ll explore all of this place, without the restriction that is Mama.

Chapter End Notes

It didn't make it in this chapter, and while I will try to find a place for it, I wanted to make it clear here. In this story Kagami was/is(? does it count if she's dead?) a transwoman, but my thought process is that no one really knew that was a think in the Waring States Era in Naruto, so everyone assumed she was a guy (I know, awful, I'm sorry), it wasn't really even until Naruto's Sexy no Jutsu that anyone had the thought to actually change one's body from male to female.
I'm so sorry this is so late in comparison to other weeks, I for some reason thought that I didn't have another planned post for this month. I realized that I did in the middle of last week and hurried to finish this, but my work has been a bit hectic and then the one day I was prepared to write, my mood was completely killed via a parking disagreement with my parents.

This chapter greatly differs from the actual episode, mostly because it was so tied up with Tsuna's canon crush on Kyoko- which isn't a thing here. In addition, I felt that explanations were needed so I took the chance to offer them up within the narrative.

Thank you to those of you who have reviewed, the new bookmarks, and the new kudos. Thank you again to those who had already done so.

A reminder that I will be on a hiatus next month as I will be focused on NaNoWriMo. I may write more for this, but it will not be posted until December.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 8: Extreme Explanations!

The day after I-Pin had been hit by the Ten Year Bazooka, Kyoko, Hana, and Tsuna accompanied Kyoko’s brother to a meeting between the Boxing Club and the Karate Club. Ryohei had been excited for this sparring get together for weeks, and the three of them loved to support Kyoko’s brother so they were going along to cheer him and his club on.

“Sorry we're late, everyone,” Kyoko said with a smile as she, Tsuna, and Hana entered the gym behind Ryohei. Her brother had opened the door and introduced himself in front of them. Ryohei charged forward and into the ring where the captain of the karate club was lounging against the ropes with a self-assured countenance. The non-club members could see Kamiyama lying outside of the ring, having been thrown there. The three of them scowled; the Boxing Club had been kind to them ever since Ryohei had joined and the three of them had come to watch him at practice and to cheer on the whole team at competitions.

“I've been waiting for you,” the other captain, Ooyama (according to the cheers by the karate club), told Ryohei, “I won't go easy on you! Get a stretcher ready.” Ooyama slightly turned to his club mates with a smirk.

Kyoko narrowed her eyes, Hana sneered, and Tsuna scowled. None of them appreciated the karate captain's arrogance. Of course, Ryohei didn't even seem to notice and simply marched into the ring.

With one punch, Ooyama was ejected from the ring. Ryohei's shoulders slumped in despair.

“Don't worry, Ryohei-shidōin[^1], you still have competitions where you could meet some worthy opponents,” Tsuna smiled at the older male as the Boxing Club and affiliates walked out of the room and off to their classes.
After classes ended for the day, Tsuna, Kyoko, and Touka met up with Haru and made their way to a karaoke bar.

“I feel bad about leaving Hana-chan out of this,” Kyoko commented as they walked along, “It's been her, you, and me for so long Kumichou; it's weird not to share this with her.”

“I know, but I don't think that telling her about our circumstances would be a good idea,” Tsuna’s eyes went distant as he contemplated something only he knew. No one else spoke as they continued to walk, though Haru kept shooting both Kyoko and Tsuna anxious looks.

Once they had rented a room, they got themselves situated in it with drinks and some snacks.

“Please, Hanshi, what is going on? You never explained after that day at the river,” Haru asked, looking at her former teacher in confusion.

“Very well. I will explain that which I know of the situation,” Tsuna let the coldness of Tobirama overcome him and began to explain what he knew, “Be cognitive of the fact that much of this is guess work and conjecture. Upon our deaths, and post any resurrections that we may have been subjected to, we have been reborn. Between those two times, much of the world as we knew it had changed, with the Ninja way of life falling into less than legend. As such, chakra is not widely known, if it is even known at all.”

“As far as I have heard, it is not,” Touka interjected, leaning back on the couch as she added her experience, gained from being the only one to have traveled outside of the country. Tobirama nodded at her, accepting the added information.

“Instead, there is a different form of power that is harnessed by various people, mostly it would seem, by criminals such as the Italian Mafia. Touka, you have more information than I on that subject,” Tobirama indicated that Touka should take over for the moment as he leaned forward so that his elbows were resting on his knees and his chin on his interlaced fingers.

“Dying Will Flames, commonly called simply Flames, are a form of spirit or life energy that has been condensed into a physical form and is most often used in battle situations. These Flames can act as their mundane namesakes as well. Within the Underworld, Flames are ranked according to their purity as it is linked with the resolve of the individual who has the Flames. There are seven types of Flames; although people can have multiple types, there will always be a primary Flame. The types are Sky, Storm, Rain, Sun, Cloud, Mist, and Lightning. Each has a property assigned to it, and there tends to be an assumption of one’s personality based on one’s Flame type within the Mafia,” Touka explained.

“Which you will explain at a later time. It is currently not relevant and we have much to discuss,” Tobirama interrupted her. Touka scowled but gave a nod of understanding and quieted down.

“Touka and I have already discussed what we felt upon our ‘awakening’ as we have been calling it. We both felt what could only be our Flames subsiding, in Touka’s case due to her believing she was about to die while my experience was… different. In place of our Flames, our chakra which had been dormant previous to that moment, rushed forward to fill the hole left by our Flames. With the return of our chakra came the return of our memories, most likely due to the fact that chakra is made up of a combination of spiritual and physical power and, as Saru-kun’s student proved[2], one’s memories are more tied to one’s spirit or soul than one’s body. Once the danger has passed, the Flames and chakra mingle together, but are still distinct from one another. Given the circumstances that occurred right before both of you remembered, I would have to say that I was the exception and that should anyone else remember who they were, that person would have to
be in what they perceive to be life-threatening danger,” Tobirama snagged one of the manju on the table and leaned back.

“Alright, so that explains why and how we’re here,” Kagami, as Kyoko had slipped into the fire of her old life once Tobirama had begun to speak, “but what about why this is happening now? I mean, you and I have been friends for years before this, and Koharu has lived here all her life, and yet never before has anything happened to create the need for these Flames to subside for a little bit. I know that you explained a bit about the fact that your father in this life for some reason decided to not inform you that there was a slim chance that you could end up as the heir to a Mafia, but why would that becoming a reality suddenly provoke these situations?”

“The short version is Reborn,” Tsuna answered with a scowl.

“The baby that lives with you?” Koharu asked, her brow furrowing.

“He's not a baby, he's an adult who happens to look like a child; I'm not clear on the details. Regardless, he was sent by the Ninth to train me,” Tobirama sneered at the mention of the Ninth, “Reborn's idea of training is to set up some situation or take advantage of an existing one and then try to shoot me. Many of these situations seem to be ones that result in lives being threatened.”

“I'm fairly sure that the bullets are special ones that are supposed to make one go into a state of being where one is operating exclusively on their resolve and Flames,” Touka interjected.

“... that makes it all the worse because he has never explained. I honestly should have expected something like that given who he is said to be close to,” Tobirama grumbled.

“Alright Hanshi, what is up with that? The last time I heard you talking about someone in that tone of voice, you were talking about my former Clan Head. Well and Hibari-senpai,” Kagami frowned at the former Hokage.

“My father I can understand, even if I do not wholly agree with. He wishes to keep his family safe and sees keeping us in the dark and staying away as how to do that. I can admire his wish to let us be civilians and keeping us from worrying about him, but I do not think that it was a good plan, nor his decision to stay away. The Ninth, who asked me to call him Nonno, on the other hand,” Tobirama took a steady breath, and the others' eyes widened. Rarely would Tobirama get to this level of anger, he usually only got to sharp annoyance, with Hashirama usually being the only one to cause him to explode with a fiery anger that was like a flare- bright and quick and then gone again. It took much to take him past that level. “He asked me to call him Grandfather and then sealed my Flames. He essentially crippled me, and thought nothing of it. He took the trust a child willingly gave him and abused it to a staggering amount. If I hadn't been a reincarnation? If I hadn't had the experience of being Tobirama to fall back on and to break the seal? Who knows if I would have even survived to today.”

The other three looked horrified.

“That's why,” Koharu whispered, “You are so disappointed with us. We didn't do right by the Village and our people. We were willing to ostracize a child, not to mention turning a blind eye to Danzo’s actions. Oh Kami, Sakumo. Kagami, I'm sorry, we let Danzo convince Itachi that your Clan had to be killed.” Tears ran down her face as she finally confronted the truth she had ignored in her last life. Kagami could only look at her old friend in shock. Touka’s jaw clenched, but she knew that she did not have a horse in this race. This was between her cousin and his team. She could only offer advice. Tobirama stood up, walked over to his once student, and kneeled in front of her slumped over form.
“Yes Koharu, that is why, but you already want to make amends for what happened, and that makes me so very proud of you,” he told her, reaching out and squeezing her shoulder. After a moment, the trap specialist gained control of herself and Tobirama sat next to her, his hand around her wrist- the equivalent of an arm around her shoulders for people that were more tactile then he.

“Make no mistake, Koharu, I want an explanation, but that can come later,” Kagami stared hard at her old friend, “Is Reborn being an abysmal tutor the only reason you refuse to let him even try to teach you?”

“Touka, before you remembered, what did you say in my presence?” Tobirama directed the question to his once cousin.

“I said many things, but I assume you mean in regards to Reborn,” Touka responded with a wry smirk, “He is Nono’s most trusted hitman.”

“Exactly. If he is so trusted by that man, I am not sure I can trust him to teach me.”

Koharu and Kagami nodded in understanding.

Soon after that they left the Karaoke bar and walked to the Sawada house. Upon reaching the home, they saw Ryohei, Yamamoto, Hana, Bianchi, Lambo, and I-Pin standing outside of it. The first three looked a little worse for the wear.

“What happened?” Kyoko asked with a worried look, all four of them having letting their past lives fade back before leaving the Karaoke bar.

“The Karate Club decided to fight Ryohei-nii for Kyoko-chan being the Karate Club’s manager. Apparently they had meant to take you after class, but you left too fast. The others were there because the Lion Monkey thought that you were going to fight Ryohei-nii,” Hana explained dryly, but staring at Tsuna with joyful eyes. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at her.

“Hana-chan extremely did well! I am unfamiliar with her style, but it worked extremely well! She would not say where she had learned it!” Ryohei, enthused.

“As I said, monkeys taught me,” Hana’s voice held much amusement, and the other group’s eyebrows shot up with the exception of Tsuna’s.

“Mama will be starting dinner soon,” Tsuna spoke up and began to usher the children into his house, “I’ll see all of you tomorrow.”

“Hana-chan, walk home with us?” Kyoko asked, “We missed you today, what with your tutoring.”

Hana smiled at the other two, as Touka dragged Yamamoto off, telling the boy to stop bothering Kumichou so much.

To Be Continued...

Notes:

1 martial arts intermediate instructor, unrelated to grade
2 A reference to Orochimaru
3 A popular traditional Japanese pastry, made with an outer layer of rice powder with an inner filling of anko
Michiko Hunts Part 1

Reborn frowned as he looked around the living room where he, Nana, Tsuna, and Tsuna’s two original friends were sitting, Bianchi having taken the children to the park for some reason. Where is that demon cat? He wondered, running his eyes over the usual spots Michiko seemed to appear at around him. She was nowhere to be seen, and it was making Reborn nervous - she always disappeared right before sneaking up on him. Suddenly Tsuna perked up, walked over to the front door, and opened it. Reborn followed slightly behind him, and raised his eyebrows at what he saw. Michiko was carrying a clearly dead mouse and sauntered up to Tsuna and placed it at his feet. Naturally, Tsuna cooed at her. Reborn felt a wave of relief. At least this was normal cat behavior.

The next day, Michiko disappeared once more, and Reborn frowned. Was she always disappearing? Was that why Tsuna was never concerned about the demon cat? This time when Michiko was let in, it was by Nana, who gave out a soft “awww” as the cat rushed past her to go up to Tsuna, who was sitting at the kitchen table with Lambo, I-Pin, Bianchi, and Reborn himself. This time, the prize was a small blue and tan bird with a black stripe over it’s eyes. Lambo’s eyes widened and he yelped something about birds being full of disease, Reborn suspected the five year old didn’t realize the bird was dead. Tsuna simply gave the demon cat a scratch behind her ears and a coo. Reborn rolled his eyes, wasn’t this what all cats did? It was nothing special.

The following day, Michiko returned from her hunt when Gokudera was over, and made her way in using the back door that had been left open to let a breeze through the house. Reborn stared at her. She was dragging behind her the carcass of a dark green and brown snake that was almost two meters in length. Tsuna responded by smushing her face and cooing about what a good girl she was. Reborn side-eyed his student.

When Michiko disappeared for a fourth time, Reborn figured that she either would go back to bringing home mice or bird (or that she would try for something she had no chance of beating, such as a badger and would, as a best case scenario, come back injured). After all, there couldn’t be much more that she would be able to hunt and bring back to his student- who had once again avoided one of Reborn’s lessons, this one about completing paperwork in a quick, but thorough manner (what sort of student completes the work while in class? Why didn’t the teachers force him to pay attention no matter his grade? Reborn didn’t understand this town). This time, Tsuna had been about to head out to do some shopping for dinner for Nana. Michiko sauntered up as he was stepping outside, with a long blue and yellow fish with white spots on it.

“Oh, that will work well for the Hot Pot, Michiko-chan. How smart of you,” Tsuna cooed as he took the freshly dead fish from the demon cat and went back inside to hand it over to Nana, who beamed at Michiko. Reborn wasn’t sure if he was all that hungry anymore.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, Hana is in fact Sarutobi. Who saw that coming? If you want spoilers for the next
Michiko Explores (so far away!) check out this post on my tumblr
A Leader Cares for His People

Chapter Notes

I'm back! Woot woot! If you see any technical problems, or problems with my translations, please let me know.
Once more, I have been adjusting to a new job (the first time I said that it was for a part-time, and then right at the beginning of November I got a Real Job), so bear with me as I figure out how to schedule out writing.
Do any of you still even remember this (at least some of you found some of the other things that I've recently written, love you all!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 9: A Leader Cares for His People

A few years before the reborn Nidaime met the World’s Greatest Hitman, a blond, excitable, and clumsy boy met a man that looked like a small child. This had consequences that were unseen by said hitman, well, unseen until he met the student that wouldn’t be taught that is.

Tsuna slowed as he turned the corner leading towards his house. The whole street in front of the house was filled with older men dressed in sharp suits. For a moment, Tsuna closed his eyes and stretched before a smirk came over his face.

Well, he thought opening his eyes, this should be fun.

As he walked forward, the men caught sight of him. As one, they moved to line the sides of the street and welcomed him home as if they were the household of a mansion. Tsuna raised his eyebrows as he continued through the men and into his home.

“Tadaima[1], Tsu-kun!” Nana said as she poked her head out of the kitchen, “Reborn is in your room with his handsome friend if you want to head up.”

“Handsome?” Tsuna’s nose wrinkled, “Are the kids upstairs as well?”

“In their room,” Nana smiled at him, pulling her head back into the kitchen.

Tsuna headed up the stairs and knocked on the door of the room they had cleared out for the two children.

“I-Pin-chan, Lambo-chan, come tell me how your day was,” he called into the room. The two kids rushed out, smiles on their faces. “Come on, I just need to put my bag in my room.”

Tsuna picked them up and headed to his room. When I-Pin and Lambo saw the group of strangers in Tsuna’s room, both of the children paused, starting to stiffen at the potential threat to both themselves and to Nana and Tsuna. Tsuna ignored the men, including Reborn and the one sitting in a swivel chair facing the window, and placed the two on his bed.
“Well? Weren’t you both telling me about your day?” he asked, his brow raising.

“Broccoli Monster and I-Pin went to the park with Mama. We played on the swings,” I-Pin slowly said, her voice forcibly even.

“Lambo-sama got higher than Tail-head!” Lambo cheered, his eyes darting around as if he was looking for the praise that he felt he deserved.

“We’ve been waiting,” Reborn looked over his shoulder at the brunette boy, “Tsuna.”

“Hush,” Tsuna ignored him, “What else did the two of you do today? And I-Pin-chan, how are your glasses fitting?”

“Yo, next head of the Vongola. I’ve come all the way from Italy to visit,” the man in the chair said, turning around and revealing himself to have chin length blond hair, “I’m the tenth generation boss of the Cavallone Family, Dino.”

“Be quiet, I am speaking with the saplings,” Tsuna snapped, shooting Dino a poisonous look.

The Cavallone men with Dino all stiffened, glares forming on their faces. Lambo and I-Pin both tensed, more than ready to try to take on the older mafioso. Dino stared blankly at Tsuna for a moment, before a huge grin overtook his face and he launched himself out of the chair and over the table to wrap Tsuna up in a hug.

“What an adorable Otouto[2] I have!” Dino gushed, rubbing his cheek on Tsuna’s head.

“Anija[3], you’re annoying,” Tsuna deadpanned in response, causing Dino to freeze before curling up in the corner, pouting. Tsuna rolled his eyes as Reborn gave Dino an incredulous look.

“So mean!” Dino wailed as his bodyguards gave each other shocked looks. Dino pulled a small turtle out from his jacket, “At least you’re nice to me Enzo-chan!”

“…Dino is in charge of 5,000 Families under the Cavallone Main Family,” Reborn piped up, hoping to unnerve Tsuna, “And they are not nearly as strong as the Vongola, which is the strongest Family in the Alliance.”

Michiko slinked into the room and eyed the turtle speculatively. Reborn wondered if he was going to have to protect a turtle from a cat and then wondered how this was his life.

Lambo shifted, unsure as to how to react to the scene in front of him. In doing so, he dislodged one of the grenades that was in his hair. Reborn scooped it up and pulled the pin before tossing it out the window with a smirk. Dino sobered immediately, and jumped out the window after the grenade. He pulled out a whip and snapped it out, wrapping it around the grenade. As he landed on the street with his men, he threw the grenade up into the air where it detonated harmlessly.

Dino gave a smirk as he stood up. His men all praised him, grinning among themselves. Tsuna watched all of this from his window, his expression unreadable.

“Mama likes you,” Tsuna finally called down, “You should stay for dinner.” With that he began to turn away from the window, “Lambo-kun, what have I told you about keeping grenades in your hair? Just because they are hidden does not mean that they are secure…”

Dino beamed up at the window, before the expression his face morphed into one of surprise as he thought of something.
“Gioele, Tammaro, I have something I would like you to do,” he called two of his men over and quickly talked to them. Both had looks of surprise as he explained what he wanted, but determination soon engulfed both of them.

Dino beamed as Nana placed the food on the table, “Thank you! The food tastes great!”

“Oh, you’re too kind Dino-kun!” Nana laughed at him, “I’m glad to have a full table.”

“Mama, we’ve had Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan over,” Tsuna protested with a slight smile.

“Oh, but they have to leave afterwards. I-Pin-chan and Lambo-chan live here, and while he’s your tutor, so does Reborn-sensei. Dino-kun will always have a place here, as he’s named you his otouto,” Nana playfully argued. Tsuna rolled his eyes at her.

“Thank you, Nana-san,” Dino said softly, his eyes wet.

“Call me, Mama,” Nana told him. Dino nodded, a smile on his face.

“Oh, by the way, does Tsuna have a Family yet?” Dino asked, turning to Reborn.

“Well,” Reborn started.

“I don’t consider any of my friends a Mafia Family, but if they were, I have Kyoko-chan, Hana-chan, Hayato-kun, and Haru-chan,” Tsuna interrupted, bored.

“And Yamamoto-kun. Potentially Hibari as well,” Reborn added on, just to gain joy from Tsuna’s eye twitch. He had no idea why his student disliked the baseball star, but he loved to remind Tsuna that the two of them were becoming friends. This was about the only thing he could take joy in about this assignment. Well that and the fact that Nana was exactly as, or near enough, to what Iemitsu said she was like.

Reborn suddenly caught a glimpse of the table in front of Dino, and he had to fight to hold back a whimper. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at Reborn.

“Is something wrong?” Tsuna asked mildly.

“No, nothing is wrong,” Reborn said, “Just, Dino, when did you get over being useless without your subordinates?”

Dino paled at that, as Tsuna looked at him with a smirk. Reborn looked between the two of them, confused.

“Lambo-san ate it all!” Lambo announced, drawing Nana’s attention.

“Ah, do you want to take a bath?” Nana asked with a smile.

Lambo nodded and ran off to the bathroom. Nana blinked and muttered about not meaning right this moment.

After a moment, there was a wail coming from the bathroom. In a rush, everyone ran from the table and to the bathroom to see what was wrong.

As they entered the bathroom, Tsuna began to gather the ice that was Tobirama. When they opened the door and saw Lambo on the side of the bath with a scared look on his face, he let it go.
“Lambo-chan, don’t get into the bath with your clothes on,” Tsuna asked, starting to step forward.

Suddenly, Lambo was lifted into the air by a giant turtle.

“Where did that come from?” Tsuna asked, flabbergasted.

“Its Enzo, my turtle,” Dino said, pulling out his whip, “When he gets wet he grows; when he grows he gets hungry. Calm down Enzo!”

Dino then used his whip to pull Enzo out of the bath, gaining him an incredulous look from Reborn. *When did he get this good?!!*

Nana tossed a pile of towels at Dino and Enzo, causing Dino to look up at her in surprise.

“Dry off your pet and keep him from getting wet while in my house,” she said annoyed.

Dino nodded sheepishly and got to work.

The next morning, after Tsuna had gotten back from his morning run, he and Dino exited the Sawada house together, only for Dino’s men to be waiting for them outside.

“Good morning, Boss, Vongola Tenth!” the men greeted them, bowing as one.

Dino’s face gained a slight pink color at the sight and Tsuna had a slight smile on his face. Two of the men stepped forward with a package in hand.

“Boss, we got that thing for you,” one of the two said to Dino.

“Thank you Gioele, Tammaro,” Dino thanked the two as he took the pack. He then turned to Tsuna, handing him the package, “Otouto, I had Gioele and Tammaro go out and get this for you.”

Tsuna took the package and opened it, another one of Dino’s men stepping forward to take the wrapping. Tsuna held up a large, dark blue sleeveless jacket with a white fur collar. Reborn shook his head, sure that Tsuna was going to reject the gift, *After all, Tsuna most likely won't want to look like Dino*, he thought.

“Well, you aren't completely useless,” Tsuna said, pulling the jacket on, “Really, thank you, Anija.”

Dino returned Tsuna's slight smile with a beam. Reborn’s eyebrows furrowed with confusion; what was it about Dino that Tsuna liked? And why was he using such an antiquated form of address?

“Tsuna-kun!” came the call from the other side of the wall of Dino’s men. The assembled mafia members turned to see who had called out for Tsuna. Dino’s men tensed as they did so, ready for an attack.

Beyond the suited men, pushing their way through, were Yamamoto, Gokudera, Kyoko, Hana, and Haru. The teens moved through the relaxing men so that they were at Tsuna’s side.

“Yo, Tsuna,” Yamamoto greeted him with a smile.

“Don’t be so informal!” Gokudera barked with a scowl.
“Morning, minna[4]. Is it Touka or Hayato today?” Tsuna ignored the byplay between the two as the other three grinned.

“She’s Touka today, Hanshi,” Hana replied with a grin, “Who are these monkeys?”

“Anija was Reborn’s student a few years back. His name is Dino,” Tsuna introduced, “Anija, this is Kyoko Sasagawa, Hana Kurokawa, Haru Muira, Touka Gokudera—sometimes she’s Hayato instead, and Takeshi Yamamoto.”

“We should probably head to school. I’ll walk with minna for part of the way,” Haru said with a smile.

The others nodded and Tsuna said goodbye to Dino before they started on their way to school.

“So?” Tsuna prompted Touka as they walked, lifting an eyebrow.

“Dino Cavallono, it’s well known that he was able to fix the financial problem left to the Family by his predecessor,” Touka explained, “Now his Family is the third strongest in the Vongola Alliance.”

“What does that mean for us?” Hana asked lowly as she hung back to be in line with them as Kyoko and Haru distracted Yamamoto.

“I’m not sure. I trust Anija, but I don’t know what his relationship with the Vongola and Nono is like,” Tsuna answered.

Suddenly, they heard the revving of an engine behind them. A red corvette rushed up to them, its right-side door opening up as it got near. As it sped past them, a lasso came out and wrapped around Tsuna, pulling him into the car.

“Tsuna!” Yamamoto yelled as Touka gave her own cry of “Kumicho!”

Immediately, all of them started after the car.

“Hold it,” Reborn’s voice stopped them, gaining him irritated looks from the group, “That’s the car of a local yakuza, Momokyokai. You’re no match for them—leave it to Dino and his subordinates.”

“I think we can handle a few thugs,” Haru said with ice in her voice, turning away from Reborn and starting to run after the car, Touka and Yamamoto not far behind her.

Hana and Kyoko instead stared hard at Reborn, their faces severe. Reborn fought back a smirk. He couldn’t wait to scold Tsuna over how his two oldest friends didn’t go after the heir. As if on cue, the car returned from around the back corner of the block, Dino and Tsuna exiting from it as it stopped.

“I like them,” Dino said with a smile, “They only thought of rescuing Tsuna.”

“Anija,” Tsuna’s voice was sharp and heavy with unspoken demands.

“I was just testing them,” Dino waved off, “There’s no such thing as the Momokyokai.”

“Ne, Tsuna,” Kyoko interrupted, “Don’t we know the Momokyokai?”

Dino’s face paled as he realized that Reborn hadn’t made up the yakuza like he believed.
“Un. We should probably get to their base before those three do something regrettable,” Tsuna said calmly.

“I’m coming with you,” Dino said, “Er, why didn’t you two go with the others anyway?”

“As if Tsuna-kun would ever be taken by such an amateur move,” Hana scoffed, “We’ve been friends for years, I know exactly how he looks when he’s pretending.”

Kyoko nodded her agreement with a smirk. The group piled into the corvette and Romario followed the directions that the teens gave, driving them to the Momokyokai headquarters.

When they arrived, the three that had rushed off had beaten up a large number of the Momokyokai underlings. Reborn smirked, glad that at least some of his choices were proving themselves to be strong fighters, Tsuna would need that in the future.

Before Tsuna and his group could announce themselves, a side door opened and into the room stepped a colorful assortment of Momokyokai men.

“Just who the hell are you?” one of them demanded with a scowl.

“Where is Kumicho?” Touka demanded.

“We don’t know who the hell that is,” another one of the Momokyokai retorted.

“She means me, Isamu-ni,” Tsuna called out, drawing attention to his group, and causing both Dino and Reborn to look at him surprised.

“Wakagashira! Isamu looked over at Tsuna and beamed, “How is Oyabun?”

Reborn held back a curse; he had hoped that by ‘knowing’ the Momokyokai Kyoko had meant that they had a few run ins with them, not that somehow Tsuna was the heir to the yakuza group.

“Mama is doing well, she should be able to come out to check on everything in a few days. We’re just here because my tutor thought it would be funny to set up a group of middle schoolers against a yakuza,” Tsuna told him with a smirk.

“Well, your friends did a wonderful job. Do any of them want to join the Momokyokai?” the first one responded.

“No thank you, Ayumu-ni,” Kyoko cheerfully told him, “We have other things that we have to do. Don’t worry. If the Momokyokai need us, we’ll still come.”

Reborn and Dino stared at her in surprise.

“We’ll keep you in mind if we need to burn anything down,” Ayumu laughed.

The teens left the Momokyokai’s headquarters, Haru, Touka, and Yamamoto looking sheepish as they did so.

Reborn craved a drink. Unfortunately, none of the bars here knew that he was an adult, and he doubted that they would accept his ID. Nana was supposed to be an oblivious housewife, who only had her husband (and now her son) as a connection to the underworld. Instead she was the head of a yakuza. Since when was she involved with anything illegal? How had this happened?
Michiko Hunts Part 2

After the Hot Pot night featuring Michiko’s whitespotted char, Reborn hoped that the demon cat would find something that scared her enough to stay inside where she couldn’t find more things to confuse him with. Michiko, obviously, didn’t care what Reborn wanted. He was the intruder and therefore didn’t deserve to be taken into consideration in her opinion. That is why the following day she arrived back home to be let in by a cooing Nana carrying a Japanese Giant Salamander for her Tsu-kun, and sauntered past Reborn to lay it at the feet of said Tsu-kun as he worked on his silly homework with Kyoko-chan, Hana-chan, The One That Smelled Like Ozone, and the Touka-Hayato one. The newer of the two started in surprise as her Tsu-kun praised her, and looked at the amphibian in shock. Silly kittens didn’t know about what a wonderful huntress Michiko was. That was fine, they would learn.

The next day Michiko sauntered in, holding her head high as she carried her kill draped around her neck like the fashion scarfs Mama would sometimes wear out and about. Most of the tail and the top and side of the head dragged on the ground, but Michiko didn’t care. Her Tsu-kun was sitting in the front room with Kyoko-chan, the Touka-Hayato, and the interloper. Said interloper was making scolding sounds at her Tsu-kun, who was looking at Reborn with annoyed eyes.

When her Tsu-kun caught sight of her, his irritation melted away, a smile overcoming his face.

“Well done Michiko! Only a few more and we’ll have enough for a scarf for Mama,” her Tsu-kun gave her a pet as he lifted the marten off of her neck.

Reborn stared. Michiko gave him as smug a look as a cat can give a person.

A few days later, Reborn returned from going out to contact Nono from a secure line away from the prying ears of the household.

Upon entering the house, Reborn saw Michiko on her back, batting at a long brown feather that Tsuna was dangling over him.

“...What is that?” Reborn asked, just knowing that he was going to regret asking.

“Michiko-chan brought home a Black Kite, this is one of the feathers. Mama is taking it to the taxidermist. Not sure what we’ll do with it,” Tsuna said without looking up. Michiko paused,
lifting her head to give him a baleful look.

Reborn just looked at the pair incredulously.

“Don't give me that! Its not like we have a place for it! I'm so proud of you, but we aren't people obsessed with predator animals…” Tsuna trailed off, a thoughtful look on his face, “Well that could work.”

Michiko tilted her head inquiringly at him. He waved her off.

Reborn held back a sigh and walked out of the room to go and find a drink.  Well at least she can't do any worse than this, he thought.

Michiko was sauntering through the streets behind the neighbor's dog and another dog who were dragging a Japanese Badger between them. Every so often Michiko would meow or yowel at the dogs, causing them to change direction.

As he watched, the strange dog started to slow and a grow began to grow in it's throat.

Michiko sent the dog a disdainful look that was straight from Tsuna's face.

The dog whimpered and went back to following Michiko's directions.

“...she just found it right?” Reborn mumbled to himself.

“Probably not.  Tsuna-kun praises her every time she brings something home, and she adores him, so she's become a really good hunter,” Kyoko said from above him. Reborn turned to her with wide eyes - how had she snuck up on him?!?  Kyoko ignored him and pulled out her phone, snapping a picture, “You know what they say about pets emulating their owners.”

Chapter End Notes

You guys have no idea how much I've looked forward to Dino showing up! I know, I know, most of you figured out him in the beginning, but still! I'm just sorry that I couldn't fit in Gokudera's line "All older men are my enemies". Poor Reborn is just so confused at this point.
You got the first prize for the review count! Yay! And its posted to Not Quite a Bingo Book!
Pop over to my tumblr if you want to chat (or see what just ends up there... *hint hint*
Chapter 10: Reborn’s Investigation

Reborn knew that he couldn’t put off investigating anymore. He had tried to simply roll with everything and just train Tsuna, but, with how Dino showing up had gone, it was obviously not the way to go. He had even let Tsuna and some of his friends disappearing that one day slide. Just this once, he wasn’t going to follow Tsuna around during the day and try to find moments to train the boy.

He said nothing as Tsuna left for the day and slipped away from the Sawada house, trusting his protege to keep Nana busy for him. Bianchi seemed to like her well enough, and Nana kept a close eye on the two child assassins anyway.

He decided to start by looking at Nana and Tsuna’s official records, both at City Hall and at the schools.

After a moment's thought, he sent some of his beetles to keep an eye on Tsuna. The armored bugs would let him know if anything happened to the heir.

Reborn lied his way into the records room, pretending to be an old friend of Nana’s parents who were worried about their little girl whom they hadn’t seen in years. An easy enough lie considering she wasn’t from Namimori and he just had to play up the retired detective role. It helped that the person on duty was obviously a huge fan of detective works.

Reborn scowled at the records. On paper Nana looked completely ordinary, though a few years ago she suddenly had a spike in her income level. Tsuna’s records seemed just as ordinary, except for the fact that some years ago his grades suddenly spiked and he refused to move up any grade, choosing instead to stay in his current class. That did explain why he was allowed to work on his homework in class; he obviously already knew the material, which would help the class average,
so the teachers just let him do what he wanted.

Wait, those dates… they coincided. In fact… Reborn opened up his bag and pulled out the report he had gotten from Iemitsu before leaving for Namimori. He scanned the documents, there! The last time that Iemitsu actually saw his family. All three of those dates coincide. What happened?

There was nothing else that he could learn from the archives. What he was searching for would not be found here. Though it was useful to see just how advanced his student’s academics were.

His next stop was TakeSushi to speak with Tsuyoshi about the underworld in Namimori.

“Yo, Tsuyoshi,” he greeted as he walked in.

“Well, well, well,” the former assassin said with a grin, “Of all the sushi joints in all of Namimori, you finally wander into mine.¹”

Reborn tried not to feel annoyed that Tsuyoshi already knew he was in town. He hadn’t exactly been hiding, and Tsuyoshi usually did know almost everything that was happening. The man would have been a wonderful information broker if he had been so inclined.

“Sorry, I was a bit...busy,” Reborn offered up as he climbed onto a stool to face Tsuyoshi.

“So I’ve heard. Tutoring Tsuna-kun must be interesting,” Tsuyoshi placed a plate of makizushi² in front of him without Reborn ordering. Reborn wondered for a moment if he should be suspicious, but Tsuyoshi did always prefer to cut down his targets, so it was probably safe. That didn’t mean that Reborn wouldn’t be cautious though.

Reborn frowned. “You know Tsuna?” he asked slowly, placing the sushi he had started to pick up back on the plate.

“Ah, yes. He joins Hime³ and I for our bi-weekly card nights. This last one he brought a few friends with him as well,” Tsuyoshi’s voice was nonchalant as he spoke. Reborn paused, unsure of what to say to that.

“Hime is your wife? I believe I’ve met your son, Takeshi right?” Reborn decided to go with small talk as he rearranged his thoughts for how the conversation would go. Obviously he was going to have to be more careful now; Tsuyoshi was most likely fond of Tsuna and he was ridiculously protective of his friends.

Tsuyoshi’s face crumbled for a moment.

“No, Hime isn’t my wife. My Usagi died some years ago. A driver lost control of his car on a rainy night when she was walking home from the store. She was killed instantly. Himeko is a friend of mine. We’ve known each for over a lifetime,” Tsuyoshi explained, “She’s usually busy bossing everyone around at the hospital or corralling her own son, so we can’t get together too much. But yes, Takeshi is my son.”

“I’m sorry for your loss,” Reborn paused and then continued after a moment, “When I was hired by Iemitsu and Nono to train Tsuna, Iemitsu gave me a file on his family. Thus far I’ve found it faulty. I had originally hoped that the discrepancies were minor or simply luck on the side of Tsuna, but I’ve come to realize that that is not the case.”

“And you want to know more about Tsuna-kun,” Tsuyoshi said, his eyes glittering in amusement, “Well, what is it you want to ask me?”
“Recently Tsuna met Dino, and there was an...incident with the Momokyokai. Tsuna and those two girls who are always with him said that they knew them?”

“Yeah. Back a couple of years something happened that made Nana-san decide that she desperately needed some form of protection for her and Tsuna-kun. So she came to me to ask about the local gangs. I’ve no idea how she knew to ask me, she’s never offered up an explanation, and, frankly, I’ve never asked. Nana-san can be scary when she wants to,”

“What? Did she punch you when you flirted with her?” Reborn interrupted with a grin.

“I’ve never even bothered trying. The woman can have the deadliest aura I’ve ever felt when she wants to, and on our first meeting she wanted to. Plus my Usagi was still alive then, so flirting was restricted to women that she approved of,” Tsuyoshi told him, placing a bottle of warm sake in front of Reborn.

“...you really loved your wife that much? Ah, nevermind. Please, continue,” Reborn had never thought that Tsuyoshi would find a woman to settle down with, he was much more like Shamal when they were younger, but life was mysterious in that way.

“So, Nana-san comes to me, asking about the different gangs in the area, wanting to know who was kind to single parents, who had weak or fluctuating leadership, who was brutal and who was efficient but non-brutal. That sort of thing. I thought that maybe something had happened that meant that she wanted to ask for protection from one of those groups, so I offered up a few different Yakuza. Back then there were more in Namimori because Kyoya-kun hadn’t yet started to clean up the streets. Himeko said that he was mostly focusing on school back then. I told her that while the Momokyokai were a decent group, definitely there to offer what help they could to the community, their leadership had recently gone to a new Oyabun who, rumor had it, was much more concerned with making money. Apparently that was what she was looking for, because a few days after she left, I heard about how this unassuming housewife had gone and challenged the new Momokyokai Oyabun using only a set of kitchen knives for weapons. She beat him and took over. Now the Momokyokai are the only Yakuza **allowed** in Namimori because they operate as a support for single parents and protection for kids,” Tsuyoshi told him.

Reborn frowned in thought, *I wonder what happened.*

“There’s also the fact that Tsuna doesn’t seem receptive to my training,” he told Tsuyoshi.

“Well, most of your previous students have needed a lot of help haven’t they? They aren’t academically inclined, nor are they very athletic,” Tsuyoshi said, his brow furrowed.

“That’s right,” Reborn answered.

“You choose the students that remind you the most of you when you were young,” Reborn started to protest, “I remember very well how you were when we first met.”

Reborn had to concede the point, even if he hated to think about how out of his element he had been. He quickly learned how to act as if he was better than he was, and he *had* to learn if he wanted to survive. He tried to teach that mentality to his students, while operating as a safety net for them while they came into their own.

“Tsuna-kun isn’t like that. He’s smart, maybe the smartest person you’ll ever meet. And he believes wholeheartedly in keeping his body as healthy as he can, so he exercises and trains. You can’t treat him like a child who has no interest or background in the reality of the Underworld. That will just make him pull back from you, and reject your training. Treat him like a younger
colleague and he’ll work with you.”

Reborn nodded thoughtfully.

“Reborn,” Tsuyoshi said to bring the hitman’s attention back on him, “I don’t give out information for free you know.”

“I remember. And I remember that you like to do an exchange of information for information, so here’s this: Shamal is in town and he used to teach one Gokudera Hayato,” Reborn told him.

“All right, that pays for the information on Nana-san, but not the information on Tsuna-kun.”

Reborn was quiet for a moment, thinking.

“For some reason, Tsuna is already fond of Dino, calling him Onija,” Reborn finally offered. It was basically useless information, but he did have the secondary objective of protecting Nana and Tsuna.

“Well, that is interesting,” Tsuyoshi said, his eyebrows raised, “Oh, and here’s your check.”

Reborn stared glumly down at the check and his barely touched sushi. What was with this town and people catching him off guard?

Reborn headed back to the Sawada house after that. He had learned all he could from secondary sources, and the Momokyokai would either have no other insight, or would not share it with an outsider without asking their Oyabun first. It was time that he had a proper conversation with Nana Sawada.

He opened the door to see Shamal glowering at Bianchi, and felt a headache grow. What now?

“What’s with that glare, Shamal?” Bianchi asked, tensed, waiting for Shamal to throw himself at her.

“How dare you,” Shamal hissed, his hand inching towards where he kept his mosquitoes.

Reborn hurried forward and purposefully bumped into Shamal, gaining his old friend’s attention and bringing it off of Reborn’s protégé.

“Yo, Shamal,” Reborn said, telling Shamal without words that he would take revenge if Bianchi was killed.

“Keep her away from my student Reborn. I won’t have her ruin all the work I did to make sure Toto[4] knew that there was nothing wrong with her orientation,” Shamal hissed, back to glaring at Bianchi, who only frowned in confusion.

Reborn rubbed his temples.

“Shamal, they are siblings, they’re going to interact,” he reminded the man, “But I will have a word with her. I’m sorry if we’ve made things difficult for your student.”

Shamal just huffed and started up the stairs.

“I’m going to go and introduce myself to Toto’s Sky. Make sure he knows how to treat my student,” Shamal called over his shoulder, “Though from what I’ve seen, he already does.”
“...let’s talk in the kitchen,” Reborn told Bianchi, “I need coffee.”

Bianchi followed him into the kitchen.

“Was that Shamal-san yelling?” Nana asked with a smile.

“You’ve met Shamal?” Reborn asked, hopping up to his chair as Bianchi moved to prepare the two of them some coffee.

“Yes, Touka-chan introduced us when the kids all got back from school. He’s a nice man, protective,” she said, moving about the kitchen to prepare dinner. Reborn watched her move, seeing now how familiar she was with her knives.

“So it would seem. Do you mind if Bianchi and I have a discussion here?” he asked, causing Bianchi to frown down at their mugs as she waited for the water to boil. French Press wasn’t his favorite way to make coffee, but it was better than instant.

“Not at all! I’m just working on dinner, if you don’t mind me being here?” she said with a bright grin.

“Not at all, we shouldn’t take too long, and I was hoping to talk to you after,” Reborn told her, “What are we having?”

“Katsudon[^1], Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan are staying over to work on a group project, and Tsu-kun requested it,” she explained. Reborn nodded his understanding as Bianchi placed a mug in front of him.

“What did we need to speak about Reborn?” Bianchi asked, her voice serious. From the corner of his eye, Reborn saw that Nana paused for a moment, obviously not expecting Bianchi to not act as if she were in love with him.

Well, he thought, at least I can surprise someone.

“It’s about Hayato-” the knife Nana was using came down harder than was necessary, and Reborn repressed a wince.

“What about my brother?” Bianchi asked with a frown, concern in her voice, “Is something wrong?”

“Yes, but not in the way that you think. Hayato isn’t just a boy,” Reborn decided to go the blunt route.

“I think I would know if I have a brother or a sister,” Bianchi’s voice was dry.

“I believe the term is genderfluid,” Reborn told her, ignoring her reply, “While physically they are male, some days she is a girl and some days he is a boy. When she is a girl, she is going by Touka. I understand that you did not know, but by constantly referring to your sibling as male, it is…”

Reborn struggled for words on what he didn’t fully understand.

“It is an insult, and horrifying for those of us that care for Touka-chan,” Nana spoke up, coming and sitting at the table with them, “I would apologize for eavesdropping, but you obviously need help with this Reborn-san.”

“Please,” he gestured for her to continue.

“While Touka-chan may not have come right out and said anything to you, given the trouble she has with seeing you at all, none of us hid that we would sometimes use ‘Touka’ and female
pronouns when referring to her,” Nana scolded the teenager. Bianchi looked horrified.

“I’ve been insulting my bro- sister?” she asked, her voice small. Nana nodded. “H-how do I know how to refer to her?”

“Well, generally we ask,” Nana’s voice was dry, “But given that the two of you can’t talk face to face, you might have to work something else out.”

Bianchi stood up, the chair screeching behind her as it moved across the floor.

“Excuse me, I need to go talk with my, my sister,” she said, moving around the table.

“You might also want to tell them about whatever game it is the two of you are playing, pretending to be romantically involved,” Nana added, voice still just as dry as sand.

“I- what?” Bianchi asked, confused.

“Given that all of us were convinced by the act, no one was all too happy with Reborn. I was even contemplating taking care of the issue myself,” Nana said with a small smile as she closed her eyes and tilted her head.

Reborn suddenly understood exactly what Tsuyoshi had meant; even if this wasn’t Nana’s worst, she was already eluding the feeling that killing someone was on the same level for her as taking out the trash, or no, something more...blasé, like wiping down the counter. It was almost enough to send a chill down Reborn’s spine.

Bianchi just nodded and left. Reborn pondered if he should make her do extra reps tomorrow as punishment for not defending her mentor at all.

“It’s so that people know to take her seriously. I have a reputation for never speaking to my lovers after we break it off, even if I don’t actually have many lovers, especially in, uh, recent years,” Reborn coughed, he truly hadn’t slept with anyone since the Curse, but he did not want to open that can of worms with Nana, “So the fact that everyone ‘knows’ that we were together, but I still call upon her for work shows that Bianchi is good enough that our past is incosiquestial to me. The ‘trying to win me back’ thing is an excuse for her to be here, but she’s actually my protégé.”

“Well, I can’t say I approve of the deception, but I understand why,” Nana said, standing up and moving back into the kitchen to continue to cook, “You said that you wanted to speak with me as well?”

“Ah, yes. I’m afraid that I was remiss when I arrived and assumed things were as your husband claimed they were. Since then, I’ve found that they were not,” Reborn explained and Nana gave a hum of acknowledgement, “Nana-san, I have to ask, what happened five years ago? Suddenly Tsuna’s grades jumped and he was labeled a genius and you apparently took over a Yakuza.”

Nana looked over at him, her eyes serious.

“Did you know,” she asked quietly, “that Tsu-kun, Kyoko-chan, and Hana-chan have been friends for five years?” she waited for him to shake his head in a negative, “They have been, and every year I’m thankful that those girls gave me back my Tsu-kun. Don’t get me wrong, he was still mine, but he was distant and detached. And then Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan became his friends and he... settled is the best word for it. As if he was walking around in a dream and they showed him reality. He still wasn’t 100 percent there of course. It took a few more weeks, and finding Michiko-chan for that.”
“But, what happened?” he asked, insistent.

“My husband and his boss happened. Iemitsu brought that man home with him, something about his boss meeting his beloved family, especially with the blood connection between the two of them. Tsu-kun was ever so shy when they first came in, but all too soon he had warmed to this kind old man that bounced him on his knee and did a wonderful job reading to him,” Nana’s voice was strained with some old, festering, emotional wound.

“Nono had four sons,” Reborn softly explained.

“*That rat bastard*,” Nana hissed at that, surprising Reborn with the venom behind it, “Tsu-kun decided that he wanted to play outside, and his ball somehow ended up in a tree, and Tsu-kun climbed it to get it. You have to understand, Tsu-kun has never been fond of dogs. His interest has always laid with cats. When he was younger he was slightly afraid of dogs, so when the neighbor’s dog barked at him, he was startled. He fell from the tree, but well. Iemitsu and that man didn’t realize that I saw, but I was watching from the kitchen. I very nearly screamed when I saw him fall, but then. Then my baby boy was covered in orange flames that somehow saved his life,” Nana took a deep breath.

“What happened next?” Reborn prompted her, hiding his shock.

“Instead of calling anyone, or even bringing him inside, the two of them stood over Tsu-kun and that man lit his finger up with orange flames, less bright than Tsu-kun’s, and pressed it to Tsu-kun’s forehead. Tsu-kun’s flames were smothered, and only then did they bring my now passed out son inside. They downplayed the fall to me, and placed him in his room, saying that he just needed to sleep. I pretended to believe them. When they left, I went out and tracked down Tsuyoshi and got the information I needed from him. Then I took over the Momokyokai, so that if I ever needed it, I would have people to help me protect my son.”

“Nana, the Momokyokai won’t help you. Not with Nono,” Reborn told her, “Your son is Nono’s heir. The heir to the Vongola.”

Nana sucked in a breath, and then let it out.

“I don’t care. If either of them ever hurts my son again, I’ll kill them,” she said, her voice determined, purple Flames in her eyes. Reborn observed her silently, thinking, *yes, you will.*

“Then, does that have anything with why Tsuna doesn’t trust me?” he finally asked.

“Most likely,” she shrugged, “If there is some connection between the two of you.”

“Gokudera did mention that I was Nono’s most trusted hitman,” he said.

“That would do it,” Nana’s voice was dry once again.

“That just means that he has called upon me multiple times in the past and trusts me to do the job, not that I always align myself with him,” Reborn pointed out.

“Perhaps you should tell Tsu-kun that,” Nana raised an eyebrow at him, “Please inform everyone that dinner is ready.”

Reborn nodded and slipped from the room, his mind whirling with adjusted plans.

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1 Casablanca reference, the line is "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks
into mine".  

2 Rolled sushi generally wrapped in nori (seaweed), but not always. Think California Rolls (more on different types of sushi [here](#)).

3 Princess, sometimes used as a nickname, such as here or when Jiraiya calls Tsunade it. [Hime](#)

4 Shamal's nickname for Hayato/Touka, using the last two letters from Hayato and the first two from Touka, as something he can use regardless of Gokudera's gender that day. [Toto](#)

5 sliced, breaded and deep-fried chicken cooked with eggs and onions served over a bowl of rice. Yuri!! On Ice fans will recognize this as Yuuri's favorite dish. [Katsudon](#)

Michiko Explores!

Michiko vs Leon

Reborn frowned to himself. Leon was missing. Well, not missing, just… not where he had been last Reborn had seen him, and Reborn didn't know where he had gone. He was fairly confident that the little lizard hadn't left the Sawada house, but that still left a lot of house to look through. And there was no way that he was going to be asking his student or the boy's friends for help.

Reborn tried to be nonchalant as he wandered from room to room, looking for Leon, but the fear that kept most from questioning him wasn't present in this house, so it was harder than it really should have been. He still pulled it off, he just had to put more effort into it.

Finally he opened the door to the last, unused guest room, which was more like a storage room by the looks of it, and there was Leon. He wasn't alone though. The hellcat was there, staring down the lizard. Reborn's breath caught, unsure for once if Leon could survive this encounter.

Michiko hissed.

Leon changed into a volleyball.

Michiko swiped at the volleyball with her claws.

Leon quickly changed into a putty.

Reborn backed out of the room.

He didn’t need this in his life.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry that the Michiko Explores is so short, but it felt right to keep it that way.

As always, feel free to come chat with me on my [tumblr](#)!
Chapter Notes

I’m not too happy with this chapter, but it was kinda hard to write around the holidays.

There’s a good amount of filler after this, but I think that it’s also going to be stuff that is semi-plot relevant, so we’ll see how it goes *shrugs*

Omg, I’m so sorry guys, my laptop did not want me to post this

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 11: Dearly Beloved, We Are Gathered Here Today!

Tsuna stood at the front of a church, feeling nervous. He had been waiting for this day for a long time. He glanced down and took in his white suit and Michiko sitting next to him, purring with a golden cat-dress[1] on. He could feel everyone behind him: Mama, Kyoko-chan, Hana-chan, Hayato-kun, Onija, Ryohei-shidōin, even the kids, Shamal, Bianchi, Reborn, and Iemitsu. He thought that he could also sense Yamamoto in the crowd. He could hear the blubbery of Tsuyoshi and Himeko as well.

This had been a long time coming, and was the happiest day of his life- wait, what was going on? Who am I marrying?

Music began as the doors at the end of church aisle. Tsuna turned to watch his husband-to-be walk forward.

He strode down the aisle, clad in a montsukihakama[2], the white and red uchiwa[3] crests standing out sharply against the black of the haori[4]. His long spiky black hair was pulled up into a top-knot.

Tsuna felt a dissonance within him. One part of him grew excited and the other What in the world? He’s not like that anymore, and he would never- I don’t- What is going on?!

Madaras came to a stop next to Tsuna and shot him a blindingly happy smile.

Tsuna stared at him in shock and woke up.

“What were you dreaming about?” Reborn asked from the low table where he was going through some papers.

“...why?” Tsuna asked after a moment, letting his heart slow from its rapid pace.

“You seemed happy, then suddenly in shock, then both ecstatic and bewildered,” Reborn shrugged.

Tsuna frowned, glancing around his bed.

“I hate bug-users,” he muttered too low to hear as he flicked a few beetles out of his bed.

Reborn sent him a curious look, “What other people have you met that use bugs?”
“It was a long time ago,” Tsuna waved off, “Don’t worry about it.”

Reborn gave him a look, wishing, as he often did, that his student would actually fear him like most people did. Tsuna ignored him.

When Tsuna returned from his morning run with the girls, he was missing the jacket that Dino had given him.

“You seem to be missing something,” Reborn observed, his eyebrows raised.

“Kyoko-chan took it,” Tsuna explained, “She apparently wants to do something to it.”

Reborn felt at least a little mollified by the bewilderment in Tsuna’s voice.

“I have some things to speak with you about after school,” Reborn informed his student. Now that he had finally overcome the hurdle that had kept Tsuna from accepting any of his lessons, it was time to get started on Tsuna learning about the Mafia. Well, that and Tsuna actually trusting him.

“Slight problem,” Tsuna responded, gathering his school uniform and heading towards the bathroom, “I have long standing plans with Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan to go and get cake one day each month, which today happens to be that day.”

“...both of the girls are close enough to you that they will most likely follow you into the mafia; bring the cake back here along with them,” Reborn said slowly, “Also, please bring me something as well.”

Tsuna gave him an amused look and nodded before closing the bathroom door.

Reborn was surprised when Haru was with Tsuna and the girls when they returned. She hadn’t been mentioned as joining them.

“As it turns out, Haru-chan does the same thing. We just never ran into each other before,” Tsuna explained as Haru asked I-Pin to join them, and Kyoko asked Lambo.

When Lambo came up the stairs, it wasn’t a child but rather the ten years later version of himself.

“Ahh, sorry. Young me accidently dropped the bazooka on himself,” Kakabo told them lazily.

“So you know that we know about that then,” Tsuna raised an eyebrow.

“Of course. Ah, Marble Cake, my favorite,” Kakabo sat down and pulled a slice of the cake to himself, obviously not going to explain anything.

“Go ahead, I-Pin,” Kyoko smiled down at the young girl, “We bought plenty.”

I-Pin glanced up at her and then back at the cake, and slowly took a bite. While the exchange and I-Pin eating took place, Haru shot multiple uncomfortable, guilty looks at Kakabo. Reborn looked between the two dread growing in his gut. He just knew this was going to be yet another thing that no one would offer up any explanation for. Which, honestly, was par for the course when it came to the fifteen year old Lambo.

“What is it, Haru-nee?” Kakabo glanced over at her, lazily.
“Well, that is, um,” Haru stuttered, and Reborn felt a surge of hope.

*Maybe she’ll actually say something that will make this make sense,* he thought, a smile tugging at his lips.

“Maa, maa. If you’re trying to apologize, don’t. It was a different time and place. We were different people then. When I’m from you have more than made up for it,” Kakabo chuckled, remembering something that he wasn’t about to share with them, “There is no use holding on to what doesn’t matter anymore.”

Reborn sighed silently. *Of course it couldn’t be that easy.*

Hana glanced at I-Pin, “How are you liking the Mille-Feuille?”

Instead of answering, a single tear escaped the eye of the young girl. Reborn tensed, getting ready to help get the exploding assassin out of the house as quickly as possible.

“Relax, Reborn,” Tsuna smiled at the girl while he spoke to Reborn, “It happens to everyone; the cake is so good.”

“I-Pin’s never had anything so good before,” the girl in question finally spoke up, a smile on her face, “Allow me to show my gratitude.”

I-Pin pulled out two gyoza buns and looked down at them sadly.

“I-Pin only has two…”

“Haru-chan and Kyoko-chan are the ones who even came up with this tradition in the first place,” Hana said, “I vote to give them to those two.”

“Un,” Tsuna agreed with a smile.

The two girls took the offered gyoza buns and took a bite.

Suddenly both girls fell over, as if they were knocked out.

Hana and Tsuna stood up, crying out both their names as pink smoke enveloped Kakabo. Lambo locked eyes on the many cakes and ignored everything else.

“I-Pin, were those the gyoza that only those trained in Gyoza Kempo can eat?” Reborn demanded.

“I-Pin forgot…” the girl looked devastated.

“You’re young,” Tsuna comforted her, “of course you’ll make mistakes…” he trailed off, locking eyes with Reborn.

The two of them had a moment of pure understanding between them.

“I-Pin, given your youth, did your teacher give you some sort of antidote?” Reborn asked.

I-Pin gave a nod and quickly dug through her belongings to find it.

“T-there’s only one dose…” she said tearfully.

“Alright,” Tsuna said, drawing Tobirama’s ice around him, “Here’s what we are going to do. I-Pin, do you know if your teacher is anywhere nearby?”
I-Pin frowned, and concentrated. Tobirama could feel her reaching out, mostly with Flames, but an undercurrent of chakra was there as well.

“He’s nearby!” she said excitedly.

“Good,” Tobirama said, scooping her up, “Reborn and I will take I-Pin to find her teacher. Hanachan, stay here and watch over Haru-chan and Kyoko-chan. Do what you can for them, and keep the antidote ready. Reborn, I-Pin, how long do they have?”

“I’m not sure exactly,” Reborn admitted, “but they should be fine for a few hours.”

“I-Pin doesn’t usually give Gyoza to other people, so I-Pin doesn’t know,” the girl looked miserable as she spoke.

“That’s fine. Hanachan, if we’re gone for close to an hour, either take them to Himeko-sensei or bring her to them,” Tobirama told Hana, whose eyes had taken on the glint that Tobirama recognized as being Hiruzen Sarutobi.

Hiruzen nodded at her once teacher, already moving to arrange the two unconscious girls in a better position.

Tobirama jumped from the window. He followed the directions that I-Pin gave, wishing that he knew the feel of I-Pin’s master, or that he felt that I-Pin could accurately describe what he felt like to her senses. He could not be sure that this master would not have some way to hide himself, given I-Pin’s strange combination of Flames and chakra and how she used it.

As they ran, they passed first Hayato and Bianchi as the two were walking back from an outing where they were trying to repair their relationship with one another, and then Takeshi returning home from baseball practice.

As soon as Hayato saw Tobirama’s determined face, he let the refined sharpness of Touka fall over him.

Touka followed Tobirama as he always had, Bianchi half a step behind him. Takeshi could do no less than try to help his friends, even if he claimed that they were having a festival.

Upon coming to the area that I-Pin’s master was in, Tobirama had to bring I-Pin close to each of the food stands to try to see if it was where her teacher was.

They found her master at a gyoza cart.

“Shishou! I-Pin screwed up!”

The man, who looked so much like one of the Aburame that Tobirama had done a double take, suddenly was giving off the air of being concerned. Tobirama could feel the burning strength that sat under his skin, the feel of a warrior who had fought hard for his peace. He was glad that the man easily followed them back to the Sawada house instead of them trying to force him.

Once there he brewed up the antidote into a tea and gave to the girls under the watchful eyes of Tobirama, Hiruzen, Touka, and Takeshi. After a moment, the girls began to stir.

“Ah, was it food poisoning then?” Takeshi asked, a frail sort of smile on his face.

Tobirama gave him a long stare before offering up a slow nod.
“Of a sort,” he said.

“What happened?” Haru asked, a hand at her head as she sat up.

“For future reference,” Reborn said with a small smile, “I-Pin’s special gyoza can only be eaten by her and those who have trained like her.”

The three reincarnations that had been present for the mad rush to find I-Pin’s master let their former personalities fade back into the recesses of their minds.

“Ah,” Hayato glanced around as the two poisoned girls took stock of themselves and the change in time, “What exactly were you doing?”

“Traditional once a month treat day,” Tsuna said, “We normally just have it be us three, but when getting the cakes we ran into Haru-chan, and Reborn wanted to talk to me about something, so we came back here.”

Unspoken was the fact that they didn’t want to interrupt the outing between Hayato and Bianchi.

“Right,” Hayato nodded.

“Well, there is enough cake to go around,” Kyoko pointed out.

“I had to tell off the cow-kid,” Hana shrugged with a smirk.

“Everyone, please dig in,” Tsuna said with his own smile, “Reborn, we’ll talk later.”

The group happily sat around the small table and shared the various cakes, even I-Pin’s master.

1 for reference go to here. [back]

2 the male wedding kimono, consisting of hakama (pants) and haori, the most formal has five crest. Started out as formal samurai wear that was later adopted as general formal wear. [back]

3 a traditional Japanese stiff fan. [back]

4 the jacket part of a kimono. [back]

5 Hana doesn't share this understanding because of Tsunade being a medic-nin and Orochimaru being naturally poisonous. [back]

6 honorific usually referring to a teacher, professor, or other professional such as a doctor. [back]

7 a martial arts term for one's teacher or master. [back]

Michiko Explores!
Michiko And Enzo
Michiko stared at the small turtle that sat in front of her, eating lettuce. The small thing just stared at her as it ate. She bared her teeth at it. This was her territory, and the stupid little thing had better respect it.

“Uh, should we move her away from Enzo? I mean, he might hurt her!” the annoying blond man asked, worry emanating from him.

“Don’t have so little faith in Michiko-chan,” her Tsu-kun scolded, making Michiko want to purr. She didn’t though, that would give that thing the impression that she approved of it, and that just wouldn’t do.

The thing snapped its jaw at her, and she swiped at it with her paw and claws.

“Enzo!” the blond menace yelped. He scrambled over to Michiko and the thing going to scoop it up. The thing snapped at him and he drew his hand back, sadness now in his scent.

“Baka-Dino,” the intruder lazily called out, “surely you have more faith in your pet than that. Look at Tsuna, he’s not concerned.”

Michiko did give a purr at that. Her Tsu-kun knew that she was a Great Hunter, and that she could more than hold her own in a fight. Obviously that thing’s human had no such surety in its chances. She shot a smug look at the thing, and saw that it was giving her a disgusted and resigned look.

At least one of the stupid trespassers realized how superior she was to them. Now she just had to take care of the lizard thing that was always around the intruder...

Chapter End Notes

Reborn was going to talk with Tsuna about training, he actually wants to figure out how to work with Tsuna rather than around/against.

An explanation for the gyoza: the ingredients in the gyoza actually react to people as if they were Storm Flames, abet very weak ones so basically they are slowly disintegrating them from the inside out. The antidote actually neutralizes the pseudo-Flames, thus stopping it. People trained in Gyoza Kempo are taught how to make the pseudo-Flames work with them and thus are not affected.
New Year Competition!

Chapter Summary

Reborn Gets What He Wants, And Realizes That He Really Doesn't Want It

Chapter Notes

This chapter was pretty fun to write, sibling rivalries are always a great time (that's a lie. I hate when I compete with my brother, but he can be an ass so.)

Small reminder, if you are confused about who's who, jump over to Not Quite A Bingo Book

Everyone go check out this piece of art by Dish of Fish! *melts into a puddle of joy...again*

Thank you, again, to everyone who reviews, leaves kudos, and/or bookmarks. You all bring a smile to my face.

Of the Cavallone people, only Brutus and Romario are not named by me.

Edit: Math, everyone, I hate it. I've corrected the error in the points to work as needed. Thanks for pointing it out, lol!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 12: New Year Competition!

Tsuna grabbed Lambo before the excitable child could open the door.

“What are you doing?” he asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Lambo wants more money!”

“Otoshidama are from family, not strangers off the street,” Tsuna told him, hitching the boy onto his hip. Tsuna scowled at how light he still was. “Let's have breakfast instead.”

Lambo stared up at him, amazement and surprise in his wide eyes. Tsuna had to try hard not to think about why Lambo was looking at him like that lest he actually go after the child's birth family.

“Good morning Tsu-kun,” Nana greeted him as she walked out of the kitchen, “There's breakfast on the kotatsu.”

“Morning Mama,” Tsuna pressed a kiss to Nana's check under the lilac colored lines coming off her eyes, “No makeup today?”

“I'm not going out,” she shrugged and headed upstairs.
Tsuna paused in the door to the living room where they had put the kotatsu. He wasn't surprised to see just a hint of Michiko's tail, but the other three were a surprise. Reborn and I-Pin were situated on either side, while Bianchi had stretched her whole body under the kotatsu so that her feet were coming out the other side.

“Really?” he muttered at her, and then gave a sigh upon seeing the state of what should have been breakfast.

“I love the Japanese New Year,” Bianchi mumbled, snuggling more under the kotatsu.

“Which is great for that,” Reborn said, getting up. Tsuna raised an eyebrow at him.

“What do you have planned?”

“You’ll see.”

Tsuna and Lambo said nothing as they followed Reborn out after he had changed into a ridiculous costume, I-Pin sleepily trailing after them.

“Tsuna-kun!” Kyoko called out as they reached the street.

“Kyoko-chan, Ryohei-shidōin, what are you doing here?” Tsuna asked, his brow furrowed. Both of the Sasagawa siblings were dressed in kimono; Ryohei in a black one and Kyoko in a dark pink one with sakura flowers on it and a blue obi. Tsuna had sensed them, but he thought they were heading towards the temple.

“Reborn-san called us and said that there was some event that he needed us all here for,” Kyoko said with a smile, “Oh, and I finished your jacket, here.”

Tsuna handed Lambo to Ryohei, took the folded up blue jacket and shook it out to see what Kyoko had done. On the back, in white thread, she had embroidered "ユキヒョウ".

Reborn stared at it in confusion while Tsuna thanked Kyoko and pulled the jack on over his sweater with a cartoon cat on it.

“Tsuna-kumichou!” Haru called out in greeting as she and Hana came up, both in kimono as well. Haru’s kimono was a forest green with bright yellow daisies on it and a dark red obi, while Hana was in a dark blue kimono with light blue chrysanthemums and a yellow obi.

Somewhat behind them were Hayato and Takeshi, both dressed in nice, but casual clothes. Tsuna pursed his lips and stared down at Reborn.

“Vongola Allied Families Tradition: New Year’s Competition,” Reborn smirked up at him, smug to get one over on the usually unflappable Tsuna. His smirk slipped a little when Hayato frowned at him, some secret concern in his face.

“Ah, we’re all competing against each other? I don’t know if that sounds fun…” Takeshi offered up his own concern.

“No. You’ll be competing as a team. Here come your opponents now,” Reborn smirked at the re-purposed army truck that was coming down the street.

Tsuna locked eyes with Dino as the older man carefully kept his balance whilst standing up in the back of the truck. Ice flooded Tobirama’s veins, and something in Dino’s eyes changed, an all but physical representation that it was Hashirama that was now in charge.
“Eh? We’ll be fighting Dino-san? This should be fun!” Kyoko grinned, a spark in her eyes as she let the fire of her old life take over.

“This is going to end terribly,” Hayato muttered, rubbing the bridge of his nose even as Touka’s refinement settled over him.

Tobirama was silent as he got into the back of the truck, the others hurrying after him.

They arrived at the floodplains by the river and everyone exited the truck.

Tobirama looked over the group that Hashirama had brought with him as Reborn did a few final adjustments to whatever it was that he had set up. There were ten of them beyond Hashirama, with only three being physically female. Two of the ten were the one’s Hashirama had sent to go and get the coat for Tsuna, Gioele and Tammaro. Romario, as always, was not far from his young boss.

“The winners will get one hundred million yen, while the losers must pay that same amount,” Reborn explained.

“If you want,” Hashirama said with a smirk as he and Tobirama stepped forward to face each other in front of Reborn, “I can give you a handicap. On account of you and your’s being children.”

Tobirama barred his teeth at Hashirama, drawing a confused look from Reborn.

“As if we need a handicap, you might though old man.”

Hashirama glowered at him, and Reborn could almost see the sparks flying between them.

“There will be a number of different challenges, all centered around New Years. Each challenge will be worth a different amount of points,” Reborn explained slowly, “The first round will be omikuji.”

“And how would that even translate into a competition?” Kagami asked from behind Tobirama.

Reborn smirked, producing an alligator out of nowhere.

“This is a fortune telling alligator that I had flown in from Italy,” he said, maneuvering the alligator to be facing him on the other side of the two bosses.

“And how, exactly,” Hiruzen, as Hana had wrapped the shrewdness of The Professor around herself when she had climbed into the truck after Tobirama, “does one make fortune telling into a competition?”

“Within the jaw of the alligator are a variety of different fortunes. Each Family will have one chance to grab any number of fortunes from the alligator. Great fortunes are worth two points, good fortunes are worth one point, normal fortunes are worth zero, bad fortunes are minus one point, and horrible fortunes are minus two points,” Reborn explained, pulling out two different charts to show visually what he said.

Before anyone else could say anything, Ryohei took several angry steps forward.

“I extremely don't believe in fate!” he yelled, and Tobirama could only stare at him in mild shock, “We extremely make our own fate!”

With that he strode forward and punched his hand into the alligator’s mouth. Said alligator snapped
its jaw shut.

“Onii-chan!” Kagami called out, aghast.

Ryohei frowned at the alligator and gave an angry hum, before ripping his hand free from the reptile, clutching a number of fortunes in his fist.

Touka raised his eyebrows as Ryohei marched to Reborn and slammed the fortunes down with a smirk.

Reborn looked over the various fortunes.

“Negative sixteen,” he said, adjusting the scoreboard to fit the score with falsely concerned eyes.

Tobirama scowled as Hashirama sauntered towards the still stunned alligator and plucked a single fortune out.

“It's a good fortune,” Reborn proclaimed, “one point.”

Hashirama shot a smirk at Tobirama.

“Round Two is hanetsuki5,” Reborn said, glancing between his two students, as two metal rackets landed between the two groups, “The rackets are each fifty kilos, while the shuttle is twenty. The winner will be awarded five points.”

“How are any of us supposed to even lift that?” Koharu grumbled under her breath.

Everyone's eyes widened as Takeshi stepped forward and easily picked up the racket and swung it around.

“Haha, just like practice!” he grinned as he spoke.

“You practice with Himeko-sensei, don't you?” Tobirama asked amused half turning to face Takeshi.

“Ah, how did you know?” Takeshi asked with a grin.

“Lucky guess,” came the dry response.

“Brutus,” Hashirama called out from the other side of the court, “you're up.”

A giant of a man stepped forward and heaved the other racket up.

“We will play to three wins,” Reborn said, glancing between the two groups.

“Honestly otouto,” Hashirama smirked at Tobirama, “you should just give up now.”

“I don’t give up,” Tobirama sniffed as he narrowed his eyes at his once-brother.

After one more glare between them, they both spun around and stalked back to their Families.

“Takeshi,” Tobirama snapped as he passed him, “take this seriously. No joking around.”

Takeshi raised his eyebrows at him, but nodded.

Touka had long since buried his head in his hands, but everyone else was watching avidly.
The first round went to Brutus when Takeshi wasn’t ready for the serve. Brutus won the second when he pushed Takeshi back with his powerful swing.

“Hanshi,” Hiruzen muttered to Tobirama, “should we stop this? Before Yamamoto-kun gets hurt?”

“Wait,” Tobirama frowned as Takeshi’s body-language seemed to become more intense. He could feel a rising of Flames, accompanied by a subconscious thread of chakra in the other boy. A smirk began to form on his face.

This time when Brutus served the shuttle, Takeshi was ready. He swung at the shuttle, enough force behind it to force it back towards Brutus.

“Brutus! Watch out!” Hashirama called out in concern.

Brutus dodged the incoming shuttle, a look of shock on his face as it flew past him.

“Out of bounds,” Reborn called, “Point to Brutus!”

“Ah, sorry!” Takeshi rubbed the back of his head, sheepishly as he turned to face the rest of them.

“We really should have known better,” Hiruzen said wryly, “You are overly obsessed with baseball.”

“This puts Tsuna’s family at negative sixteen, and Dino’s family at six. The next challenge will be karuta. Each of you, please choose three players. This will amount to ten points.”

“Gioele, Tammaro, Nunzia,” Hashirama named. The three stepped forward and sat at the edge of the spread out cards that Reborn had placed.

“Shit, this isn’t going to go well,” Touka muttered, running a hand over his face.

“Relax,” Hiruzen laughed, “Tsuna-kun and Kyoko-chan are the two top karuta players in our class.”

“And I’m not half-bad myself,” Koharu stepped forward.

“We have our team,” Tobirama smirked over at Hashirama. The three teens knelt down on the other side of the cards.

“First, a tea break,” Reborn said and took an obnoxiously long time to drink his tea.

Koharu started to twitch as the pressure began to get to her.

“Patience,” Tobirama murmured to her, his eyes staring down the other team. For once, he thought, I actually miss my old coloring. Many people did find it disconcerting.

Then, Reborn began to read the lines that they needed to complete. For a moment, the teens were thrown off, as all of the sayings were associated with the mafia, but soon they were able to follow along. Koharu was the slowest of the three, and soon she had to step back as she found she couldn’t do it. She felt better in that Nunzia had stepped back first. Shortly after that, Gioele also had to step back, apologizing to Hashirama as he did so.

Tammaro simply could not keep up with Kagami, let alone Tobirama, and they easily won.

“Well, you certainly can listen,” Hashirama smirked at Tsuna in challenge, “but that will not be enough for you to win.”
“Get used to the taste of defeat, Anija, for that is all you will be tasting the rest of today,” Tobirama shot back.

“Tsuna’s Family is now at negative six, while Dino’s Family is at six. The next round will be fukuwarai, for twelve points,” Reborn said, his eyes darting between the two.

“Hayato!” Tobirama snapped.

“Gabriele!” Hashirama snapped at the same time.

The two named members jumped and hurried forward as their bosses glaring at one another.

Touka and Gabriele both had a bandana tied around their eyes, creating a blindfold, and then they were spun around and seated in front of the blank heads.

“Begin!” Reborn called out, and the two reached forward for the various face parts.

Gabriele carefully felt each piece before attempting to place it, but his careful movements were no match for Touka, who easily picked up a piece and placed it.

“You- that’s- the blindfold must not have been secured properly!” Hashirama sputtered out.

“Oh Hayato just is better at this than your Gabriele,” Tobirama smirked at him.

Hashirama glowered.

“That brings you both to a tie,” Reborn said, despair in his thoughts- as wonderful as it was to have something go vaguely according to plan, this sudden rivalry between Tsuna and Dino was disconcerting to say the least, “So points don’t matter for this last challenge. Whoever wins, wins. The last challenge will be mochi. Each Family will make kinanko mochi and present it to me for tasting.”

Tobirama and Hashirama glowered at one another before turning on their heels and marching back to their Families.

Tobirama refused to pay attention to Hashirama and his underlings and instead began to divide the work.

He set Ryohei and Takeshi to pound the rice, Hiruzen and Touka to shape the mochi, and Koharu and Kagami to cook the shapes over a fire and to dip them afterwards. I-Pin and Lambo held up a cloth barrier to hide their progress from the other team, while Tobirama flitted between the steps, aiding when needed.

Soon they finish and plated the mochi. Hashirama and Tobirama approached Reborn holding the plates.

“I’m afraid that this was as good as we could do with no experience with the dish,” Hashirama said as he glowered at Tobirama. The dish he held was misshapen and parts were both obviously hard and burned. Reborn wasted no time in telling Hashirama that.

Tobirama smirked and held out the exquisite dish, pulling it away from Bianchi as she slid into place next to Reborn.

From the corner of his eye he could see Hashirama gaping at the pink-haired girl.
“The dish we made for you,” Tobirama said, smug as he could be.

“Well done,” Reborn managed to get out.

“Just because they have an advantage of knowing the dish,” Hashirama grumbled.

“Or we’re just better than you,” Tobirama said dryly. Touka glared at Reborn.

“Otouto is so mean~!” Hashirama whined before brightening, “You can make it up to me by introducing me to this sublime creature.”

“This is Bianchi. Please don’t ask her to cook for you,” Tobirama said amused.

Bianchi pouted at Tobirama as Hashirama stared at her starry-eyed.

1 New Years money given to children in small decorated envelopes called pochibukuro. back

2 A low, wooden table frame covered by a heavy blanket which is topped by a table top, underneath is a heat source. back

3 Yukihyō: Snow Leopard. back

4 Japanese fortune-telling paper strips that can range from greatly positive to greatly negative. back

5 Similar to badminton, a traditional Japanese game played with a rectangular paddle and a shuttlecock with no net. back

6 A card game where a phrase is read out and one must find and grab the corresponding card. back

7 Similar to pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey, but with various face parts. back

8 Mochi is a Japanese rice cake made by pounding the rice and then shaping it, kinako mochi is made on New Year’s Day for luck and is dipped in water and coated in sugar and kinako (soy flour) after being cooked. back

Michiko Explores!

Michiko Discovers Kotatsu

Michiko stretched and yawned, sleepily blinking as she looked around her Tsu-kun’s room. Her Tsu-kun was gone from the room, but she could hear him downstairs. She thought about going down, but from the noise, he and Mama were moving something around, and she did not want to risk get caught up underfoot.

Finally the noise seemed to die down, so Michiko slowly exited her Tsu-kun’s room and made her way down the stairs. She glanced around when she made it to the first floor, but she didn’t see either her Tsu-kun nor Mama.

Curious, Michiko made her way into the family room, where usually her Tsu-kun and Mama would spend time lazing about. At the door, she stopped.
Instead of the usual low table that she would jump up on, so that she could sun herself during the day, there was a thick blanket, overtop of which was some strange combination of a blanket and table.

Michiko looked at it suspiciously. She moved closer to the thing and sniffed. She gave a sneeze, but didn’t smell anything suspicious.

She paused, tilting her head. Was it hotter here than elsewhere in the house?

She looked at it, and found a fold in the blanket that she could use to get under the table.

This. Was. Awesome! Under the table was deliciously warm, and cozy.

“Michiko-chan? Where are you?” her Tsu-kun called from outside of the cozy table.

“Meowr,” she called out.

“Michiko-chan?” her Tsu-kun asked again, this time as he leaned down and lifted up the edge of the draped blanket.

“Meowr,” she yowled at him, for once displeased with her Tsu-kun, as the warm air was let out.

Her Tsu-kun just chuckled, and then there were legs under the table next to her.

“Here, we can share the kotatsu,” her Tsu-kun’s voice was muffled, but happy, and Michiko purred.

Chapter End Notes

Feel free to chat with me on my tumblr!

Please also let me know if you rec me to anyone, I want to personally thank you if you do!
Chapter 13: Zoo Trip

A week after the New Year's competition, Tsuna's group headed to the zoo. Reborn and Bianchi tagged along, amused over the plan to go. Kyoko had cheerfully said how it was an ongoing mission of theirs to try to go to the zoo as early into the year as possible.

Takeshi laughed and joined them when Touka had said they weren't going to be around for the day. Takeshi was quieter than normal as they went through the zoo, something recondite in his gaze as he watched the others all but trip over themselves to try to impress Tsuna, and how they kept making comments on the greatness of the other student. Takeshi let his gaze drift over Reborn and Bianchi who were visibly bemused with their actions.

When the rest rushed off to find something - Takeshi wasn’t paying that much attention - or had turned away to something else, Takeshi took a few steps closer to Tsuna. This close he could see the tightness that was around Tsuna’s eyes.

“Hey, I want to show you something, Tsuna,” Takeshi said, keeping his usual smile on his face.

Tsuna glanced at him, one eyebrow quirked, but nodded. Takeshi let his smile become more genuine as he led Tsuna away from the beaten path of the zoo and to a hidden picnic table. It was in a back corner of one of the food courts. Once it was more obviously there, but hedges hid it now.

Tsuna said nothing as they settled themselves and their lunches in the hidden spot.

“What was it you wanted to show me? It can’t be the food, we’ve passed other food carts,” Tsuna asked, his gaze locked on Takeshi.

“My parents and I used to claim this spot whenever we came here,” Takeshi said, his own gaze drifting around the area, “Probably my dad’s old habits from being an assassin. At school there’s this storage room no one ever comes to that I use, but I figured this would work just as well here.”

Tsuna raised an eyebrow, his expression obviously calling for more of an explanation.

“I sneak off when everyone just gets too… much,” Takeshi said quietly, “I don’t think that the others noticed, but…”

Tsuna stared at Takeshi with an unreadable expression as the baseball star trailed off.

“It really isn’t something you notice unless you have experienced it as well,” Tsuna said after a
moment, “Thank you, Yamamoto-san.”

“Haha, no problem!” Takeshi laughed. “You know you can call me Takeshi, right?”

“Stop that,” Tsuna replied, annoyance in his voice. “If I’m going to call you by your given name then, when it’s just the two of us, drop the mask.”

“Ah, right,” Takeshi said, a bit surprised. “Um, can I ask what it is?”

“What is?” Tsuna frowned at him.

“That thing that all of you share, that made Kurokawa-san and Sasagawa-san start to look at you differently. I have a timeline of when each of the group changed, even if I’m not that sure on how much Gokudera-san changed,” Takeshi elaborated.

“Oh. That. It’s… difficult to explain,” Tsuna said.

“Right, and we haven’t really been friends that long.” Takeshi gave a strained smile.

They sat there in silence after that.

“Hey, can I ask you something?” Tsuna asked.

“Um, sure? I mean, I’m not that smart, but I may be able to help you?”

“Oh please, you’re plenty smart. Remember that competition you had with Haru? You actually did very well with those problems; your problem is that you don’t apply yourself,” Tsuna rolled his eyes. “But I have a hypothetical situation for you. Say, you were part of, well, let’s call the group a **Clan**, that was a war with another Clan,”

“Can I name them?” Takeshi interrupted.

“What?” Tsuna looked at him in confusion.

“Can I name the clans?”

“I don’t see the point. No because the names don’t properly matter,” Tsuna shook his head at Takeshi. “Anyway, so say you were part of a Clan at war with another Clan. You’re one of the top warriors in your Clan and every time you’re in battle you fight this one member of the other Clan. The two of you are basically equals. Then, one day in battle, he falls to your sword. You expect retaliation from his Clan Head, his **anija**, and yeah, he does have it out for you, but the Clan itself has had enough. You all have, truth be told. So instead of an endless cycle of vengeance, your generation creates peace between the two Clans. Between even more Clans and clan-less people.

All of you together create a village, with your **anija**, **his** anija, your **aniyome**¹, and you being the leaders of it for all that most people dismiss your **aniyome** as having contributed. While people are getting along, you can tell that **his** anija can’t get over **his** death. So you keep an eye on him, you begin to understand your once-enemies far better than you ever did before. And then **his** anija betrayed the village you had built. This, this **baka tare**² decides that he can’t stand the village, the peace and runs off, forcing **your** anija, his so-called **best friend** to fight him, to **kill him!” Tsuna’s face actually shows his emotions as he speaks and the confusion, anger, and disgust almost completely overshadow the betrayal and sorrow, but Takeshi still sees it.

Tsuna’s quiet for a moment, and Takeshi wonders if he’s going to stop. But then he hears as Reborn passes by with Hana.
“Kumichou?” the girl calls out as she’s walking, “Kumichou, where are you? Are you sure that he and the chacma baboon\(^3\) went this way?”

“Yes I’m sure, keep looking,” Reborn replied waspishly.

Tsuna kept quiet until they could no longer hear either before he continued.

“Then your anija dies, and you’re left to lead the village that would rather paint your aniyome as a housewife\(^1\) rather than a fully capable warrior in her own right. You do what you can, but people hold your actions before the founding of the village against you far more than they did with either your anija or the baka taro. It doesn’t matter that much to you, so long as you can do right by your village and, in some ways far more importantly, do right by your students. So years later, you fall to enemies to give your kids enough time to get away, but only after finally making a decision as to which of them will follow in your footsteps. You’ve done what you could; it’s finally time for you to rest.

Except it’s not. That baka taro had to go and make some deal with a yokai\(^4\) and was still alive and trying to do something. Either take over the world by putting everyone in a dream-like state with their own personal version of peace, or to destroy the world by freeing the life-stealing evil yokai that had been sealed in the moon.”

“I’m sorry, the moon?” Takeshi interrupted in confusion.

“Yes, the moon. Don’t ask. So you, your anija, your successor, and his successor are all summoned from the afterlife using a technique that you made to fight him- it doesn’t go well. I mean, in the end, everything works out, but yeah. So you go back to being dead. And then you wake up. Because you’ve been reincarnated. You try to move on with your life, really you do. But you know someone who makes you think of your perfect enemy. The one that you cut down all those years ago and set the baka taro onto his path of being, well, a baka taro. And you kind of… fall into a pattern of treating him like you would have treated your enemy in a similar situation. Not fighting, but you certainly aren’t going to be friends with him.

But then he seems to be determined to be friends with you, and you find that you do like his company. But that just means that you feel guilty about it because, what if your enemy was like him and you could have stopped so much heartache if only you had tried to be friends with him. What would you do?”

Takeshi was silent, absorbing all the information.

“I- I really remind you of someone you were once enemies with?” he finally asked.

“What? I told you, it’s a hypothetical—”

“Tsuna, you do realize that that was way too much information for a hypothetical. Plus it really explains things. I take it that the rest of the group are also reincarnations? Who are they? I mean, obviously Dino-san is your anija, but,” Takeshi paused in his ramblings as he registered Tsuna’s shocked face, “Um, sorry, it just. It makes sense, ya know? It’s like, like a puzzle piece that you didn’t know was missing until someone handed it to you.”

“Uh, right. Um,”

“Ah, I guess it would be a bit uncomfortable to talk about this with me. I’m not somebody that you used to know, and I remind you of your enemy,” Takeshi forced a smile and stood up, “I’ll leave you be then.”
Tsuna’s hand darted forward and latched onto Takeshi’s wrist.

“I don’t-” Tsuna started but then cut himself off and squeezed his eyes shut before opening them up once more, “You don’t have to leave.”

Takeshi blinked at his classmate and sat back down, “Well, alright then. Does this mean we’re friends now?”

“How can you want to be friends with me?” Tsuna blurted out, feeling almost lost at this point, “I just told you that I murdered someone that you are almost identical to in personality, caused his anija to go mad and try to take over or destroy the world, and that I created a way to resurrect people.”

“Wait, Tsuna, you don’t,” Takeshi stared at him in shock, “You know that none of that is on you right? Well, the resurrection thing, but I won’t pretend to understand what drove you to making that in the first place.”

“Everything that happened can be traced back to my actions on that battlefield,” Tsuna pointed out, “as that is what drove that baka taro over the edge.”

“No! You were in a life or death situation! You survived! Never be sorry about that, and fuck anyone who dares act like you should be! And that baka taro’s actions are only on him! He could have chosen to learn to live with his grief instead of wallowing in it!” Takeshi was breathing hard at the end of his tirade, thankful for the weird acoustics in the hidey-hole that meant that sound didn’t really get out that well.

Tsuna blinked at him, before speaking softly, “Thank you. I don’t think anyone’s ever really said that to me before…”

Takeshi awkwardly sat back down, an embarrassed flush on his face.

“S-so! Who are the others?” he asked, desperate for a topic change.

“Touka-chan is my cousin, just as determined as always to be a protector. Hana-chan, Kyoko-chan, and Haru-chan are reincarnations of my students. Lambo-chan and I-Pin-chan are reincarnations of people that I only really met when I was resurrected, but Hana-chan and Haru-chan knew both of them. I guess Kyoko-chan died before she could meet them. Uh, your dad and Himeko-sensei are Hana-chan’s students,” Tsuna explained, a slight smile on his face.

“Would you mind giving me more details about your previous life?” Takeshi asked.

“Why not? Let’s see, ah, well to start with you must understand, I was the second of four sons…”

A few hours later, Tsuna and Takeshi wandered up to the rest of the group.

“Kumichou, there you are! We’ve been searching for you for ages,” Touka said with a relieved smile.

“Oh? We grabbed a bite to eat and then wandered around the zoo. You must have missed us,” Tsuna said nonchalantly.

“Really?” Reborn asked, his eyes narrowed.
Tsuna hummed, but otherwise ignored the hitman.

“We’ll meet at my place next Tuesday to go over the homework,” Tsuna said to Takeshi. “Alright, Takeshi?”

“Sure, I’ll bring sushi,” Takeshi smiled back at Tsuna.

The rest of the group stared.

1 elder brother's wife. aniyome

2 complete idiot/moron. baka tare

3 one of the largest species of monkeys, and one that has a wide variety of social behaviors including friendship pairings. chacma baboon

4 supernatural being/force. yokai

Michiko Explores!

Reborn’s Fedora

Michiko watched from the top of her Tsu-kun’s dresser as the Interloper slipped from the room to shower, leaving Leon behind.

The lizard thing inched back from Michiko, exuding wariness.

Smug in the knowledge that she scared the stupid lizard thing, she jumped down from the dresser and sauntered forward. Sitting on the low table that her Tsu-kun was keeping out for him and The One That Smelled Like Ozone was the Interloper’s hat.

Michiko examined it, sniffing at it and moving around. The lizard thing made a distressed noise, but quieted when Michiko shot it a disdainful look.

Michiko could hear the Interloper coming back to the room, and snatched up the hat in her jaw, rushing passed the lizard thing to hide under the bed.

Reborn entered the room and began to get dressed, pausing when he had on his shirt and pants, finally having realized something was wrong.

“Leon, where’s my fedora?” he asked.

“…” Leon stared at his human in disbelief.


Leon just stared blankly at him.

“Where?” Reborn asked as if Leon had responded, “I need it!”

Leon slightly turned away from him to look at Michiko under the bed, who only glanced at Reborn
then back to Leon as if she were watching some great comedy.

“You tell me where my suit is chameleon! We are talking about the greater good here!”

Leon gave a sigh and turned into a ball to roll under the bed and hide there from his crazy human with the demon cat. At least he could appease her by being submissive.
Camping and Consequences

Chapter Notes

Uh, sorry for the shortness of this chapter? I've been listening to podcasts at work and kinda got dragged head-first into fandom for a few (curse the lack of fics! I don't know if I have time for another fic! although I did start to send Wandering_Shalows that one angsty exes fic..... hm.....)

Thank you to everyone who reviewed, left kudos, and/or bookmarks. I might not always be the most coherent in my replies as I sometimes quickly answer while at work, but I truly do love all of the comments, kudos, and bookmarks.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 14: Camping and Consequences

“Tsuna,” Reborn spoke up as the various residents of the Sawada house sat at the table after dinner, “I have a proposition for you.”

“Oh?” Tsuna raised an eyebrow at him, “What is it?”

“As I stated before, I was sent here to train you,” Reborn began, “While I have seen plenty of evidence of your dodging skills, and a your decent fighting skills, there is still much that I am unsure of when it comes to where you are as opposed to where you should be at the end of my training.”

“And so you have an idea?” Tsuna stared at him, a slight frown on his face.

“Yes. One of the things I normally have to train for is teamwork within a Famiglia. As such I would like to take you and your Famiglia-”

“My friends,” Tsuna interrupted.

“Yes, yes, them, on a camping trip. This way I will be able to observe how well you all work together when in unfamiliar territory.”

“And what supplies would you provide or expect us to provide? Obviously with school we will have to do this on a weekend,” Tsuna stared the hitman down.

“Provide for yourselves the basics; I will provide food,” Reborn said, not breaking eye contact, “I would prefer to do this sooner rather than later.”

“Very well. I’ll go let everyone know and see when they are free,” Tsuna said, pushing back from the table and leaving the room.

Nana locked gazes with Reborn.

“If you do not provide them food, I will consider you a failure of a tutor,” she told him.

“What happens if Reborn is a failure of a tutor?” Bianchi asked, a curious look on her face.
“He gets fired,” Nana’s grin was full of bloody promise.

The next weekend Tsuna, Takeshi, Kyoko, Hana, and Haru stood at the base of a mountain.

“So what?” Hana asked as the stared up at the mountain, “We just stay the night in the forest and then go home? How is that supposed to show teamwork?”

“Honestly,” Haru huffed at her, “It’s like you never evaluated anyone. We just have to show that we can work well together.”

“Is that it?” Hara’s voice was dry.

“How hard could it really be?” Hayato asked moving past the two girls and Kyoko, who fell in step behind him while the other two hung back for a moment.

“Ah, Tsuna?” Takeshi asked, glancing at the other.

“Yes Takeshi?” Tsuna looked at him, both eyebrows raised.

“They do realize that this mountain wasn’t here a month ago, right?”

Tsuna shrugged.

“Right, fine. If you designed it, what would you have done?”

“Takeshi, we had a sectioned off training ground that actively tried to kill us,” Tsuna said in answer.

“What did you do with it?” Takeshi asked with a frown.

“We called it Daiyonjūyon Enshūjō,” Tsuna flashed his friend a grin and headed towards the mountain. Takeshi stared after him with his mouth open, snapped his jaw shut, shook his head and followed.

“I’m really sorry,” Haru said miserably.

“It’s fine,” Tsuna said from the hospital bed.

“But if I had been bet-”

“Haru,” Hayato interrupted, choosing his words carefully as Reborn was in the room with them, “Kumichou and I both are trained fighters, Hana-chan and Kyoko-chan regularly run with Kumichou in the mornings, and Yamamoto is the baseball star of Namimori-chuu. We could at the very least dodge well enough. You’ve only been seriously exercising for a few months; you can’t blame yourself for Kumichou choosing to protect you.”

“But-” Haru started again.

“Nope. No buts,” Hana said grabbing her once-teammate’s hand, “You want to make it up to Tsuna-kun? Let’s go get him something that isn’t hospital food.”

“O-okay,” Haru looked at Hana wide-eyed.
The rest watched them leave quietly.

“Yo, Reborn said that someone was hurt?” Shamal asked as he entered the room, a grin on his face. The grin slipped as he noticed that it was Tsuna in the hospital bed.

Hayato gave his mentor a deadpanned look.

“I want you to take Tsuna as your patient,” Reborn said, ignoring the byplay.

“Excuse me?” a cold voice came from behind Shamal.

They all turned to look outside of the room. Standing there was a tall, voluptuous woman with her hair twisted up into a bun.

“Why hello~” Shamal said with a flirtatious smile.

“What was this I heard about you bringing some outside doctor my hospital for one of my patients?” she asked in a dangerous voice.

“Himeko-sensei,” Tsuna greeted from the bed.

“Tsunayoshi, get some rest,” she said, her narrowed eyes not leaving Reborn.

“It doesn’t matter really if he did,” Shamal said, missing Kyoko’s horrified look.

“Really?” her voice was like ice, “In that case, both of you are going to come with me.”

Her voice gave no room for disagreements, and they followed her out. The teens watched as Himeko spun around and started to tear into the two, a sharp gesture cutting them off each time one tried to interrupt her.

“Well, that’s going to go on for a while,” Kyoko said amused.

“Hmm,” Tsuna said, starting to drift off, but also trying to keep his eyes open.


The three of them sat there in an awkward silence.

“Can I ask you two something?” Takeshi finally broke the silence.

“Depends on what it is,” Hayato shot back.

“Tsuna told me a bit about his previous life, but I was wondering,” Takeshi looked at them, his face serious, “What was he like? From an outsider’s point of view?”

“What was my itoko like,” Hayato repeated, leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed, “His name was Tobirama, and he was brilliant. The brightest mind I’ve ever seen, but he also didn’t have the best sense of self-worth. Oh, don’t get me wrong, he was confident. But he didn’t think that his wants or dreams or even desires were worth much, especially when compared to his older brother’s. A good amount of that, and everything he was, was on my uncle’s head. Tobirama wasn’t a man that was very open with his feelings, or rather, he didn’t express them in the most obvious of ways. Hm. It is a bit hard to describe him. Tobirama was a very singular person in an age that already had two historical and powerful people.”
“Hanshi was, and is, like a cat. It’s honestly the best way to describe him. Well, that and ‘loyal to a fault’, but I don’t like thinking about that. It… brings back some bad memories,” Kyoko added on, looking down at her hands at the last portion.

“The two others, they were his brother and his brother’s best friend, yes?” At their nod, he continued, “Then, what was his brother like to make him place his brother over himself?”

“You remember Dino?” Hayato asked.

“Ah, yes, the blond man, right?” Takeshi gave him a look of confusion at the change in topic.

“Well imagine that plus more hyperness. Hashirama was always a dreamer who couldn’t help but tell people what he thought should happen. Usually loudly. I still have no idea how my uncle didn’t decide that he wasn’t a suitable heir,” Hayato explain.

“Probably Hanshi,” Kyoko shrugged.

“Ah, good,” Himeko said as she swept into the room, a sheepish Reborn and an ashamed Shamal slinking in after her, “Tsunayoshi is resting. I’ll let you all visit tomorrow, but you must be on your best behavior. And yes, Takeshi,” she shot the boy an amused look, “you may bring him some sushi tomorrow. He just needs to rest up. Being partially crushed by a giant turtle will do that to you.”

They nodded and left the room, redirecting Hana and Haru as the two started to return to Tsuna’s room.

“Ah, Takeshi, you’re home,” Tsuyoshi glanced up as his son entered the sushi shop.

“Yeah…” Takeshi said distractedly.

“Is Tsunayoshi doing alright?” Tsuyoshi asked.

“Yeah, Himeko-ba is handling his case. Tsuna’s tutor tried to bring in some other doctor, but Himeko-ba tore them both a new one,” Takeshi said, a contemplative frown on his face as he spoke.

“Haha, I wish I could have seen that, Hime-chan’s always been a firecracker,” Tsuyoshi laughed, “You alright?”

“I just, I found out some things and I’m trying to figure out if they change anything,” Takeshi explained before heading up to his room, his father’s eyes on his back the whole time.

In honor of Valentine’s Day, have a glimpse of the future (Jack-In-The-Box Jesus this would be fairly far off in terms of chapters...) instead of the usual Michiko Explores, which usually is either in the past or congruent with the chapter it’s on.

Tsuna had a slight smile as he watched Kyoya walk right past various pairs and groups of people obviously celebrating Valentine’s Day.
"What?" the once Uchiha asked defensively.

"Who would have thought," Tsuna teased, "the Demon of Namimori is a romantic."

Kyoya huffed and started to speed up his walking, causing Hibird to let out a shocked peep as the canary tried to keep pace. Kyoya slowed back down, glancing up at his bird.

"I don't mean it in a bad way," Tsuna said softly, the smile gone now, "I think it's... nice. You know that the only part of you I dislike is the weird obsessive side that leads to stupid decisions."

"... it's hard to not be a romantic when I was raised by Chichi and Haha," Kyoya finally offered up.

Tsuna gave a small smile and hooked pinkies with Kyoya. He repressed a snicker as his boyfriend started to turn red with a blush.

Michiko purred from her perch on her Tsu-kun's shoulder, and Tsuna's phone beeped. He pulled it out and glanced at the screen.

"Come on," he said, twisting his hand to grab Kyoya's, "let's go to the park."

Kyoya didn't say anything, just stared wide-eyed at Tsuna as the younger male dragged him along.

Soon they came to the park and Tsuna lead the way to a blanket laid out and set up for a picnic, two bento's already set up on it along with drinks.

Michiko jumped down and dashed for the large pillow next to the blanket and curled up on it, Hibird fluttering down to cuddled up to her side.

"Koneko..." Kyoya said blinking at the set up.

"Isamu-ni and Ayamu-ni set it up for me," Tsuna explained, sitting down, and pulling Kyoya down with him, "Mama and I made the bento's though. She wanted to also give you something, you know how she is."

"Ah, okay," Kyoya said staring at Tsuna with a small smile.

"Oh, right," Tsuna said, grabbing the bag on the side of the blanket and rummaging through it, pulling out a home-wrapped chocolate bar, "It's chilli chocolate, I know how much you like spicy things."

Kyoya took the chocolate and placed it down next to himself on the blanket. Then he reached forward and cupped Tsuna's face with both his hands and leaned in and kissed his boyfriend.

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1 Fourty-Fourth Training Ground. Daiyonjūyon Enshūjō

2 aunty. ba

3 one's father. Chichi
4 one’s mother. Haha

5 kitten. Koneko

Chapter End Notes

Before anyone starts to, I don't know, have a problem with Tsuna/Tobirama being the one to give chocolate, I kinda headcanon that Madara (and to a lesser extent Hibari) kinda sucks at cooking, so.

Anyway, come chat with me about anything on my tumblr, here.
Chapter Notes

Sorry this is later than usual, I was out to dinner with my family and hadn’t yet written the Michiko Explores.

I will continue to name all the background characters and give them personalities - it’s just super fun!

Thank you to everyone who bookmarked, left kudos, and/or reviewed!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 15: Ranking Perspective

Takeshi kept his false smile on as the other students talked about how he was needed to win the baseball games in the upcoming season. They had basically ignored him post the season and now they all were acting as if they all were best friends. He felt a scream trying to climb it’s way out, but he forced it back down, never losing his smile. It was harder now. Now that he had real friends.

Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder.

“We need to talk,” Tsuna said, his voice stern.

Takeshi blinked at his friend, confused as to why he was angry with him, but let Tsuna lead the way out of the room. He could hear the murmuring behind him.

“What did Yamamoto do?” “Sawada-san looked pissed.” “I would not want to be in Yamamoto’s shoes.” “Maybe we should stop him? We do need Yamamoto’s baseball skills.” “Yeah, sure, you go and stop Sawada.”

Tsuna continued to lead Takeshi through the school. Takeshi felt a real smile overtake his face as he realized that Tsuna was leading him to the roof.

“So,” he said, amusement in his voice, “what did we need to talk about?”

Tsuna snorted as he sat down next to Hayato, and Kyoko handed the former Hokage a bento.

“How annoying all of our classmates are?” he offered.

“That our lives are ridiculous, and yet we don’t want them to stop being so?” Kyoko suggested as Takeshi sat down.

“That Reborn is utterly bizarre and makes no sense?” Hana added, handing him the remaining bento.

“You’re choice,” Hayato smirked.

Takeshi laughed, “How about all three.”
As they talked, Takeshi had a genuine smile on his face.

When school finished for the day, they all headed back to the Sawada house, Haru joining them part of the way there. At the gate, Tsuna paused, and narrowed his eyes, a severe frown replacing the slight smirk he had before. He shifted slightly, letting the coldness of Tobirama wash over him.

“Tsuna?” Takeshi asked softly as the others also shifted, getting ready for a fight, becoming more like who they had been.

“A stranger is in my room,” he growled almost subvocally.

Tobirama started forward, his eyes already glaring. The girls and Touka moved themselves to fill out a protection pattern around Takeshi, where they could still back up Tobirama if needed, but if it came to that Touka would grab Takeshi and get him out of there.

Takeshi’s mouth twisted, unhappy with being a burden on his friends.

They followed Tobirama up the stairs to his room. He pushed the door open, sweeping his eyes over his room. He blinked, a bit taken aback when a short blond boy stood in front of him, Reborn off to the side.

“Hello, my name is Fuuta,” he said, “The mafia is after me.”

They all stared at him for a moment.

“And why should that matter to us?” Hiruzen asked, one eyebrow raised.

“Vongola Jyuudaime, Tsuna-nii” Fuuta implored, “please hide me!”

“And why would I do that?” Tobirama asked, moving forward into the room and sitting down at his table, the rest followed behind.

“Haha,” Takeshi laughed, “Tsuna just started this mafia game. He can’t really help you.”

Reborn stared at him for a moment, but Takeshi just stared back, keeping his eyes blank.

“Because Tsuna-nii is ranked number one in taking care of his subordinates. Him and the Cavallone Boss, but Tsuna-nii is also ranked higher in strategy,” Fuuta said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world, pulling out an extra large book and opening it.

“What in the world?” Kagami said with a frown, leaning forward to peer at the page.

“This kid is nicknamed Ranking Fuuta,” Reborn explained, “He is an information broker specializing in ranking. Fuuta’s rankings are always correct. Which means that if you were to use these rankings to formulate a plan, you would win every battle.”

Reborn smirked as if having Fuuta come to them was a huge victory.

They all stared at the two.

“What the fu-” Touka started.

“What he means is,” Koharu swiftly cut him off, “that doesn’t really make sense.”
“Of course it does,” Reborn retorted, giving the two a look of condensation.

“No, it doesn’t,” Tobirama glowered, “Just because one person is ranked better doesn’t mean that they will always come out on top. Or if a plan is ranked as the most likely to succeed, it very well may fail, while a plan far less likely to succeed will be the one to do so because it is unexpected.”

“Tsuna, Tsuna, Tsuna,” Reborn shook his head, “The rankings Fuuta does are always correct.”

“And the most surprising person can still fall into the same pattern over and over again,” Hiruzen shot back with a frown, “even if the situation changes.”

“A rank should never be absolute. The world constantly shifts, as do people. There could be someone who is ranked as my equal in battle, and yet could fall to me because I do something unexpected. Rankings would not show that,” Tobirama insisted.

Takeshi risked a glance at his friend, knowing that he was using an example from his previous life and Takeshi was afraid of how it might affect him. Tobirama looked more annoyed than anything else, but Takeshi could see the hidden pain in his eyes.

“Or someone that is ranked as a better fighter and strategist could fall to a group of lower ranked, weaker fighters because they thought of how to wear him down, and what to do to keep him preoccupied,” Kagami added, her voice thick with emotion, though she maintained an overarching air of disbelief and anger that shrouded the sorrow and shame.

“But-” Fuuta’s voice was small as he stared at them in shock.

Tobirama softened at the look of the boy.

“That isn’t to say that rankings are not important. They simply are not the be all end all of things. For example, could you rank who loves me the most?” he asked, imagining that should such a thing exist, it would begin with his mother, followed by Dino, and then some combination of his friends and his father.

Fuuta lit up.

“I can do that!” he said, standing up, and eerie chant coming from his open but unmoving mouth.

“Oh, it was an,” Tobirama started, his voice trailing off as galaxies entered Fuuta’s eyes, “example…”

It was as if someone had turned the gravity off as items began to float.

“The one who love Sawada Tsunayoshi the absolute most is,” Fuuta said his voice empty of emotion, “Sawada Michiko.”

Everyone froze at that, staring at Fuuta in confusion, before looking at Tobirama, who was clutching said cat to him to make sure that she didn’t float too high up and become hurt when this ended.

Tobirama blinked at them.

“Well, I had assumed that such a ranking would only include humans, but it does make sense, and I can still use this to demonstrate my point,” he said, staring them all down, “While Michiko-chan loves me the most, there are others who also love me. Just not as much as my cat.”
Michiko Explores!

The Myth of Michiko

“So,” Isamu asked as he and his friends sat around drinking, “does anyone know how Tsunayoshi-sama got that cat of his?”

They all paused and thought of the fluffy kitten that was almost constantly with Tsunayoshi, and when she wasn’t, was often with their new Oyabun, Nana.

“Well, I heard that Michiko was a gift to Tsunayoshi-sama when he was a baby,” his friend Yue started, “done in some sort of family tradition so that they always have a companion.”

“That doesn’t make sense,” Ayumu complained, “Oyabun would have one as well then.”

“That’s the point,” Yue insisted, “Oyabun had a companion, but then Tsunayoshi-sama’s father killed it, or got rid of it, and that’s why she went and challenged the old boss to take over. So that in the future we can take out this guy and whoever is on his side.”

The others looked skeptical.

“I don’t know. I can’t see Oyabun not, ah, taking care of someone like that right off the bat,” Kazuo said.

“Have you heard something better?” Yue asked, crossing his arms.

“Yeah, actually. I have,” Kazuo smirked, “So it goes like this, Tsunayoshi-sama was cornered by this Triad guy, yeah? Like, the Triad guy was going to kidnap him for something, and Tsunayoshi-sama couldn’t get away. Right as the guy was about to grab Tsunayoshi-sama, something jumped at his face. It was a little kitten and it scratched up the Triad guy’s face and that gave Tsunayoshi-sama enough time to grab a board to knock the Triad guy off balance enough for him to run. The kitten was Michiko and Tsunayoshi-sama took her with him and they bonded over the incident.”

“Tsunayoshi-sama? Helpless?” Isumu raised an eyebrow, “Yeah, I don’t believe that for a second.”

“Besides,” Ayumu said confidently, “it actually was that Tsunayoshi-sama was out and heard a ruckus in an alleyway. When he looked down it, he saw a group of Triad men- at least two of them, probably more knowing those roaches. The Triad were cornering a tiny kitten, and making noises to hurt her. Tsunayoshi-sama, of course, could not stand for this and picked up a piece of wood and attacked them. He beat them enough that he was able to grab the kitten and take off. He’s had her in his life ever since.”

They all looked at each other, each able to see most of each story.

Chapter End Notes

I’d apologize for it being short, but I absolutely love the end point (as does Wandering_Shadows), so no apology.

Also, if it was anyone other than Tsuna and Michiko, this would probably be sad. But
because it's them, it's honestly awesome.
Chapter Notes

So... I don't know how many of you actually go and check out my [tumblr](https://tumblr.com), but for those of you who don't go there or just missed it, I was in the part of Michigan affected by the power-outage, so this ended up being a bit rushed. I think it still came out well, but we'll see.

In addition I honestly wasn't sure what the Michiko Explores should be until right as I was going to bed last night, and during the work day one of my absolutely favorite authors posted the next chapter of her HP story and I *had* to read it before even starting on Michiko Explores. No apologies because it was *so* worth it.

The title is because I have such a deep love for punny titles, that when I was unsatisfied with the original title, and complained to Wandering_Shadows, she offered it up as the only thing her pre-coffee brain could come up with, I had to use it.

As always, thank you so much to everyone who left kudos, comments, and bookmarks- you all make my day(s).

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Chapter 16: Eyes To See You

A few days had passed since Fuuta had revealed that Michiko was the one that loved Tsuna the most, and Nana and Tsuna had extended their protection to the Ranking Prince, but otherwise let him do as he wished, which included wandering through the town. Neither worried about him much as various members of the Momokyokai were often spread out through the town and he could simply run towards any of them for help.

Tsuna walked into the kitchen after his morning shower post his run with the girls, which had started to include Haru after the Mountain Trip. Hayato and Takeshi had also started to join them, though Takeshi sometimes had to beg off as he did have baseball practices. Nana absentmindedly greeted him from the kitchen table where she, I-Pin, and Lambo were looking over a map and a stack of papers.

“Mama? What’s going on?” he asked with a frown as he grabbed the breakfast plate she had prepared for him, swooping down and giving Michiko a skritch as he passed his cat.

“Lately there have been a number of attacks on Nami-chuu students,” Nana explained, frowning down at the map, “We’re trying to find some pattern between them.”

“Huh,” Tsuna blinked at the information, “I think I’m going to go in a bit early today.”

“Be careful,” Nana told him, concern in her voice.

“I’ll be fine, Mama,” Tsuna told her before kissing her cheek and leaving the house.
Tsuna frowned. The Disciplinary Council was out in force in front of the school.

“Well,” he said softly, “this would be the connection then.”

“Oh?” Reborn asked, his own face in a frown as well.

“From this I would gather that the injured students, or at least the majority of them, are members of the Disciplinary Council,” Tsuna grimaced.

“Is there a problem?” Reborn asked at the grimace.

“I… am not someone that they are fond of,” Tsuna admitted.

“And tensions must be running high after all of these attacks,” Reborn added.

“Hm, they must be thinking that these attacks are being done by someone with a grudge against them,” Tsuna stared passed Reborn at the school.

“No.” Came Hibari’s voice from behind him.

Tsuna turned, disdain on his face, “Hibari.”

“Ciao-su,” Reborn greeted the prefect.

“Hello there, Sawada Tsunayoshi,” Hibari stared at the younger teen as he advanced.

Tsuna set his jaw and stared him down, a slight sneer on his face, “There surely must be enough people who have a grudge against you.”

“I have no memory of any such mischief,” Hibari purred as he came closer to Tsuna, “Of course, I intend to protect myself by eliminating the source of the threat.”

“Oh? So you’re leaving then? It’s about time,” Tsuna snarked back.

Reborn wondered if the only thing that he would be able to teach his student was how to recognize when someone, especially a violent, socially awkward person, was flirting with him. He wondered how he could swing that to Nono and Iemitsu as being vital to being a Mafia Don beyond simply hiring people to take care of such problems.

Suddenly, Hibari’s eyes left Tsuna’s and snapped to the bushes next to them. He swung his tonfa and knocked Shamal out of the bushes. Tsuna watched dispassionately.

“Owwww,” Shamal whined, “What was that for?”

“I sensed malicious intent,” Hibari deadpanned, a slight glare on his face, “I suppose it was my imagination.”

“Is he sure that wasn’t you he sensed?” Reborn whispered to Tsuna.

Tsuna gave him a look, conveying that Reborn’s sass was not appreciated at all and that if Hibari could not figure out that Tsuna would happily watch him take a long walk off a short pier than the older man was dumber than Michiko’s dog underlings.

“That doesn’t mean that you should attack me,” Shamal complained, surreptitiously watching one of his mosquitos as it buzzed around Hibari’s neck.
Tsuna smirked at the man, schadenfreude in his eyes, though the two adult hitmen were unsure as to whom it was that it was derived from.

“Scary guy,” Shamal muttered, getting to his feet, “Oh, that hurts.”

Reborn hummed as Hibari paused in front of him and Tsuna to touch his neck after the mosquito bit him.

“That was a conditioned response,” Shamal said as he came over to lean on the half wall next to Reborn, “He should be fine as cherry blossoms aren’t in season right now.”

Tsuna gave him a flat stare, “That’s not a very good conditioned response then.”

“Haha, you sound like you want this kid dead!” Shamal laughed, but quickly quieted when neither of the other two joined in, “Wait, what?”

“What are you doing here?” Tsuna asked instead of answering.

“Ah, I heard about the attacks and wanted to check in on Toto,” Shamal said, scratching at his cheek.

Tsuna nodded his understanding.

“♪midori tanabiku namimori no♪” came from behind them.

“...isn’t that your school anthem?” Reborn asked, “Where’s it coming from?”

Behind Tsuna, Hibari answered his phone.

“Oh, I see,” Hibari spoke into his phone before turning back to Tsuna, “Isn’t Sasagawa Ryohei one of your acquaintances?”

Tsuna stiffened and stared at him wide eyed, before turning his back on the school.

“I’m skipping,” his voice was clipped.

“Your absence today will be considered excused,” Hibari said, his eyes searching Tsuna’s face.

Tsuna rushed into the hospital room, followed by Kyoko and Hana, the two having gotten a call while on their way to Nami-chuu.

“Onii-san!” Kyoko gasped, her hands fluttering over his well bandaged body.

“Ah, Kyoko-chan,” his eyes swept over her, drinking in the sight of his sister.

“Ryohei-shidōin, what happened?” Tsuna demanded, his voice sharp.

Ryohei glanced at him and then back down to his own hands, avoiding looking at his face.

“I did not take my opponent very seriously. Though I doubt that as I was I could have beat him. He was like an animal, and boxers lack the killing instinct,” Ryohei said.

Kyoko cocked her head studying her brother.
“Maybe not,” Tsuna said, “but you have the Will of Fire, so maybe you could have.”

“Not to mention,” Kyoko added cheerfully, “I doubt any human could be even half as dangerous as a giant nine-tailed fox.”

Ryohei’s eyes widened and he stared at Kyoko before looking away, something like shame in his eyes.

“Kyoko-chan…” he started.

“Is this yours?” Reborn interrupted, holding up a pocket watch.

“Ah, no,” Ryohei blinked at him, confused, “I was told that it was found on me though?”

“As touching as this is,” Himeko swept into the room, “and as much as I enjoy your company, Tsuna-kun, you, Hana-chan, and your tutor need to leave. Sasagawa-san’s parents are here and I need to talk to the family.”

Tsuna nodded, squeezed Ryohei’s hand, and left the room, the other two following him. As he stepped out, he registered that there was an abundance of Nami-chuu students waiting in or near rooms.

“How many,” he muttered under his breath, stretching his senses out, hoping that none of his friends were among the attacked. His breath caught and he headed towards one of the rooms.

He stood in the doorway, and stared at the occupant of that bed.

“Ah, Sawada-san,” another person greeted, surprised to see him outside of this one room, “um, Mochida-kun hasn’t bothered Sasagawa-chan for a while?”

“I know, I was just… surprised to realize that he was here,” Tsuna said. Hana reached out and squeezed his hand, also staring at Mochida.

“A lot of people have been attacked,” the other boy said in explanation.

There was a murmuring through the ward as people realized that some of the still standing DC members, including Tetsuya, were striding down the hall, making plans as to deal with the problem.

Tetsuya stopped in front of Tsuna and stared at him. Tsuna looked back at him ignoring how the other student was trying to make him bow.

Tetsuya looked away first and continued to walk down the hall.

“Tsuna-kun? What was that about?” Hana asked.

“Hibari went to deal with this,” Tsuna told her.

Elsewhere (Aka Kokuyo Land):

Hibari gave no thought to the Kokuyo students as he made his way towards the center of their base. They were weak Herbivores after all, and he was searching for the Carnivore behind this.

He made his way into a dilapidated room that held an old couch, on which a figure sat.
“Yo,” the person said in a musical voice, “thank you for coming,” as if they had offered up an invitation to a suburban home.

“I’ve been looking all over for you,” Hibari responded, “Are you the one behind this mischief?”

“Kufufu, something like that. And the new order in your town.”

“There are already too many Carnivores in Namimori. We don’t need another.”

“Oh, I agree. I’ll just remove one,” the person gave a mad grin and Hibari scowled.

“I’ll bite you to death,” he growled, unleashing the spikes on his tonfa and tensing to attack.

The other chuckled again.

“You want to die sitting?” Hibari asked disdainfully.

“I’m sitting because there is no reason to stand,” came the snarky reply.

“Talking is pointless,” Hibari said as he stalked forward, his every nerve on guard for an attack.

“If that is what you wish,” the other smirked, “but it is your last chance to say anything.”

Hibari sucked in a breath as he caught sight of the other’s right eye. It was light red and held the kanji for six in place of a pupil. As Hibari watched, the kanji shuttered like a slot machine and became the kanji for one.

Something about that eye disturbed Hibari on a primal level, his instincts screaming that it was wrong wrongwrongWRONG!

The other was talking, but it was like the sound of a waterfall in Hibari’s ears as he tried to find what he found so wrong about the eye. It couldn’t be the lack of a pupil- that idea simply caused him to become angry, as if he had found rule breakers, but not disturbed as this eye did.

He did notice when the scent of cherry blossoms filled the room and he became dizzy.

His last thought before passing out was of how he could never let that idiot know of this.

At the Hospital:

“Reborn,” Tsuna’s voice was sharp, “Why did Leon’s tail fall off?”

“This is an ill omen,” Reborn said instead of answering.

“That isn’t what I asked,” Tsuna narrowed his eyes at Reborn.

Reborn said nothing and simply held his companion as the chameleon uncontrollably changed forms again and again.

“Without his tail, he can’t control his shape,” Reborn said, concern in his voice and on his face.

Before Tsuna could reply, one of the orderlies called out for people to get out of the way.

The various students paled and whispers broke out when they saw exactly which Nami-chuu student had been beaten up.

“It’s Kusakabe-senpai,” Hana murmured as he was pushed passed them.
“Hibari should have dealt with the culprits by now,” Tsuna added, frowning after Kusakabe.

Reborn ignored them to jump up on the gurney and pick up the pocket-watch that was on Kusakabe’s chest.

“I believe that they are picking a fight with you,” Reborn told Tsuna after jumping down from the gurney.

“And what does the pocket-watch have to do with it?” Tsuna demanded.

“Look,” Reborn held out the two pocket-watches that he had gathered. They showed the time as seven and six o’clock respectively.

“It’s like a countdown...” Hana said with a frown.

“I thought the same thing,” Reborn said before pulling out a piece of paper out, “and then there’s this.”

Tsuna took it, scanning the paper.

“A Ranking of All the Fighters Under 16 Years of Age in Namimori,” he read. His breath hitched and Tobirama spun on his heel, the paper fluttering to the ground behind him.

“Hana,” Reborn snapped, “Go and keep watch on the Sasagawa’s- you and Kyoko were both on the list as well, and we don’t know if they plan on returning to finish you off.”

Hana nodded but hesitated, “What are you going to do?”

“I am going to go and find Hibari Himeko and tell her exactly what is going on so that she can prepare for what is about to happen,” Reborn said.

At Nami-chuu:

Hayato fiddled with his phone, wondering where everyone was. Finally he huffed and gave the day up as a loss, getting up and leaving the school, ignoring the yell of the teacher and not bothering to wake Takeshi up.

It was in the shopping center that he was stopped.

“Namimori-chuu Class 1-A, seat 8, Hayato Gokudera.”

Hayato turned, letting the refinement of Touka overtake him.

“And what’s it to you?”

Michiko Explores

Michiko Meets Her Elders

Michiko gave a purr and nuzzled her Tsu-kun before jumping down from the table. Her Tsu-kun watched with a fond smile as she wandered out of the room.

“Will she be alright?” the tall, long haired human asked as Michiko left the room.
“Of course,” her Tsu-kun replied.

Michiko forewent the meandering act as soon as she was out of sight of the room. She knew that who she was seeking was in this house.

It took her longer than she liked for her to finally track them down.

She looked at the two silently, and stared them down.

“...alright koneko-gaki², what do you want?” the Toad asked.

“Gamabunta! We are supposed to be keeping our nature secret!” the Slug protested.

Michiko stared at them.

“Oh come on Katsuya! She seeked us out! She obviously knows!” The Toad huffed.

“Well, well, oh fine!” the Slug gave in.

“Out with it koneko-gaki,” the Toad turned back to her.

“Honestly Gamabunta, how everyone believes that Toads are wise is beyond me,” the Slug snarked, “She’s a normal cat, she can’t Speak. Besides, isn’t it obvious as to why she would seek us out?”

Footnotes

¹a German word meaning the joy in someone else's misfortune, troubles, or failures. schadenfreube

²kitten-brat. koneko-gaki

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, who saw Ryohei coming? Wait, was it even obvious who he was? eh, I'll leave that tag out until I actually say it. But please, speculate❤
So do to some rl stuff, this wasn't completed till midday today, and thusly hasn't yet been beta read. As soon as Wandering_Shadows has, I'll update this to the beta-ed version. Edit: 3/29 6:37 pm updated with beta changes

This chapter has a lot of stuff that I had to make up because there wasn't anything that I could find. Feel free to talk with me about it, I would love to explain my reasoning!

Thank you so much to everyone who has left reviews/kudos/bookmarks! I love to see all of your thoughts on this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 17: Day Trip

Touka waited for the boy to answer, his mind flicking through both the various genjutsu to use and what explosives he had on him.

“Let’s get this over with quickly,” the bespectacled by said, dismissing Touka as a threat.

Well, Touka thought, I can work with that.

He gathered a bit of chakra, even as the other continued, “I don’t want to break a sweat.”

“And who the hell are you?” Touka asked, striding forward and slipping his hands into the Monkey Seal\(^1\).

“Kokuyo-chuu, first year, Kakimoto Chikusa. I came to break you.”

“And why,” Touka drawled, arms falling back to his sides, “am I being accosted by people from other schools?”

“We’re looking for someone,” Kakimoto smirked at him, confidence oozing off of him.

Across the street a pair of civilians noticed them and slowed, wanting to watch the show.

Kakimoto sneered and tossed a yo-yo out, shooting needles out of it. The civilians gasped as one was hit before running off to go get an authority.

Touka scowled at him, “I’ll thank you to not involve civilians.”

“It’d be a pain if someone interfered,” Kakimoto’s voice was level giving no verbal indicator for his sudden toss of the yo-yo, needles flying at Touka’s face.

The former Senju dodged to the side, slipping through an alley, his hands first flashing from the Monkey seal to the Snake seal, from there into the Horse and then the Tiger. As he turned the corner, he pulled out a portion of the explosives he had on him and threw them into the air.

Kakimoto rounded the corner, saw the explosives and tossed two yo-yos, extinguishing the wicks.
He gave a slight smirk as he drove Touka from his hiding spot.

Tobirama rushed into the shopping district, his every sense reaching for his once-cousin. As he did so, he felt a slight tingling sensation in the back of his head and in the air in front of his eyes. *Well then.*

He skidded to a stop behind an injured Touka, propping him up.

“Hayato! Are you okay?” he asked, visually scanning his former cousin.

“Itoko!” Touka looked up at him, a bit wide-eyed but those eyes were filled with steel, “What are you doing here?”

“I found a list titled *A Ranking of All the Fighters Under 16 Years of Age in Namimori*. Your name was fifth on the list, so I came to find you. After all Kyoko-chan and Hana-chan are ranked eighth and ninth respectively, but are almost always together and haven’t been attacked, while both Ryohei-shidōin and Kusakabe-senpai are on the list and were attacked.”

“Don’t interfere,” Kakimoto intoned from across the road, lifting a hand to toss his yo-yo.

Tobirama tensed, preparing to dodge with Touka when they were pushed to the side by Takeshi.

“Hey,” he grinned at Tobirama.

“Thanks,” Tobirama smirked in response.

“Can’t either of you take this guy?” he asked quietly.

“Hm. Takeshi Yamamoto, which makes you Tsunayoshi Sawada. Neither of you are my targets,” Kakimoto sneered at them, dismissing them from his mind.

“Someone’s coming,” Tobirama murmured to them both, “and quickly at that.”

“Oh to hell with this,” Touka muttered, slipping his hands from Monkey to Boar and then to Tiger while locking eyes with Kakimoto, “Kusabana ya chūrippu no kōzui.”

Kakimoto’s eyes glazed over a bit even as he raised his hand to once more toss the yo-yo.

“Tell me please, who has sent you, my friend?” Touka sing sioned, his hands still in Tiger.

Takeshi frowned, but said nothing when Tobirama shook his head.

“Rokudo Mukuro,” Kakimoto said blankly, tossing the yo-yo and sending needles flying at them.

“Oh my friend, I wish to know, why would this be?”

“The best way to accomplish our goals is to use the heir to the Vongola, and this would draw them out.”

Takeshi brings out the bat his father had given him that turns into a sword and bats away many of the needles while Tobirama uses Takeshi’s school-bag to catch the rest.

“Over here!” someone yells and Kakimoto blinks. His gaze is once more sharp, and he only glances at the police officer heading in their direction before he’s turning on his heel and slipping
away.

Touka cursed and drops his hands.

The police officer stopped next to them, “Are you kids alright?”

“As much as can be expected.  My friend was attacked by that person,” Tobirama replied, his voice even but not calm.

“Here, I'll help you get to the hospital and take your statement there,” he told them, “I'd say that it was stupid of you to fight your attacker young man, but I doubt that would have stopped him.”

“Mostly I just was trying to get away,” Touka ground out as he was helped to his feet.

Takeshi and Tobirama hung back a little as the police officer half carried Touka towards a car to drive to the hospital.

“Are these people really that strong?” Takeshi asked.

“No.  Hayato is using a layered genjutsu to make himself look more injured than he is and to make his attacker more likely to brag, trying to get information,” Tobirama explained.

“And the Kusabana thing?”

“A more dangerous information gathering genjutsu.  As long as you maintain eye contact, am the only one speaking, have a soothing cadence to your voice, and speak as if you are friends, the person under the genjutsu will verbally respond as if you are a dear and trusted friend, but their body continues as if no genjutsu had been applied.”

“Which would be why we couldn't talk,” Takeshi inferred.

Tobirama nodded and let his ice thaw as they climbed into the car.

By the time they reached the hospital, Hayato had relaxed from the refinement of Touka, though he had to keep the genjutsu going.

A nurse took them to the same room Ryohei was in, where Shamal met them, his hands fluttering over Hayato’s body.

“Dr. Shamal, I thought I had made it clear that I didn’t want to see you in my hospital until you had renounced your vow,” Himeko-sensei sneered the last word as she finished checking on Ryohei.

Hana and Kyoko looked up at them, concern in their eyes.

“I’m not here as a doctor,” Shamal said in a clipped voice, “I’m Hayato’s guardian.”

Himeko blinked once, and then gently pushed him away from Hayato’s bed.

“Then you need to back up to let me examine him,” she said.

Shamal gave a short nod and backed out of her way, but stayed near and watched intently.

Bianchi and Haru hurried into the room, and Shamal immediately grabbed the other Gokudera and forced her back out of the room.
“What was that about?” one of the nurses frowned at the door.

“Hayato-kun has a psychologically induced physical reaction to seeing his sister’s face. I think Dr. Shamal was making sure that Hayato-kun wouldn’t get sick on top of his injuries?” Hana piped up.

The nurse blinked and then turned back to Himeko’s examination of Hayato.

“So what is going on?” Hana asked, her arms crossed.

“This group, Mukuro and his men, are for some reason going after people on that list of fighters under 16,” Tsuna said quietly.

“Who’s on it?” Ryohei asked from his bed.

“Hana-chan is at nine, Kyoko-chan, you are eight. Ryohei-shidōin is seventh, and Kusakabe-senpai is sixth. Hayato-kun is fifth, while Takeshi is fourth. Hibari-senpai is third, I am second, and Michiko-chan is number one,” Tsuna listed off.

“Michiko is the top fighter?” Haru asked incredulously.

“Well she does have above human intelligence,” Tsuna said with raised eyebrows.

“No,” Hana said rubbing her temples, “that’s not a thing.”

“I don’t know,” Takeshi said looking up towards the ceiling, “I can see it.”

“Regardless, we are all on the list,” Tsuna said after smirking at his best friend.

“Tsuna-kun,” Kyoko asked quietly, “what’s the plan?”

“Do you know what Reborn is doing?” he asked instead of answering.

“I saw him at a payphone as Bianchi-san and I were coming here,” Haru offered up, “If I were him, I would be checking with my sources for information.”

“You are correct,” Reborn spoke up from the window, “I was calling Dino and some of my other contacts in Italy. From what I’ve gathered there was a recent break out of a group of criminals from a Mafia Prison. It is believed that Mukuro Rokudo and his men have come to Namimori. Three days ago, three Italians transferred to Kokuyo-chuu. I also have a letter from Nono:

To My Beloved Vongola Decimo,

Reborn has kept me informed as to your maturity and the growth of your Famiglia. I believe it is now time for you to take the next step. Here are your orders: capture the escaped prisoners, and rescue the hostage. I wish you the best of luck.”

“Hmph. I have yet to swear any sort of vow to the Vongola nor to him. Reborn, I assume that Bianchi-san has had experience negotiating pay for services rendered?” Tsuna’s gaze was cold as he stared down Reborn, “I’ll ask her and Shamal to negotiate on our behalf regarding payment. She and Dr. Shamal are invested in us due to Hayato-kun, I trust that they will complete this to the best of their abilities. Hayato-kun’s injuries looked more superficial than Ryohei-shidōin’s. Haru-chan, I’m sorry but I’m going to have to ask you to stay behind and watch over Ryohei-shidōin,” Tsuna looked at her, and Haru gave a wry smile.

“I understand Kumichou, I still need to get stronger.”
“I’ll stay to help her,” Hana suddenly spoke up.

“You will?” Haru asked with a frown.

“Yes,” Hana nodded, lifting her hand from her side and bringing it to her face. As she did so, her hand first made a loose circle, and then a loose fist before it came to rest on her chin, the Konoha sign for Team, “The three of us need to talk.”

Reborn frowned at them, but before he could say anything, Tsuna continued.

“Everyone go and get whatever you need for this. We’ll meet at my house in an hour and head for Kokuyo Land. Once there we’ll make our way through it and find these people. Himeko-sensei, how is Hayato-kun?” Tsuna raised his voice at the last question.

“Luckily enough for your friend, all injuries were superficial, and just needed some bandages, though I would recommend icing some of them as well,” she answered, stepping away from the bed.

Tsuna nodded and they all dispersed to gather what they could.

At the Sawada House, 45 minutes later:

Tsuna glanced up as Takeshi stepped into his room. The other boy was carrying two tubes on his back, along with two bags.

“Tsuna, I need to ask you something before we do this,” Takeshi's voice was soft and serious.

Tsuna straightened and faced his friend, giving him his full attention, as Takeshi placed the bags on the ground.

“What is it Takeshi?”

“With what's coming, we're most likely going to be fighting,” Takeshi paused and sucked in air, fortifying himself for what came next, “I need you to promise me that you will not interfere unless I'm in life threatening danger.”

Tsuna stared at him in shock, “why?”

“You're my best friend, I need to be able to stand next to you, and not be a burden. If you keep trying to protect me, I can't and what if one day you leave me behind—” Takeshi broke off as Tsuna flash stepped forward and gripped the base of his head, pulling him down to rest their foreheads together.

Takeshi shakily reached up and gripped Tsuna's arm.

“Okay, I won't leave you behind, but I'll do this. You're my best friend, Takeshi,” Tsuna whispered, and they just stood there, breathing together.

Finally, Tsuna stepped back.

“What do you have in the tubes?” he asked.

“One’s holding Shigure Momiji, the other is holding a loaner sword from Oyaji for you,” Takeshi said, after clearing his throat.
“Thank you Takeshi, I was contemplating taking Mama’s knives, and that… wouldn’t have been preferred,” Tsuna smiled at him.

The group of seven cautiously enter the abandoned land, on edge even though this is not the entrance Mukuro and his ilk have been using. Tsuna lets the ice of Tobirama sweep over him slowly as they made their way into Kokuyo Land, even as vague memories from when he was small dance in his head. Hayato settles the refinement of Touka around him like a cloak, and Kyoko’s eyes held that spark of fire that was all Kagami.

Tobirama isn’t sure if subconsciously that is why the feral looking blonde went straight for Takeshi. The two of them fall through the ground and into what had once been a glass zoo.

“Takeshi!” Tobirama yells down, “Are you alright?”

“Just a little bruised,” Takeshi yells back up, “But I can't see the other guy.”

“I could give him some fire?” Kagami offers, holding up an aerosol can and a lighter.

“While I love the pyromania,” Touka raises an eyebrow, “we have no idea what is down there that might be flammable. So probably not.”

“Try using your other senses,” surprisingly, it was Bianchi who called down.

Takeshi doesn’t reply, instead stilling before suddenly dodging out of the way.

“Welcome, Takeshi Yamamoto. Kakipi’s still out cold, and I got bored with no orders, but now that my prey’s shown up, I’m really happy. I’ll go after your friends once I’m done here.”

“You’re kinda like a dog,” Takeshi smiles blankly at him.

“Are you stupid? Well, who cares,” the blonde lunges forward again, this time too fast for Takeshi to dodge. Instead, the baseball star blocks him using Shigure Momiji. The bat-sword shatters from the assault.

“Next time I’ll tear out your throat,” the blonde taunts.

“Takeshi!” Tobirama cries out worry in his voice. He leans forward, debating if this counts as life threatening danger, when an unexpected push comes from behind and he slips down.

He lands, controlling his fall so that he is less damaged than either of the other two.

“Keh, I’ll just deal with you first,” their opponent sneers at him and begins rushing forward.

Tobirama braces himself, but the zipper on his tube is stuck. He has to dodge, or else engage in hand to hand, and he’s still trying to keep his former life, and chakra from Reborn, even if some skills have been shown. There’s no reason to let the hitman in on any of Tobirama’s secrets, so he must maintain a balance between not being too skilled and not purposely letting himself get hurt.

He feels a sudden surge of chakra, a familiar mix of a bonfire and an electric storm.

Ken stops, and raises a hand to his head.
“I am your opponent,” Izuna growls, a glare on his face.

With a gleeful laugh, Ken turns back to him and runs forward even as Izuna backs up.

Izuna locks crimson eyes with him and Ken slows right before him, swaying a bit. Tobirama knows that the others can no longer see Izuna and Ken, but he watches as Izuna smirks and brings the blunt end of Shigure Momij’s handle down on Ken’s temple.

When Izuna looks up, he glares at Tobirama.

“Heavy us complete this job,” Tobirama says quietly, “We are getting paid for it after all. After that, we never need to interact outside of school again.”

Behind them, a room tumbles down, ready for them to climb up. Tobirama knows he'll go first.

Footnotes:

1 Seal Chart There is no specific seal for genjutsu, but in the Chinese Zodiac, the Monkey represents changeability. Monkey Seal

1 Flood of Violets and Tulips, my own genjutsu name based on Hanakotoba (Japanese Flower Meanings). Kusabana ya chūrippu no kōzui

1 Shower in Late Autumn, Japanese Maple: my name for Takeshi's bat-sword, named in respect to the style of his father's sword. Shigure Momiji

1 Father/Old Man: equivalent of Pops, a more informal way to refer to one's father. Oyaji

Michiko Explores

Michiko Begins

The Slug and the Toad take off then, faster than anything she’s ever seen, and Michiko has to rush to follow them.

They lead her on a twisting road, and then suddenly.

Suddenly, they are at the base of a mountain, and it is day. As far as Michiko can tell, there are no buildings here.

Michiko looks once more at the Slug and the Toad, and finds that she must look up, and up, and up.

“Well koneko-gaki, here is where we leave you,” the Toad says, puffing on a pipe.

“You must prove yourself worthy of joining us,” the Slug tells her, “You must make your way to the top of the Mountain, where all the Summon Chiefs will wait to receive you.”

“You will have three days to get there,” the Toad told her.

The two of them turned away from her, and were suddenly gone.
The forest around her came alive with the sounds of various animals.

Michiko looked around, worried, but then gave a decisive nod. She would do this so that she could always be with her Tsu-kun.

Chapter End Notes

And lo, the Angst Queen did look upon Her subjects and said "Thou hast not yet suffered enough. Thusly this shall be remedied post haste." And so it was done.

ahem. Wandering_Shadows calls me the Angst Queen. I damn near made myself cry with this, so I hope all of you enjoy it as much as I do❤

You can come yell at me on my tumblr
Chapter Summary

Just in case you don't see the updated warning, or you see the update before I add the warning: this now will have fairly descriptive violence. Blood will be mentioned and people will die. None of the main characters, but that does leave quite a few people. I won't get super graphic, but I figured a warning is warranted either way.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your reviews, kudos, and bookmarks! Your wails of despair fuel me

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 18: The Enemy of My Enemy is A Horrible Person

Kagami kept herself between her former teacher and the newly awakened Izuna. Privately, she wished Izuna-sama would let the memories of Takeshi have more of an influence, but she doubted saying such would work. It would probably make him even more suspicious of her actually. Right now she was just about the only thing keeping him from lashing out.

“We should eat while we can,” Tobirama finally spoke up, drawing her from her thoughts.

“Right!” Kagami clapped her hands together, “We need to keep up our strength!”

Izuna gave a small grunt, but headed straight for the picnic tables and placed the bags of Sushi down. Before they could open the boxes, a loud hum pierced the air, and the liquid in the food began to boil and exploded.

Tobirama, Kagami, and Touka dove behind the picnic table where Izuna was already crouched.

“What was that?” Touka demanded, peaking out around the table to glance over the girl sitting in the ruble, smirking at them.

“Can’t think why Kakipi and Ken had such a problem with you,” she all but sneered, “You’re the most pathetic Mafioso I’ve ever seen.”

“The Kokuyo-chuu uniform means she’s one of Mukuro’s,” Tobirama observed.

“This style of attack is reminiscent of some of what we were starting to hear about Otogakure,” Kagami barely moved her lips as she quietly spoke, the words not carrying over to where Bianchi and Reborn were taking cover.

“Is it relevant right now?” Izuna asked in a clipped voice.

“No,” Kagami conceded.
“Don’t ignore me!” the girl seethed, “I’m M.M.! I was specifically hired by Mukuro!”

“We gathered that, thanks,” Touka said sardonically, palming some dynamite.

“Man, it saddens me to see you losers,” she then tried to bluff.

“Kyoko?” Tobirama asked brisk and quiet as the girl continued on.

The girl shook her head, “We don’t know exactly how her sound manipulation works. She might send the fire right back in our faces.”

“Then I’ll just-” Izuna started to get up.

“No.” Tobirama grabbed the back of his shirt and pulled him back down, “We are not letting Reborn or Bianchi see just what we can do. If we get separated from them, or if they get knocked out, go for it.”

Izuna scowled but sat back down.

Another loud hum came from M.M., and the remaining bottles of tea boiled and exploded.

“We need a distraction,” Izuna says in the aftermath, his eyes hard, “So that one of us can get close to her.”

Kagami freezes, eyes locked on Tobirama, her breath fast and shallow, a litany of ‘no’ and ‘not again’ echoing in her head.

Before any of them can respond, Bianchi launches herself over the table.

“Let me handle her,” Bianchi threw over her shoulder before addressing M.M., “You’re wrong. Money isn’t what counts, it’s love!”

Tobirama blinked and stared at Bianchi in disbelief. Touka grinned.

“This should be good.”

“That weapon works like a microwave, right? It uses sound waves to vibrate water molecules and raise the temperature,” Bianchi stared the girl down.

“Tch. So what if you figured it out,” M.M. sneered, before launching into an explanation of what exactly her clarinet did.

Tobirama and Izuna both scowled in confusion, while Touka rolled his eyes.

“What is happening right now?” Tobirama muttered.

“She’s explaining her weapon,” Kagami answered slowly, giving her former teacher a worried look.

“But... why ?”

“Um, I guess it’s just something that people started to do? It was pretty commonplace by…” Kagami’s voice dropped to keep her next words private, “by the time I died.”

Izuna shook his head.
“I understand monologuing in reference to certain genjutsu, but this is ridiculous. We could make a plan to take her out just based on what she’s saying,” he murmured, exchanging a look of understanding with Tobirama before remembering himself and giving a fierce scowl.

“Veleno Cottura: Grandi porzioni! Tutto quello che puoi mangiare!” Bianchi called out, somehow producing two large platters of her poison cooking.

M.M. sent a blast of high frequency at Bianchi, but the teenage hitwoman blocked it from reaching her body with the large platters.

“Impressive,” Tobirama complemented, and then Bianchi was in M.M.’s space, and too close for the girl to safely use the clarinet on her once more.

“Ha! Did you think I’d panic?” M.M. demanded, twisting the clarinet into two pieces, connected by a thick chain, “I’m good at close-range too!”

She swung her now-nunchaku at Bianchi, causing the older girl to have to suddenly backtrack.

The platters tumbled to the ground and Bianchi’s hands came up to protect her head as the nunchaku swung by.

Touka gave a shocked sound and Tobirama ‘hn’ed.

Izuna glanced at the former Senju and his scowl deepened.

“Are you really so depraved that you are happy to watch your teammate fail?” he hissed at the smirking Tobirama.

“Watch,” was Tobirama’s only response.

M.M. swung the nunchaku once more at Bianchi’s face, and Bianchi went flying back, rolling on the ground as she landed.

“Bianchi-san!” Kagami gasped, tensing to run to the older teen.

Tobirama placed a hand on her shoulder and gave a small shake of his head.

“Ahahaha!” M.M. gloated, “What were you saying about love? Nothing beats money! Time to finish you off with one last blow!”

From where she was kneeling, Bianchi stared at M.M. as the other brought the reassembled clarinet to her mouth.

“I’ll make your brains boil this time,” M.M. smirked, before placing the clarinet in her mouth.

“Veleno Cottura: Mille Fiori velenose,” Bianchi intoned with a smirk.

M.M. stared at her in confusion before realizing that something was off about what was in her mouth. She glanced down and gasped, unable to form words. Where once there had been a sleek black clarinet, modified for both sound attacks and close-range attacks, there now was a partially melted purple mass with bugs and worms all over it.

M.M. could only stare in horror at what had been her weapon, before the poison cooking caused her to pass out and fall over.
Bianchi stood up with a smirk, and ran her eyes over Touka scanning her younger brother for any sign of injury.

“Are you okay?” she asked before turning and rushing over to where Reborn was faking sleep, “I’m so glad I didn’t interrupt your nap!”

Tobirama observed her play-acting with a slight smirk. *What better way to keep who you actually care about safe than making it seem as if the only one you do care about is a great hitman.*

“Ehehehe,” came another voice.

Tobirama gave a small disgruntled huff.

“About time someone took out that annoying little snip,” an old man said, leering at them, “Now it’s my turn to play with you lot.”

“She's your teammate!” Kagami growled, angry at the lack of care he demonstrated towards the downed M.M.

“So what,” the old man shrugged, “Take a look.”

Two projectors suddenly turned on; one was showing Nana as she wandered through the shopping district, the other was looking into Ryohei’s hospital room.

“Your friends and his mother are being targeted,” the old man said, nodding at Tobirama.

“Who are you, asshole?” Touka’s eyes were hard as she stared at the old man.

“My name is Birds,” the old man said with a creepy smile, “The video you’re seeing is being transmitted from tiny cameras placed on my feathered friends,” he gestured to the various canaries around.

“What’s that?” Kagami asked, her brows furrowed. Behind Nana was a tall, lanky figure, whose limbs almost seemed to be moving in impossible ways, and whose mouth was sewn shut as if it- he was Loki in *Lokasenna*. An identical figure was climbing the wall of the hospital towards Ryohei’s room. “Who are those two?”

“Ah, so you’ve noticed,” Birds smirked, “They’re my loyal twin henchmen, the Bloody Twins. Adorable aren’t they?” he didn’t wait for a response, “But during their time in prison, they were considered such vicious serial killers that they were always kept in restraints,” on screen Nana slipped into a nearly empty TakeSushi while the other twin reached Ryohei’s window and stilled below it, “They’d love to play with those lovely ladies of yours.”

Behind Nana, the one twin flicked his fingers and his nails extended. The other twin copied the movement with one hand.

“What are you planning?” Bianchi demanded.

“Nothing at all if you do what I say~” Birds singsonged at them.

“Or we can rip your arms off and beat you with them,” Izuna snarled, his eyes flickering to the screen that showed Nana chatting with an oblivious seeming Tsuyoshi.

“It would be best not to threaten me,” Birds’ voice was even but now had a hard edge to it, “look at your friends.”
On the screens, the twin following Nana got even closer to her as Tsuyoshi turned away to start on her order, and the other twin tensed, readying himself to launch into the room.

“I’m able to give commands, even from this distance,” Birds explained with a sick smile, “I hold their lives in my hands. So don’t run your mouth at me, boy. If you do as I say, they’ll be fine. So, shall we begin?”

Tobirama gave one short nod, saying nothing even as the others seethed.

“I want all of you to beat the Vongola heir to a pulp!”

“What?” Kagami gasped.

“What was that?” Touka demanded.

Even Bianchi and Izuna looked disturbed by the order.

“I said to punch Sawada!” Birds said with an evil grin, “You want your friends to live? Then punch him!”

“Or they could not,” Tobirama spoke up, his voice flat with boredom and disappointment.

“And you’re friends and mother will die,” Birds reminded him, “It’s nice to see what a selfish brat you are.”

“Or maybe I simply have a better idea than you of what they are capable of,” Tobirama now smirked.

Birds frowned at him, confused, as the others also looked at him with confusion.

Tobirama nodded at the screens.

The one twin launched himself into the room only to trip over a broomhandle right inside the window, stumbling the rest of the way into the room. He then was launched back out the window, blood streaming from his face. He flew back close to twenty feet before he even started to go down. He didn’t move once he landed.

From the window, Himeko-sensei stared out with a fierce scowl on her face before doing a 180 and stalking away from the window.

On the other screen, Nana calmly sipped the sake that Tsuyoshi had placed before her with her left hand while her right moved under the counter. Suddenly, her right arm moved so that it was behind her left elbow. The twin right behind her jerkily twitched his head to the side, and then slumped backwards, flopping to the ground, blood spreading from the wound in his chest.

Nana then placed the now bloody uchigatana on the table and gave the despairing Tsuyoshi an apologetic look.

The other patrons got up and went to work cleaning up the body.

Birds gapped at the screens, “How?”

“Himeko-sensei worked through medical school by underground cage fights, and Mama is the Oyabun of the Momokyokai. Plus she went into TakeSushi,” Tobirama actually rolled his eyes now.
“And Oyaji is trained in Shigure Soen Ryu,” Izuna added with a bloodthirsty grin, “Do you have any idea how annoying it is to clean up after trash like that for a restaurant? Let me show you.”

Izuna stalked towards the now shaking Birds.

“I need to work off my own issues with him as well,” Kagami growled and joined him.

Tobirama only lifted an eyebrow at the two of them. Touka huffed.

Suddenly, Tobirama stiffened and spun to face the forest.

“Fuuta,” he muttered, “Touka! You and the others deal with any more of these people that show up, I’m going to grab Fuuta.”

With that he ran into the woods, a concerned frown on his face.

“Wait-” Touka’s words were cut off as a giant metal ball on a chain landed right in front of him.

He and the others turned to face a tall dark-haired man with deep bags under his eyes and two claw like black scars on one cheek.

“Well, shit,” Kagami summed up all of their thoughts as she and Izuna stepped away from the cooling body of Birds.

Footnotes:

1Poison Cooking: Large Portions! All You Can Eat!.
2Poison Cooking: Thousand Poisonous Flowers.
3picture link a long blade with a sharp edge, 60-70 cm.

Michiko Explores

Michiko's First Trial

Michiko hurried through the dense forest, alert for every sound. She wanted to get to the Mountain as quickly as possible. She may have been able to subdue some of the other animals around Home, but she doubted she could do the same with most of these creatures. Best to try to reduce the risk.

Suddenly there was a break in the woods. Michiko slowed, cautious now. As scary as the forest was, a clearing would be far more dangerous. There would be nowhere to hide in a clearing.

She paused at the edge of the woods. It wasn't a clearing, but instead it was a large river.

Warily, she approached it. Her eyes darted around, searching for some way to get across. Behind her came more noises, something big and dangerous was behind her. Part of her wanted to fight it, but then she might die, and she couldn’t be with her Tsu-kun if she were dead.

“Let us help you, little one,” came a voice from the river.
She looked back to the river. There at the edge, easily ignoring the current was a large white fish with orange and black blotches. There were other shimmering forms in the water as well. *Koi*.

Michiko stared at the enormous koi. He was offering help… surely that was...fine? The Toad and Slug had said nothing of going about this on her own after all.

But… would it really count? Would it mean anything if she couldn’t even traverse through the forest to the top of the mountain on her own?

(Would that mean she wasn’t good enough for her Tsu-kun?)

She shook her head at the koi. She was going to do this herself!

The sound came from behind her once more.

No more hesitating, she jumped into the river and began to fight against the current, trying to get to the other side.

The koi watched her.

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Chapter End Notes

I chose Italian for Bianchi's attacks as I thought that it made more sense than her using Japanese. I *did* use Google Translate for it, so if you see an error, please let me know and I will fix it!
So, I've made the decision that Biwako will also be a reincarnation, but I don't really have any idea who she should be, so I'm opening that up to all of you. Either a canon character or an OC, the only requirement is that she remains a woman.

Also, I will try to keep to a Tuesday update, but as Summer gets going, my weekends will get busy and I'm now golfing on Mondays, and those are the days that I mostly write on. The most that will happen is it will move back in the week, but I'll try to warn you all if that happens.

Thank you all for the comments, kudos, and bookmarks, you rock!

Chapter 19: Strength and Conversation

Tobirama expertly dodged around the trees as he followed both what he could feel of Fuuta’s Flames and his own sight. He slowed when he felt Fuuta join with another person. The boy felt… he felt calm and resigned, and of a sick thrill that came from fulfilling orders.

Tobirama narrowed his eyes. There were several different ways to play this.

He slowed to a walk.

“Fuuta?” he called out, “Where are you?”

“Are you here to rescue me?” a honeyed voice called out.

“Who’s there?” Tobirama demanded.

A teenage boy stepped out from behind a tree, his dark blue hair covering his right eye.

“You came here to rescue me right? Thank you very much, I thought I would never escape this place,” he explained as he walked forward.

Tobirama watched him with a blank expression on his face.

“You were a prisoner, then?” he asked, his eyes sweeping over the other.

“I didn’t expect that anyone would rescue me,” the boy said with a small, sad smile.

Tobirama gave a small, sympathetic hum at that.

“You must have some very strong allies,” the boy hinted.

Tobirama just managed to keep his eyebrow from raising, that was rather obvious.

“Hm,” he replied noncommittally, “Four like me plus two more,” vague, and yet was technically descriptive, if one knew what he was. He decided to take a chance, if only to see what the boy would focus on, “A young hitwoman, and a man who looks like a toddler or a baby.”
“A baby?” the boy latched onto that, “in this dangerous place?”

“As I said, he is a man who *looks* like a baby,” Tobirama reiterated withholding a smirk.

“Ah, yes, so you did,” the boy coughed, looking off kilter, before a smile returned to his face, “Is he really strong in a fight?”

“I doubt we’ll need him. And even so, he seems disinclined to join in fights.”

The boy’s smile grew wicked, “So you’re saying he’s an indirect assassin?”

Tobirama stared at the boy and cocked his head to the side, “I can’t speak to that.”

“Why not?” The smile had completely left his face at this point and he was staring intently at Tobirama.

“Because I don’t know you,” Tobirama said dryly, amused more than anything else at this boy, “But I would like to know if you have seen a young boy around here? Blond, has a thing for rankings, a bit of existential crisis in his eyes?”

“I’m asking the questions right now,” the boy snapped.

Tobirama scowled at him,

“Will that baby... be acting indirectly?” His hair moved to reveal an unnatural red eye with the kanji for six in place of a pupil.

Tobirama tensed, casting his mind out to remember the landscape around them and decide which way to dodge.

“That is none of your business,” he snapped, his gaze locked on the boy’s forehead, giving the illusion that he was looking at him in the eyes, “Excuse me.”

With that he turned and walked away. The boy seemed more concerned with gathering intel than on attacking, and Tobirama wanted to have *words* with Reborn as to why something like that eye had not been mentioned when discussing Mukuro Rokudo and his allies.

As he ran, he wondered if Mukuro was able to change people when he captured them, and snarled.

With the Others:

They all stared at the man, each evaluating what they saw.

“We need to take care of this quick,” Kagami said lowly, “Tsuna-kun is fast, and we need to catch up with him.”

Izuna seemed disgruntled, but nodded his agreement.

“Don’t bother,” the man muttered, flinging off his hat, “You cannot defeat me.”

“Then,” Touka asked, “you are Mukuro Rokudo?”

The man didn’t answer, instead he just stared at them evenly.
“What did you do with Fuuta?” Bianchi demanded, a scowl on her face.

“Fuuta?” the man answered, “Never heard of him.”

He began to swing the giant metal ball around.

“What ridiculous strength,” Izuna muttered, eyes locked on the man.

“I’ve seen stronger,” Kagami muttered, thinking about Himeko, and the acts of strength she had seen Tsunade do in their last life.

“Who’s first?” the man asked, seemingly bored with the encounter already.

“I’ll be your opponent,” Izuna grinned at him, killing intent rising.

“Mille Serpenti: Domina Fiera!” he shouted and pushed the ball forward.

Izuna tensed, watching it rush towards him. With the chain attached to the ball, he couldn’t simply dodge out of the way, he would need to time it so as to not give enough time to redirect it to follow him.

Right as he was about to dodge, to lean around the ball and use that time to attack the man, a whistling sound filled his ears and he was too disoriented to move, fearing that if he did, he would just fall to the ground.

Instead, he was pushed onto his back and skidded a few feet closer to the others.

“How-” Kagami started to asked, the red of her eyes swirling in shock.

“Now you know,” the man interrupted with what was almost a snarl, “you have no chance of surviving. Abandon all hope.”

“We’re in trouble,” Reborn observed, “this guy’s strong.”

“What was your first clue?” Kagami snarled as she went to Izuna’s side- to either help him up or drag him out of the way, though her eyes were locked on the man the whole time.

“Who’s next?” the man intoned.

Touka scowled and began to take a step forward.

“Wait,” came Izuna’s voice from where Kagami was helping him up, “I haven’t lost yet.”

“How-” the man bit out.

“I blocked,” Izuna bared his teeth at the man.

“Don’t scare us like that, you idiot!” Touka yelled at him, relief woven into the otherwise angry words.

“We’re still in a bad situation,” Reborn reminded them.

“Only if we do the stupid thing and continue to take him on, one on one,” Kagami said with forced cheer, “Strength isn’t everything after all. Also, I really want to see just what color flames this guy would make.”
She palmed the lighter and can of hairspray she had brought.

“As if it would matter,” the man said.

Kagami growled, standing next to Izuna.

“We need to solve the mystery of that attack,” Reborn interjected.

“How foolish of you to resist,” the man scoffed, “A wasted effort. You are only inviting a more wretched end.”

He sent out his attack once more.

“Move!” Izuna roared, pushing Kagami away.

She hissed, but dodged out of the way of the attack, already moving closer to the man, calculating how close to get. Meanwhile Izuna moved into the attack, kicking up the dirt with the bat case as he did, before suddenly veering to the side and out of the way of the ball.

The dirt was sucked into mini air currents that could be mistaken for snakes.

“I’ve heard about this,” Izuna said, calling on the memories of his new life, “It’s just like how baseballs leave turbulence in their wake. But on a much larger scale.”

“The grooves,” Touka pointed out, hand on his dynamite, just waiting for an opportunity.

“What about them?” Bianchi asked with a frown.

“The shape of the snakes twist the flow of air,” Reborn realized, “creating a gale that amplifies the ball’s force.”

“Understanding the attack won’t help you defeat it,” the man growled.

“I disagree,” Izuna replied, drawing the man’s attention.

The man tossed the ball into the air once more, “Serpenti Violenti: Dominazione Fierce.”

Touka’s eyes widened, “Yamamoto, move!”

Izuna realized why; this attack was stronger, and it twisted, nearly following him, but an explosion helped knock him out of its path. He gave a short nod of thanks to Touka.

“I promised I would give you a wretched end,” the man growled, striding forward.

“Yaro,” Touka growled, and threw a set of explosives at the man.

The man dodged and continued forward, gathering his chain as he went.

“It is useless to try to resist your fate. I have yet to use a third of my power.”

“Then you’re an idiot!” Kagami called as she let loose a stream of fire.

The man jumped back, his expression finally changing with the widening of his eyes.

Izuna rushed at him from the other side, swinging the bat case like a club and pushing the man back.
Bianchi threw a dark pink ball, aiming at the chain trailing from the man’s hand to the serpent ball. “Cucinare veleno: Sakura Mochi\textsuperscript{4},” she murmured as it landed and began to eat through the chain.

“Wha-” he was cut off by a sword appearing at his throat.

“Surrender,” Tobirama ordered.

The man swallowed but a stubborn look crept on his face.

“Surrender and I guarantee that whatever Mukuro Rokudo has done to you, we will make him pay.”

The man crumpled.

Minutes Ago, With Tobirama:

Tobirama slowed as he got closer to where he had left the rest of the group.  He could feel the tension among all of them.  From the top of a ledge, he watched as they fought the man.  Something was… off about him.

Ah, he closed his eyes when he attacked.  That… made a lot of sense actually.  Well, \textit{that} would make this entire thing a bit more complicated at the end of everything.

He just needed to wait for an opportune moment.  Ah, his friends were \textit{so} accommodating.

With a quick glance to make sure that Reborn was occupied with watching the fight, he used his \textit{shunshin}\textsuperscript{5} to get behind the man and place the sword Takeshi had lent him at the man’s throat.

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Footnotes:

\textsuperscript{1}Thousand Snakes: Fierce Domination.  \textit{Mille Serpenti: Domina Fiera}

\textsuperscript{2}Violent Snakes: Fierce Domination.  \textit{Serpenti Violenti: Dominazione Fierce}

\textsuperscript{3}Bastard.  \textit{Yaro}

\textsuperscript{4}Poison Cooking: Sakura Mochi, one of Bianchi’s most used attacks.  \textit{Cucinare veleno: Sakura Mochi}

\textsuperscript{5}Body Flicker Technique.  \textit{Shunshin}

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Michiko Explores

Night Terrors

Michiko slowed as it grew dark.  She hated to do so, she \textit{could} see just as well at night, but this place was Dangerous, and she was exhausted.  She had gotten far, farther than she thought she would, but that came at a price.

She found a hollow area under a tree that only held long stale smells.  It would have to do, even if
she was more familiar nowadays with a nice soft bed.

She curled up trying to get comfortable, and then heard It. The Thing that had been stalking her all day. She had hoped that she'd lost it at the river, but it must have found her trail. She pushed back further into the hovel, hoping that it couldn't reach her.

It moved on.

She relaxed. Now that she thought about it, it probably wasn't that Thing. Ugh, she was getting paranoid. Wait... it felt like something was watching her, she could feel *eyes* on her, evaluating her. What did they want? Were they going to try to stop her?

A squirrel glared at her from where it was patting at the ground. She wished she could groan like Hana-chan did in the mornings. A squirrel. She had started to freak out because of a squirrel that was hiding his nuts. How... embarrassing.

She hated this place. She just wanted to be *home* where her Tsu-kun was. She wanted to curl up on his lap as he worked on that Homework thing. Or sit in a chair as he made her dinner while Mama made theirs. She wanted to explore the town from the comfort of Mama's Michiko Bag or from her Tsu-kun's shoulder.

She wanted to bring her Tsu-kun all sorts of prey, to show him just how *good* of a hunter she was. She wanted to be waiting for him when he got home.

But then, she wanted to always be there for him. She wanted to never have to worry that he would be alone, like she had been. She couldn't bear the thought. So if spending a few days away from him and everything she loved, a few days of discomfort, of pure danger, meant that she could be with her Tsu-kun always? She'd do it gladly.

She growled at the squirrel and curled up to sleep.
I'm baaack! Thank you so much to everyone to left well wishes for my grandmother, and I apologize for not posting when I promised, and explanation is here and a supliment explanation with some of my personal feelings about it all here.

Because of how much I didn't seriously write during the whole... *waves hand in the air* everything, I wasn't really back in the swing of writing, so this is shorter than what I wanted it to be. Plus side, you all get a, kinda, early introduction to a new(ish...well not really, but I'm giving personality to the character so it counts) character! yay!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 20: The Calm Before The Storm

“We can’t just leave him,” Touka said after Lancia finished his story.

“I won’t attack you,” the older man protested.

“You just said that you can’t stop Mukuro from controlling you,” Kagami pointed out, “We would be idiots to leave you unattended.”

“Kyoko-chan is right,” Tobirama pointed out, “Leaving you on your own would be asking for you to become controlled once more and attacking us from behind. Plus we don’t know when M.M. is going to wake up.”

“The best plan would be for at least one of us to stay behind,” Bianchi added.

“I can,” Kagami spoke up, “M.M. seems to be the type that would underestimate me, and…”

“And you were fairly competent when it came to seeing my attacks,” Lancia nodded at her.

“My eyes are top notch!” Kagami said cheerfully.

“If you’re sure, Kyoko-chan,” Tobirama nodded at her, “I’d suggest staying in the shade of that tree.”

She nodded and Lancia carried M.M. under the indicated tree.

“Do you remember how to let me know if you get in trouble?” Tobirama asked her under his breath, keeping an eye on where both Bianchi and Reborn were.

Kagami gave a small nod.

The other five continued into the Kyokuyo Health Land building.

They stopped as they came to where there should have been stairs.

“Well, that’s one way to keep people from getting to you,” Touka murmured,
“Come on,” Tobirama ordered turning away, “there has to be one way up somewhere.”

Izuna made a protesting sound, eyeing the wall.

“Takeshi,” Tobirama said sharply, “We need to find how they get upstairs.”

The former Uchiha huffed, but followed.

Soon they found a ladder leading up to the second floor.

Tobirama narrowed his eyes and dodged to the side just as needles flew past him.

“Tch,” Touka sneered at the boy behind them, “Chikusa. Kumichou, I’ll take care of him and then catch up with you.”

“How confident of you,” the beanie wearing boy said flatly, “You didn’t do so well against me last time.”

“Don’t take too long,” Tobirama told him before turning to the ladder and following Bianchi and Reborn up.

Izuna hesitated a moment before nodding at Touka and following Tobirama up.

Touka smirked at Chikusa. The boy felt a slight chill go down his spine.

Tobirama and the others stalked down the hall, looking in each room for Mukuro. Finally, they entered one room and found a teenage boy sitting on a dilapidated couch.

“Really?” Tobirama muttered, “This is where you stay?”

“You know this person, Tsuna?” Bianchi asked.

“We met in the forest as I was looking for Fuuta,” Tobirama responded, stepping forward, “He said he was a prisoner.”

Reborn frowned at the teenager sitting across the room from them.

“Tsuna, I don't think he's a captive of Mukuro's,” the hitman said, watching the grinning boy.

“Of course not,” Tobirama said casually as he took another step forward, “He’s Mukuro.”


“Oh, I don't know,” Tobirama said dryly, “Maybe it was 'finding' you in the woods, along with your poor acting skills?”

Mukuro flushed at that.

Meanwhile:

Touka clasped his hands together, both pointers and thumbs pointing up, “Genjutsu: Kokuangyo no Jutsu.”

Chikusa whirled, his eyes wide, “W-what?”
Touka smirked and started to quietly walk forward; he was going to enjoy this.

He was almost at Chikusa when the other lashed out with his yo-yo.

Touka cursed and jumped back.

“Mukuro-sama has much more dangerous illusions,” Chikusa sniffed, “Though I didn’t know you had Mist Flames.”

“What can I say? I enjoy breaking assumptions,” Touka snarked back, throwing some dynamite towards the other and then taking off down the hall, fingerling his weapons with a smirk.

Chikusa gritted his teeth, and blinking away the darkness, following after Touka.

Mukuro’s underling turned the corner and was caught in the edge of an explosion.

“What can I say? I enjoy breaking assumptions,” Touka snarked back, throwing some dynamite towards the other and then taking off down the hall, fingerling his weapons with a smirk.

Chikusa whipped his yo-yo around, making the bombs fall harmlessly to the floor.

Touka smirked at him and gave a thumbs down motion.

Chikusa looked at him confused, before glancing down. His eyes widened as they fell on the bombs at his feet.

Touka’s smirk fell as Chikusa stumbled out of the smoke.

“Right,” he murmured, “you’re rather tough.”

Before Touka could throw more bombs or toss up another genjutsu, Chikusa clumsily threw his yo-yo and Touka had to dodge to the side, back to the window.

The window broke and Ken burst through.

With the Others:

Tobirama turned when he felt a familiar presence behind them, “Fuuta. Are you okay?”

Tobirama was cautious as he approached the boy, unsure as to what Mukuro had done. Bianchi turned to face the young boy as well, but Izuna kept his eyes on the older teen sitting across the room.

“He looks unharmed,” Bianchi observed of the young boy before she addressed Fuuta himself, “We’ve been searching for you all over, kid.”

Tobirama stared at the child, who only looked back at him blankly, before half turning back to Mukuro. He took several steps forward, towards Mukuro, keeping only a minimal amount of his attention on Fuuta.

“Stay back,” Bianchi told the boy, stepping past Tobirama and turning to face Mukuro, taking a protective stance in front of Fuuta, “It’s dangerous.”

Tobirama caught a glimpse of something bright at Fuuta’s chest and realization swept over him.

“Bianchi, mo-”
Fuuta stabbed Bianchi.

Tobirama felt a wave of chakra that abruptly stopped.

With Touka:

Touka almost screamed as Ken sunk his teeth into his shoulder. The bomber wrenched himself away, gritting his teeth and glancing between the two.

“Oh, so you aren’t dead,” Chikusa looked dispassionately at Ken.

“No,” Ken told him, fishing climbing through the window, “But it looks like you need some help.”

Breathing through the pain, Touka slowly made the hand signs for Monkey, Dog, Horse, and Bird backing up as he did. He went to hit one of his rings on the wall behind him, to make a ringing sound to complete the genjutsu as he took one final step backwards. As soon as it was cast, he would get some room between him the duo.

His hand didn’t stop and his foot landed half on the ground, half not. Touka fell down the stairs.

He looked up the stairs at where the two were staring down at him with smirks on their faces. His ears were ringing, he couldn’t concentrate to re-gather his chakra, and just moving his head was making him dizzy. This… was not good.

And now a small yellow bird was making fun of him. He really should have just finished off the stupid kid in the beginning. It wasn’t like he didn’t have worse genjutsu than Kokuangyo. But no, he just had to play with the kid first, and, wait. Was that bird singing the Nami-chuu anthem?

“Heh, only you,” Touka murmured, lighting one of his bombs and letting it roll back to the wall. The bomb exploded, opening up the room behind the wall.

Madara looked up from where he was leaning on the wall and gave a smirk.

“Just this once,” he murmured, picking up his tonfa.

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Michiko Masaru Explores

Bird of Steel

Bird 18 wandered closer to the window where the new prisoner was being held. This human was so different from everyone else. Oh, sure, he had the presence of a predator just like everyone else that Bird 18 had ever encountered, but there was something different about him.

“Hello there,” the human murmured as Bird 18 alighted on the high up window sill, “Are you here to visit me?”

Bird 18 considered him.

“Beaten, beaten,” Bird 18 chirped to remind him.

Something happened to his face. Bird 18 thought it was fascinating. The man faced the ground.

“For now, yes little one. I wonder, can you sing? Ah, it doesn’t matter, just so long as you make
noise to drown out the silence of my cage. I think I’ve had enough silent rooms to last me,” the last bit was said so softly, Bird 18 wasn’t sure if he was meant to hear.

Bird 18 opened his beak and sang “Ninna nanna, ninna oh, questo bimbo a chi lo do?²”

The human looked up and smiled at him.

“Well now, that's interesting,” he said, “Why don't you come down and visit me little bird.”

Bird 18 hesitated, but flew down to perch on his knee.

“Do you have a name friend?” the human asked.

Bird 18 tilted his head. What was a name?

“What are you called?”

“18!” Bird 18 chirped, that was what Birds called him when he had to distinguish him from the flock.

The human scowled, “That’s not a name. How about… Akira? No, that doesn't fit you. Hiroki? Ugh, if I ever run into the idiot again I'll never hear the end of that. Oh, how about Masaru?”

“Masaru!” Bird- Masaru chirped. He liked his new name.

“Nice to meet you Masaru. I'm Uchiha Madara, or rather, I was. Now I'm Hibari Kyoya. Now, how about I teach you the best song there is…”

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¹Genjutsu: Bringer-of-Darkness Technique. [Genjutsu: Kokuangyo no Jutsu](#)

²Rock-a-bye baby, oh, Who will I give this baby to? from the Italian version of Rock-a-bye Baby. [Ninna nanna, ninna oh, questo bimbo a chi lo do?](#)

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Chapter End Notes

As always, you can come and chat with me on my [tumblr](#), especially as it's been slow at work and I would love to hear from all of you!
I wanted to make sure that this chapter was posted when I promised it would be, so this is the un-beta’d version. As soon as Wandering_Shadows looks at it, I'll update it to the final version. Edit 6/20 7:45 PM Updated

WARNING WARNING WARNING ACTUALLY PAY ATTENTION TO THIS PLEASE
This chapter does have a short mention of self-harm, along with violence towards animals, and the canon gun violence. Both of the first two are in line with the level of either within the shows, but please be careful if it is upsetting for you, and if you cannot handle it at all, stop at "His eye changed and suddenly the floor was crumbling and everyone was falling and-" skip a line, and then continue for the first (though it will mention the injury after that, but not in any significant detail), for the second, stop at "...The Third Realm, Animal, grants the skill to summon deadly creatures." and skip the next four paragraphs. Um, for the last, I'm not sure when you would need to stop, but the first mention of said gun isn't until after "No need to worry," Reborn began, “A nearby Vongola medical team is on-” which is very close to the end. If you need to stop there and ask me what the significant details are within that part, please do so. I sincerely don't want anyone to have to stop reading because of these, and if you have a better suggestion for how I can show where they are without significantly changing the style, please let me know.

*ahem* Now that I’ve warned you all, I did want to let you know that it’ll be another break after this. Because the next scheduled update is July 4th, which is a holiday here in the US, and I’ll be celebrating that and my birthday the weekend prior. So, you know, not really any time to work on it. I may try to upload some supplemental material, but I’m not going to promise that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 21: The Gauntlet

Tobirama moved backwards as Fuuta swung his weapon at the reincarnated Hokage.

“Fuuta,” Tobirama’s voice was firm, “You need to stop.”

He wasn’t surprised when that didn’t work, but he had to look like he was trying, if only for Reborn. He had to pretend for Bianchi who could not be dead, he didn’t care if her chakra had completely disappeared! She wasn't dead!

Tobirama desperately tried to think of a way to break the young boy out of Mukuro’s mind control.

The boy moved more robotically than he would have thought. These weren’t the movements of someone possessed by a Yamanaka; those movements were fluid, but restricted, like trying to move in clothing too tight in some places and too loose in others.

But, it also wasn’t the forced movements of someone controlled by a Nara or chakra strings. It
was almost like a genjutsu…

*Well,* he thought, *I can work with that.*

He didn’t want to hurt the kid. Fuuta was… delicate, in ways that meant that Tobirama wasn’t comfortable with hurting him. But there were other ways to break a genjutsu.

It would make sense as well. Whatever it was that Mukuro could do to people, Lancia had broken it with his emotional upheaval. Mukuro had obviously been able to re-apply whatever he had done, and Lancia had simply… lived with it until now.

Lancia and Fuuta’s eyes were the same.

“Fuuta,” he said, staring at the boy, “This is not you.”

The boy swung his three-pronged weapon again.

Tobirama bit back a curse and danced backwards.

“Come on kiddo, don’t tell me you don’t have some ridiculous ranking that tells you how much this *isn’t* your fault,” Tobirama growled, not glancing at the rest of his group.

Fuuta stared at him, unmoving. It was as if he was shocked by the words.

Tobirama could have hit himself, of course the kid blamed himself. He was a *kid*.

“I don’t need your powers to be able to tell you that all of this was 100% not your fault,” Tobirama continued, his lips quirking up a tick at the corners, “We’ll still help you, still *care* for you after all this is over.”

Fuuta trembled, his eyes changing, and suddenly he was falling forward into Tobirama’s arms.

“Tsuna-nii,” he murmured, tears in his eyes, before he passed out.

Tobirama looked up over Fuuta’s head, and saw Izuna staring back at him from where the former Uchiha was pressing down on Bianchi’s wound.

There was confusion and *something* else in Izuna’s gaze, though when he realized that Tobirama was looking, it was covered by the smouldering rage that had been characteristic of their last life.

“You had to stick your nose where it didn’t belong, and now he crashed,” Mukuro began from behind Tobirama.

The Nidaime turned to eye him. One eyebrow raised.

“He hasn’t slept much in the past ten days,” Mukuro continued, “Thinking back, he was quite the handful.”

Tobirama stood, cradling the unconscious form of Fuuta. He ignored the goading and moved towards the rest, putting Fuuta down next to Bianchi.

Reborn responded to whatever it was that Mukuro was spouting, sounding more serious than he normally did.

“Watch over them,” he murmured to Izuna. The former Uchiha nodded.
Tobirama stood up and turned to face Mukuro.

“I can’t believe it,” Tobirama said, keeping his gaze away from Mukuro’s eyes.

“Oh you better believe it, little Vongola,” Mukuro sneered at him.

“No, I can’t believe that everyone is stupid enough to actually monologue. I thought I had run into one-offs and it was just something on TV,” Tobirama pushed off, rushing towards Mukuro, his borrowed sword slipping free of its bag.

“I didn’t expect to have to deal with you personally,” Mukuro stood, flipping his hair.

His eye changed and he jumped forward with a staff in hand. Tobirama sneered. The boy was coming right for him and that staff was held in such a way that he couldn’t use it as a weapon. The Nidaime raised his sword, ready to injure the other as they clashed.

Mukuro dodged. Tobirama’s eyes widened and he abandoned his plan to draw out Mukuro’s fighting style and flash-stepped away.

Mukuro snarled at him, his right eye surrounded by indigo flames.

“You shouldn't be able to move like that,” Tobirama said, warily eyeing Mukuro.

“And yet you dodged,” Mukuro all but sneered at him, “I was able to do so because of the aura of combat skill I obtained from the Fourth Realm, Asura.”

Tobirama stiffened, his stomach suddenly feeling tight. This had to be a coincidence.

(But was there even such a thing? No. No, he was being paranoid. He needed to calm down. The Warring States Era was long past. For the Sage’s Sake! He wasn't even Hokage anymore!)

Something must have shown on his face, though obviously not what was running through his mind.

“Have you ever heard of the Six Paths of Reincarnation?” Mukuro asked with a smirk.

Tobirama furrowed his brows, What?

“When people die,” Reborn said slowly, “they're reborn in the Naraka, Petra, Animal, Asura, Human, or Deva Realms.”

No, no that wasn't it. Was it? Tobirama felt as if there was a lump in his throat. Like a piece of food had gotten stuck when he was swallowing.

Mukuro's eye changed again, the indigo flames - no, Flames fading from view.

“I have past life experience in all Six Realms etched into my body,” he practically bragged, “Through them I've been granted six special skills.”

Tobirama scowled as he fought his body's sudden switch to short, shallow breaths.

“If that's true, you are one crazy monster,” Reborn observed and Tobirama wanted to laugh. As if the hitman knew what type of monster was drifting on the edges of this.

“You're in no position to talk, cursed infant Arcobaleno,” Mukuro sneered before turning back to Tobirama, “Now, let me show you another skill!”
His eye changed and suddenly the floor was crumbling and everyone was falling and-

Tobirama ran his palm across the sharp edge of his borrowed sword.

The world shattered around him.

“How clever,” Mukuro chuckled, “I’m impressed that you were able to see through the illusion. The First Realm, Naraka destroys a person’s mind with unending nightmares!”

Tobirama snorted this time, the pain in his chest easing by the smallest fraction.

“A crumbling floor is hardly what I’d call an ‘unending nightmare’,” Tobirama didn't dare glance at Izuna and the others. He had to keep Mukuro's attention on him.

“And here I thought I had figured out the relationship between the two of you,” Mukuro started to turn towards Reborn.

“Rokudo Mukuro!” Tobirama snapped, ignoring the cold dread that washed over him, “Don't you dare turn away from me!”

He held his still bleeding left hand vertically, in half of the ox seal, and kneaded his chakra. It gathered in a senbon shape in his mouth and he spat the water-chakra senbon at Mukuro.

He smiled grimly as Mukuro yelped and danced backwards.  Tenkyū was always such a surprise to others.

“You little-” Mukuro snarled, his eye changing once more.

Asps, vipers, and adders suddenly appeared around Tobirama.

“Another illusion,” Reborn said in a superior voice.

“No,” Mukuro was smug, “these are real. The Third Realm, Animal, grants the skill to summon deadly creatures.”

Tobirama moved the bag from his shoulder to between him and one of the snakes as it went to attack. With his other hand he swung his sword, either severing the head or slashing open the neck of several snakes.

This wasn't how it was supposed to be; Mukuro was jumping between the Paths as if each was a one time use. Thus far they weren't very strong, but maybe he was holding back. Wasn't that just like the damn Uchi-No.  Stop. Tobirama had never even seen Mukuro before today.

Mukuro glared at him, and took a step forward as more snakes fell to Tobirama's sword.

Tobirama smirked at him, ignoring his nausea, and the last snake flopped over, dead.

“I'm going to end you Vongola,” he hissed and Tobirama's heart lept to his throat.

Why was his cousin within striking distance, closer than striking distance from that damnable man?!

“Yo,” Touka greeted them with a slightly pained smirk as he helped Madara into the room. The smirk fell as his eyes landed on Bianchi's fallen form.

“I see the audience members are joining in now,” Mukuro sneered, projecting his unspoken
comment about how Tobirama needed help to defeat him, “What \textit{could} Chikusa be doing?”

With a stubborn set to his jaw, Touka helped Madara over to where Tobirama and Mukuro were, and let the former Uchiha go upon drawing even with Tobirama.

“Taking a nap,” Touka snarked, “along with the other one.”

“Are you ready?” Madara asked with a smirk, holding up one of his tonfa.

“So scary,” Mukuro mocked, “But don't interfere with the Vongola and me. Besides,” he smirked, “you can barely stand what with all those broken bones.”

Tobirama stared at the two. \textit{This could not be happening.}

“Are those your last words?” Madara asked.

“You say the most amusing things,” Mukuro spoke with bravado in his voice, “I'll make this quick.”

His eye changed and was covered in indigo Flames once more.

The two of them charged towards one another.

Tobirama started to gather his chakra, raising his hand to form half seals. He wouldn't let anyone be hurt by that madman. He couldn't let it happen. He \textit{needed} his Hiraishin seals.

Touka gripped his half-risen wrist, shooting him a concerned look.

“He’s on our side, just this once,” his former cousin told him, his voice low.

Tobirama stared at him blankly, his body slowly being overcome by a slight prickling sensation all over.

A crash brought both of their attention back onto the fight. Madara had sent Mukuro falling back. The blue haired boy was snarling and pushing himself up, stumbling to his feet.

Madara smirked at him, arrogance oozing off of his body.

“Had enough?” the once Uchiha asked, “Or shall I drag this on even longer? I hadn’t thought that our fight would be over so swiftly.”

“I'll end \textit{you} swiftly,” Mukuro snarled, the Flames around his eye fading as it changed.

Tobirama’s brow furrowed as cherry blossoms filled the air.

“Sakura-kura\textsuperscript{2},” Reborn murmured, worry in his voice as Madara stumbled to the ground.

Mukuro sneered at his downed opponent as he swaggered forward.

Tobirama pulled at his hand, but Touka’s grip hadn’t loosened. He shot a look at the Italian-raised boy. A slight smirk was tugging at the edges of his mouth.

Tobirama looked back at Madara and saw the hint of a sharp, bloodthirsty smile on his face. And then the former Uchiha suddenly swung upwards, catching Mukuro in the jaw and sending him flying backwards.
“Shamal thought ahead,” Touka smirked, holding up a medicine bag with his other hand.

Madara gave one satisfied chuckle and then fell over.

“He was pretty injured,” Touka murmured, glancing around as the two of them and Reborn moved closer to Madara.

“He was fighting on pure instinct at the end,” Reborn guessed, “He must have been pretty upset to have lost the first fight.”

“We need to get everyone medical attention right away,” Tobirama heard himself say as if from far away.

“No need to worry,” Reborn began, “A nearby Vongola medical team is on-”

“You won’t be needing them,” Mukuro interrupted, holding up a silver revolver in hand, “Because everyone will be dead!”

There was a wildness to his eyes now, some sort of panic that the boy - and Tobirama could see just how young he was now even if it didn’t quite matter - could not hide.

“Put down the gun,” Tobirama said softly.

“We will meet again,” Mukuro ignored him and with a laugh turned the gun around, “Arrivederci.”

They all were wide-eyed as the body hit the ground.

“I guess he would rather die than be caught,” Reborn said softly.

Tobirama stared at the body, knowing that something was wrong. It was almost like his Sensor ability, like an extra sense that he had. But unlike his Sensor ability, he didn’t know what this feeling meant.

After a moment, the sound of movement came from behind them where Izuna still had his hands on Bianchi’s stomach.

The young hitwoman staggered up, pushing Izuna away from her.

“Hayato?” she murmured, “Help me up?”

Tobirama stared uncomprehendingly at her, half his attention still on the body. Touka moved towards her, extending a hand.

“Just this once,” he said, starting to let go of the refinement of Touka.

Oh, oh.

“Hayato! Don’t go ne-” Tobirama snapped to Touka as Izuna leaped to the side, grabbing Fuuta’s unconscious body and getting the boy away from Bianchi.

Bianchi swung the three pronged weapon that Fuuta had been using at Hayato, causing the boy to stumble back as the refinement of Touka snapped back into place.

“What are you doing?” he demanded of his sister.
“Oh my, how silly of me,” she said absentmindedly.

Tobirama stared at her, no him.

“Kufufu,” Bianchi’s body turned to face him, the pink hair swinging around, “I told you we’d meet again.”

Her right eye was red.

Footnotes:

1 Heavenly Weeping. Tenkyū

2 Verginious Cherryitis in the English. What Shamal infected him with. Sakura-kura

3 Italian: till we meet again. Arrivederci

Michiko Explores

The Enemy

Michiko hurried forward. She had to move quickly. She had to get there. Her Tsu-kun deserved it.

A sound came from next to her.

She didn’t know what it was, but she didn’t want to find out.

It didn’t give her a choice. The wolverine crashed out of the forest and into her path as she entered a small clearing.

“What is this? A silly pet traipsing through my home?” It growled.

Michiko hissed, her back arching. She felt her claws digging into the soft earth beneath her.

“What’s that?” the wolverine mocked her, “Oh that’s right, stupid pets can’t talk.”

Michiko’s eyes darted around. If only she could get around it…

“But what can you expect from some thing stupid enough to get itself all tangled up with a dumb human for survival.

Michiko growled. Oh, it was on. How dare this, this, smelly, ugly rodent talk that way about her Tsu-kun!

Michiko sprung at it, claws extended.

The wolverine’s eyes widened.
Chapter End Notes

You know what we're coming up to? Leon's gift. So... here's a question: What do you think I'm going to give him? Do you think it'll be as in canon or something else and if so what? I'm will to offer up a prize to at least one person who guesses right (if it's only a couple who do so maybe you'll each get a prize over the course of a few weeks, if it literally everyone who guesses, then I'll only do a couple). You can leave a guess in the comments, but I'd prefer if you did so on my tumblr, either in an ask or directly to this post.
Ah, I'm back my lovelies and from a wonderful vacation for my birthday! Thank you all for the birthday wishes, the wonderful reviews, kudos, and the new bookmarks!

We're nearing the end of this Arc, but don't worry, I have plenty planned for what comes next! I do tend to watch the episode(s) associated with the chapter that I will be writing next, and to share my commentary with everyone, I've set up a Discord Server. The link is in NQaBB. It may be fairly obvious at this point as to what Tsuna's new weapon is, but feel free to continue to guess, and please let me know your thought process (I still can't quite believe that I left clues that pointed towards Nana being Orochimaru! I honestly love that interpretation)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 22: Complications

Touka ignored the small trickle of blood on his cheek as they all stared at Bianchi.

“This looks bad,” Reborn muttered.

“You don’t think,” Touka looked at him with concern, “Mind Control?”

“I think it’s outright possession,” Reborn told them, still staring at Bianchi.

Tobirama glanced at the body of Mukuro; he definitely seemed dead.

“I still have things to do so I came dancing all the way up from hell,” Bianchi smirked at them.

Touka glared, “Get out of my sister.”

“The one thing it could be…” Reborn muttered under his breath.

Tobirama glanced at him, wondering what the hitman was piecing together.

“Well, if it’s possession,” Touka said with a smirk, “Rin! Byo! To! Sha! Kai! Jin! Retsu!”

Bianchi clutched at her throat as Touka chanted the ward against evil and then fell to the floor.

Tobirama raised his eyebrows, That actually worked?

He walked forward, eyeing the fallen woman.

A chill ran down his spine as that feeling of wrongness washed over him once more. He twisted and saw Touka behind him.

“I’ll do it,” Touka said, his eyes closed and a smile on his face.

Tobirama jumped back and away from him with a growled “Mukuro.”
The trident stabbed into the wood where Tobirama had been but a moment before.

“Kufufu,” Touka chuckled, “It looks like it wasn’t just a fluke.”

Tobirama raised an eyebrow at him.

“You know,” Touka turned to him, and he too had a red eye, “this is the first time someone has been able to detect me at a glance.”

“Obviously you’ve been dealing with idiots,” Tobirama retorted.

“You used That bullet and faked your death, didn’t you?” Reborn was staring at Touka, “The Possession Shot is forbidden. How did you get a hold of it?”

“Kufufu,” Touka chuckled, “So you know then.”

“Explain,” Izuna demanded from the other side of Touka.

“The Possession Shot allows you to control another’s body,” Reborn explained, staring at Touka, worry in his voice.

“And somehow Mukuro has used it on both Hayato-kun and Bianchi-san,” Tobirama said as he flexed his muscles, mind whirling to try to figure out how to get out of this situation without having to hurt either of them more than they were.

“The Estraneo Famiglia developed it,” Reborn continued.

Tobirama’s brows came together at the slight tensing Touka did upon hearing that name, Well that’s interesting.

“One needs a powerful will and a compatibility with the shot to use it,” Reborn explained.

“Kufufu, my compatibility is perfect,” Touka boasted.

Tobirama felt lead in his stomach as a picture began to form in his mind.

“It was terribly abused and the Mafia banned it,” Reborn frowned, “All the existing bullets should have been destroyed.”

Behind Touka, Izuna quietly began to move.

“This is no mere mind control,” Touka sneered at them, “I’ve taken -”

He was interrupted by Izuna kicking the back of his knees.

“Oh shut it,” the former Uchiha growled.

“I think,” Tobirama’s voice was dry, “That Reborn had a point to all this exposition.”

“So get on with it,” Izuna snorted, grabbing Touka’s hair to hold him in place.

“Why do you have it?” Reborn demanded.

“Let’s just say it’s mine,” Touka smirked at them, “Now, it’s your turn to be possessed, Vongola Decimo.”

Tobirama raised an eyebrow at that, “Really now?”
“Once you’re mine, I’ll begin my revenge,” Touka smirked at him.

“And how are you going to accomplish that?” Izuna snorted.

“His trident,” Reborn guessed, “One nick and he can possess you.”

“Well done Arcobaleno,” Touka sneered.

Suddenly, his arm moved and the trident went spinning through the air only to be caught by a now standing Bianchi.

Tobirama scowled, twisting to be perpendicular to both.

Izuna swore and let go of Touka’s hair as he passed out.

“I prefer calling it ‘making a pact’,” Bianchi knelt down and began to bring the trident down onto Hibari.

Heart thundering in his chest, Tobirama flash-stepped closer, kicking out at her.

Bianchi stumbled back and snarled at him.

Tobirama stared levelly at her; he could not let Mukuro have Madara. Sage, but that would be a whole new level of hell. Especially when Tobirama couldn’t be sure if Hibari maintained a Rinnegan.

“Tch, fine,” Bianchi sneered, “He was probably too injured to be of use anyway.”

Tobirama’s eyes widened as that feeling intensified.

“Takeshi,” he roared, “move!”

The former Uchiha did so, jumping to the side as Touka lunged at him.

Tobirama pointed his sword at Bianchi, standing above Hibari’s body. Behind him the door burst open and there stood Ken and Chikusa as well.

“Four bodies,” Tobirama murmured, his brow slightly furrowed.

“I never heard of someone possessing four people at once,” Reborn said.

I have, Tobirama thought but did not say. His mouth felt dry.

“That’s not all,” Touka boasted, his red eye changing to the kanji for 2. He threw some dynamite into the air towards Tobirama.

The former Hokage grabbed Hibari and hauled him back as the bombs exploded, pushing them further back.

Chikusa threw his yo-yo at Reborn, letting loose his needles. The hitman jumped away, the needles being blocked by his jacket as he did so.

“The Second Realm, Preta, steals other people’s techniques,” Touka boasted.

He immediately had to stumble to the side as Izuna’s foot sailed through the air where he had just been.
“You're really trying to piss me off, aren't you?” Izuna asked with a frown.

Touka scowled at him, his eye changing to the kanji for four as he used his Fourth Realm again to swing at Izuna.

Izuna's eyes shone crimson as he activated his Sharingan to anticipate the attacks.

Tobirama used the flat side of his sword to knock Bianchi to the side.

“What? No help for your student?” Chikusa mocked as he and Ken chased after Reborn.

“Maybe the Great Reborn isn't so wonderful, what with all the dodging,” Ken added.

“Tsuna, I can't interfere. This is your mission,” Reborn said, alighting on the ground next to Tobirama.

“And here I thought we were bonding,” Tobirama snarked.

“Poor Reborn, panicking over his student,” Bianchi laughed.

“Not at all,” Reborn retorted, “Tsuna is already more advanced than Dino was when he went from Greenhorn to Bronco.”

Tobirama snickered at that, “He used to be called Greenhorn?”

Reborn shot him a flat look, “He earned the change of name by defending his people.”

“Still,” Tobirama said, dodging some of Bianchi's poison cooking.

“You and the Cavallone are cut from the same cloth,” Touka sneered from where he was jumping back from Izuna and tossing a small explosive at the other, “To care for others is a weakness, and one I will exploit!”

Izuna jumped through the smoke to tackle Touka.

“And yet the ones who care for you are keeping you alive,” Izuna muttered, snatching at the belt Touka was wearing.

Touka snarled at him and bucked him off.

“I'll possess you Vongola Decimo,” Bianchi growled, “And get my revenge.”

“What is with that green blob?” Ken asked, as he caught sight of Leon. His face contorted in disgust.

“My partner, Leon,” Reborn smirked as Leon began to glow, “He becomes like this when one of my students is about to reach their next level. He'll make them a new weapon! Dino got his whip and Enzo.”

Ken snarled and lunged forward. Tobirama and Reborn dodged to opposite sides and Leon was thrown into the air.

Ken jumped at Leon as the chameleon emitted a bright light. Leon split in two as Ken’s claws brushed him.

“Kufufu,” Ken chuckled darkly, “no more Leon.”
“Think again,” Reborn said as he caught half of the green blob as the other half fell towards Tobirama.

Tobirama snatched it from the air and it transformed into a flashlight and a cream colored cat's paw glove. Tobirama frowned at the glove, tugging it onto his off hand.

Reborn took a bullet from the newly reformed Leon and his eyes lit up.

“Tsuna!” he yelled, cocking his Leon-gun, “Don't dodge this one!”

Tobirama glanced at him and tightened his grip on the flashlight.

Chikusa lunged at Tobirama. The former Hokage dodged around him and ran into the bullet.

It knocked him back.

In his mind’s eye, Tobirama could see his mother sitting in an empty TakeSushi with Tsuyoshi.

“Those boys of ours,” Nana was fondly shaking her head, “They just had to run off and take care of this themselves. Making us worry.”

“Heh, that's the real curse of Parenthood. Trusting in your brat’s ability, but also wanting them to be safe. And here I thought it was bad back in the day when my students were in danger.”

Nana nodded and drank her sake, “It might just be worse now because there isn’t danger all around.”

He saw his students, now reborn as his friends.

“Argh,” Hana gripped her hair, “Why's Sensei taking so long?”

“We should have faith in Shishou,” Haru said, plucking at Ryohei’s blanket.

“Yeah, relax Hana-chan,” Ryohei grinned, “It's not like he's taking on an entire Squad while suffering chakra exhaustion. I mean, what are the odds?”

“Honestly, you three,” Himeko walked in, looking at Ryohei’s chart, “Tsuna-kun will definitely not lose to whoever is behind this. He's taken on false Jinchuriki before. He'll be fine.”

Everyone believes in us.

Tobirama pushed up from the floor, looking at the possessed bodies calmly.

Reborn stared at him, brows furrowed in confusion. Never before had there been a physical response to the Criticism Shot. And yet the three red blotches on Tsuna's face had solidified into three red lines.

“Those who hunt monsters must take care lest they become monsters themselves,” Tobirama announced to the room.

Of course he knows Nietzsche, Reborn thought.

Footnotes:
Michiko Explores:

Michiko Ascends:

Michiko limped into the clearing where all of the Chief Summons sat waiting.

"That's her! The wee pet that attacked my Takehiko!"

The speaker was a giant Wolverine. Michiko stared at him and let out a low growl.

The Crane Pair chuckled at that.

"It would seem, Kou, that the koneko disagrees with that assessment," the female spoke.

"I agree," the Alpha Wolf added in a throaty voice, "Have you lied to us Kou?"

The Wolverine barred his teeth at him.

"We saw! We saw!" the songbirds sung behind their leader, "Koneko defended!"

The Wolverine snarled at that.

"Enough!" Gamabunta pounded his sword down, cutting off the snarls. "We are here because the koneko wished to be named Summon."

"The question is if we believe that she has proven herself," Katsuya asked.

The Summons looked between themselves.

"She has conducted herself well," the Snake said, "Brave in the face of fear."

"Wise in when to travel," the Bear added.

"Thoughtful in the face of offers," the Weasel commented nodding at the river.

"A good fighter," the Salamander added, smirking at the Wolverine.

"Then we are in agreement?" the Monkey asked.

Around the circle there were nods and sounds of agreement.

"Very well," the Snow Leopard finally moved, prowling closer to Michiko. He leaned down and breathed on her, "We Name Thou, Michiko the First Queen of the Himalayan Cat Summons Clan."

Michiko took a deep breath, reveling in her victory.

The Snow Leopard licked her.

"Welcome, imouto," he said with mischief in his eyes.
Well my dears, that's the end for the next two weeks (so long as nothing else happens, knock on wood). As always, feel free to come and chat with me on my tumblr

(seriously though, go look up cat's paw gloves, they are adorable)
Lightning Strikes but Once

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who’s left reviews, kudos, and bookmarks, you all rock!

We're almost at the end of this arc, wow. Hopefully soon I can start putting some humor back in this... (¬_¬)￥

A huge thanks to @iamlikecain and their friend for helping with the Italian.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 23: Lightning Strikes but Once

Tobirama glanced down at the glove on his hand.

Channel your Flames something told him, some instinct deep within him.

Tobirama trusted himself above all else. He knew himself and how difficult it was to actually be able to catch him in a genjutsu. He had barely touched the not-chakra Flames, unsure as to what they could do that his chakra couldn’t, but that didn’t mean that he hadn’t occasionally used them.

In his hand the flashlight changed, it's body morphing, two petal shaped holes opening at the end, and the top shifting into a pincer like shape. His fluffy cat glove changed as well. It became worn brown leather, covering the back of his hand, sturdy straps wrapping around to keep it in place. Leather covered his fingers up until the first knuckle where the leather held wicked looking claws. The back was embossed with a red X with a small silver Konoha symbol in the middle.

Ken, behind you whispered that inner voice. Tobirama shifted his weight to the side. As he lifted his gloved hand, he tossed the borrowed sword into the air.

“Takeshi,” he called, catching the former Uchiha’s attention.

Izuna kept his eyes on Tobirama as he reached up and snatched the sword out of the air.

Tobirama’s hand continued back from flipping the sword into the air and collided with Ken’s face before Tobirama pushed him back, Flames accenting his push and sending the boy flying back.

Izuna used the flat of the sword to knock both Touka and Bianchi off balance and then rushed past them and knocked them both out.

Tobirama let the voice inside of him lead him as he dodged around the other two, able to predict their movements expertly.

Was this what it was like to have the Sharingan? he wondered If so, I can see why the Uchiha are so proud of it.

He pushed them both back and out of the way before turning to a side room.

“Are you ready to fight me yourself?” he asked, dispassionate eyes locked onto Mukuro.
Izuna stiffened as Mukuro chuckled and strolled into the main room.

“This will be interesting. I can’t wait to possess you.”

“That is not happening,” Izuna growled, tensing up.

“Takeshi,” Tobirama’s voice was sharp, “keep everyone else back.”

Izuna scowled, but nodded.

Mukuro’s eye blazed with Mist Flames as he charged at Tobirama with his staff.

Tobirama caught the staff and glanced at his still burning hand.

“Don’t think I’m intimidated by your aura,” Mukuro told him.

“It’s not an aura,” Reborn spoke up, “Flames are highly condensed energy.”

With a smirk, Tobirama let his Flames heat the staff just enough so that he could bend it. Mukuro’s eyes widened in shock.

“You lose,” Tobirama told him, aiming the Raijin no Ken at Mukuro’s side.

Mukuro screamed as electricity ran through him and he flew back in the air like a ragdoll. He slammed into the wall, and slid down to a crumpled heap on the floor.

Reborn and Izuna stared in shock at his crumpled form as Tobirama swept his eyes over to Ken and Chikusa.

“Putana di merda,” Reborn whispered, taking off his hat.

“Stay away from him,” Ken spat as he dragged himself closer, “The Mafia isn’t allowed to touch Mukuro!”

“Why are the two of you going to him?” Izuna demanded, a scowl on his face, “He’s been controlling you this whole time. Look at the damage to your bodies!”

“You wouldn’t understand,” Chikusa glared at him, “This is nothing,”

“Compared to what we went through at That Place,” Ken added.

Tobirama was blank faced as the two recited their horrible childhood and the experimentations that their own Famiglia put them through. Izuna’s scowl deepened, and he had to fight back a growl when he noticed that Reborn did not look at all surprised.

“Loyalty should reward loyalty,” Tobirama’s voice was soft, “You should always protect your people, that that didn’t happen for you is a tragedy and a travesty.”

The two boys looked shocked at the words, and Izuna felt uneasy, though he refused to show it.

“If I swear to protect you and yours, will you do the same?” Tobirama knelt down in front of the two.

Reborn started at that, a disturbed look on his face. The only reason that Izuna doesn’t do the same is that he remembers the training he’s had to never give away anything. (He wonders if it was more than just Hashirama that wanted peace among the Senju, but no, it has to be a trick, or, or
The two exchange looks, a desperate kind of hope in their eyes.

Before they can verbally accept on their and Mukuro’s behalf, the doors swing open. Three tall men in black suits, and covered in bandages stood in the doorway. Three chains with thick metal collars flew from the men to lock in positions around Ken, Chikusa, and Mukuro’s necks.

Tobirama snarled at that, taking a step forward. Reborn jumped to his shoulder.

“Tsuna,” the hitman’s voice was almost scared, “don’t.”

“Where are you taking them?” Tobirama demanded.

The men ignored him.

Izuna shifted uneasily. There was something wrong about these men.

“I have been hired to capture these boys! Tell me what you are doing with them!” Tobirama yelled, cold anger emanating from his body.

“Tsuna,” Reborn said, “These are the Vindici. They enforce Mafia law and punish the criminals that are beyond the reach of conventional criminal law. You can’t go against them.”

Tobirama watched as the Vindici dragged the three boys through a portal. Ken and Chikusa looked resigned and disappointed. He scowled and decided that he was going to make sure all of his people knew the Konoha signs.

Reborn jumped down after the portal closed and glanced up at Tobirama in concern.

Tobirama let out a slow breath and watched as the Vongola Medical Team entered and began to look over all of them.

“I’m fine,” Izuna snapped at the woman trying to look him over.

“Takeshi,” Tobirama started, taking a step towards him.

“No. The job’s done, you and I are done. Once the money comes in, have Sasagawa give it to me,” Izuna’s voice was hard as he glared at Tobirama.

Tobirama blinked and gave a small twitch.

“Of course. I’ll see that it’s done,” his voice was blank as he spoke.

Izuna scowled at him once more and then stormed out of the room, and out of Kokuyo Land.

The room was silent after Izuna left, the only noise coming from the medical team. After several minutes, Tobirama gave a shuddering breath and let go of the ice of his last life.

“Excuse me,” Tsuna said softly, exiting the room himself.

Unlike Izuna, who had headed directly towards his house, Tsuna turned towards the river and disappeared from sight in the commotion of getting aid to those in Kokuyo Land.
Later, At The Hospital:

“...and then Yamamoto-san left heading towards the part of town where his house is, and Tsunakun headed in another,” Kyoko told the group, “I didn't know what was said until Reborn-san told me.”

Hayato sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

“I'm not surprised, to be honest,” Hana said from her spot next to Ryohei, “Saddened, yes. But not surprised.”

Reborn glanced around the room and scowled.

“I am,” he said, narrowing his eyes at them, “Because, until we went to Kokuyo Land, I was pretty damn sure that those two were going to end up dying together one day. So what the hell is going on?”

Haru pursed her lips as she looked at him.

“The relationship between Kumichou and Yamamoto-kun isn't really your business,” she said slowly, “I understand that you have some plans for Kumichou, but until you understand that he, we have parts of our lives that we will not share with you, you don't get any reason.”

Reborn's scowl deepened and he opened his mouth to rebuke her when Himeko stalked in.

“No fighting in my hospital. If you're going to do so, leave,” she snapped.

They all quieted down at that.

Ryohei glanced around, “Where is Tsuna anyway?”

All eyes snapped to him.

Michiko Explores

Twin Stars

Michiko sputtered, she thought Summons were above this type of milarky!

The Snow Leopard chuckled.

“Come imouto,” he said, “I shall escort you back.”

He nodded at the other Chief Summons and began walking down the Mountain, though a different way than she had used to get up here.

Michiko hesitated a moment before following him.

“He is something special, your human?” the Snow Leopard asked, something off in his voice.

She looked at him, unsure if she even could answer.

“Ah, yes, being granted Summonhood has also given you the ability to speak. Try it my dear,” the Snow Leopard nodded at her kindly.

“Michiko's Tsu-kun is the best ,” she told him.
The Snow Leopard chuckled, “Our First Humans always are. I remember my Tobirama.”

Michiko blinked up at him.

“He, he was old, your Tobirama? When he…” she trailed off, unsure if she ever wanted to say those words about a Summoner.

“No. He should have lived longer, but my Tobirama has always given his all for those he claims as his,” the Snow Leopard told her, “You will have to watch out for that. I doubt he's changed.”

Michiko halted.

“What?”

The Snow Leopard glanced at her.

“Your Tsu-kun was my Tobirama in his last life. I can Sense him on you,” he told her, turning to face her before sitting down, “He was a good Summoner, and as soon as I was named Byakko, Second King of the Snow Leopards, I gave him our Eternal Contract. He all but raised me, and I could think of none better to bind my Cloud to.”

“Then…” Michiko began, unsure of what she wanted to say.

“I named you Sister,” Byakko said patiently, “You have no quarrel from me to sharing him. You are a fierce fighter, and a wonderful huntress, but his enemies will no doubt be ones that we are better suited to fight, if only because of size. Perhaps one day you will be strong enough to have the size of the Elder Summons, but for now…”

Michiko stared at him and then nodded, “okay….Byakko-nii.”

Footnotes:

1 Italian equivalent of holy shit. Putana di merda

Chapter End Notes

As I asked on NQaBB, do you all want me to set up a text channel on the SLnL Discord specifically to chat about the story and such in addition to the one for my ramblings as I watch KHR?
I am absolutely *amazed* that I actually got this done. As I’ve said before I do most of my writing on the weekend, and I ended up busy these last few weekends - this past Saturday my family was hitting up a bunch of microbrewery and Sunday I ended up with a migraine. But I did finish it, yay!

The long awaited reveal of a certain character~

There's three of you who guessed correctly, and over the next few days I’m going to post those pieces of art that each of you requested when I asked ( ´∀´)ʃ ~ ♡

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 24: Conversations

“No, I haven't seen him. … Yeah, I'll let you know if he calls me. Bye, Gokudera,” Dino sighed as he hung up the phone.

Just his luck to have such a stubborn otouto. Dino pocketed the phone and began climb down to the bridge Tsuna was under. As he expected, there was Tsuna, knees hugged to his chest, at the edge of the river.

“You've got everyone really worried, you know.”

Tsuna's head snapped up in surprise. Dino frowned in concern at that, *What could be so bad that he wouldn't pay attention to his senses?*

“What are you doing here?” Tsuna asked, his voice rough.

Dino, still frowning, picked his way over to Tsuna.

“Like I said, everyone is worried. Gokudera called me asking if I had heard from you. I figured you might want to talk about it?”

“What's there to talk about,” Tsuna turned away from him.

“You tell me. You only hide away from everyone like this when something's really wrong,” Dino gave Tsuna an encouraging smile, sure that his once-brother would open up.

“I don't want to talk.”

Dino frowned. *Honestly, he needs to learn how to open up.*

“I can help.”

“Not with this. It's not like what happened with you .”

Dino cocked his head to the side, confused by that, “I wouldn't know unless you tell me.”
Tsuna glanced at him, “What, our cousin didn't tell you all about it?”

Dino shook his head.

Tsuna gave a mirthless chuckle at that, “Takeshi remembered.”

Dino furrowed his brows, “But, wouldn't that be a good thing? I mean, obviously the two of you knew each other what with how close you are now.”

Tsuna rolled his eyes, “He was Izuna. He wants nothing to do with me now.”

As Dino stared in shock, Tsuna pressed his forehead to his knees once more.

“Well, I mean, can you blame him? You did kill him, that can't be easy to forgive,” he pointed out after he recovered.

Tsuna paused, his entire being processing that comment. Tobirama might have shrugged it off, his world revolving around his brother and carrying the guilt of being the catalyst twice over for the ending of Hashirama and Madara's friendship, but he wasn't just Tobirama. He had others just as important as his former brother now. And as for his guilt? Takeshi had told him no more on that front.

“Fuck. You,” he bit out.

Dino looked startled, “W-what?”

“Fuck. You.” Tsuna stood, hands clenched at his sides, “I survived, and you want me to feel guilty about it? We weren't friends. We were trying to kill each other. We weren't playing pretend like you and your bosom buddy.”

Dino scrambled to his feet, “Now hold on! You didn't have to try to kill Izuna!”

“Oh, I'm sorry that I didn't make friends with an enemy after running off as if I was the only one to lose family!”

Dino took a step back, eyes darting to where the water was frothing and churning.

“I didn't–”

“Sage, you and Madara both! Itama was my little brother too! And you just ran off as if you were the only one mourning him! Fuck, but if you two idiots had brought us along, we could have all been working towards peace! That's on both of you!”

Dino paled.

At Takesushi:

Tsuyoshi flipped the sign to closed and wiped his hands as he moved over to Izuna, who was sitting at the counter.

“Hey gaki, Hime said everyone is freaking out about Tsuna-san being missing. Why aren't you out looking for him?”

Izuna glanced at his now father.
“You were in Konoha, right?”

Tsuyoshi blinked at him and sat down.

“You have a past life? Were you in Konoha, or one of the other Hidden Villages?”

Izuna shook his head, “I was before that.”

Izuna chewed over his next words, “I was Uchiha Izuna.”

Tsuyoshi leaned back, “Well fuck me. Huh. I guess that explains why Tsuna-san had a grudge against you. But why aren’t you looking for him?”

“Because... I’m Uchiha Izuna?”

“And why should that matter? If it’s because he killed you, that’s one thing, but we all have new lives. Why should we keep everything as it was?” Tsuyoshi pointed out, “If I had lived like that, I wouldn’t have married your mom. She hadn’t been around back then.”

Izuna was quiet for a while.

“Can you tell me how Konoha was, as a place?”

Tsuyoshi looked at him, contemplating the question.

“You mean how your Clan was treated, correct?”

Izuna looked startled but nodded.

“Hmmm. Under Tobirama, they were given control over the police. Mind, I was a kid, so I might have missed things, but, based on what I saw, and what I saw later, they were well thought of. Especially as one was a student, then a guard for the Nidaime. It did continue under Sensei, but, once I left for my spy network and research, I noticed that when I came back, it was different. I couldn’t really say how, and it definitely got worse after Minato - the Yondaime - died,” Tsuyoshi shrugged.

Izuna went silent.

Tsuyoshi stood up and went to get both of them a plate of sushi when the door slammed open.

Izuna spun around, eyes turning red as he gathered chakra.

“Damn it, Nana! The sign says Clos...e...d,” Tsuyoshi trailed off as he looked up at Nana.

Izuna followed his gaze as well.

Stalking straight towards Izuna was a version of Nana he had never seen before. Rage, disappointment, and a fierce protectiveness all mixed on her face, her hands clenched at her sides.

“How dare you,” she seethed as she came up to him, “How dare you convince my son to move past the stupid feud we used to have, just to turn on him as soon as you actually remembered.”

“Now Nana,” Tsuyoshi’s voice was cautious.

“No, I’ve already had one son have his heart broken by selfish Uchiha; I won’t let it happen to his little brother. Tsuna has already not come home for three days.”
Izuna swallowed at that. *Tsuna, you idiot, you didn't.*

“I don't care if you become friends with him again. You will at least inform Tsunayoshi that it is not because of any default in him that you are refusing to fight for your friendship, or *I will feed you to my cranes.*”

Tsuyoshi stepped out from behind the counter, “Sawada-sama, I don't care who my son used to be, or what has happened to your son. You will not threaten Takeshi.”

Nana’s jaw worked for a moment.

“Where is he?” Izu-Take—whoever he was now asked, conflicting feelings warring within him.

Nana eyed him for a moment before telling him. He was gone as soon as Tsuyoshi put a bento in his hands.

When he could see under the bridge where Nana said that Tsuna would be, he was frozen by the scene in front of him.

Tsuna, *Tsuna his strong friend-Tobirama his icy rival*, was encased in the arms of Dino, shuddering through tears.

Izuna swallowed, *this, this wasn’t what he expected* (*This broke his heart*). He stepped forward slowly, and then took another and then he was running towards his best friend, his rival.

Dino saw him first and stiffened. In turn, Tsuna looked up and Izu- *Takeshi* was treated to the sight of raw fear flooding his *best friend’s* face.

“I-” he swallowed, unsure of what to say.

Dino looked at him and then nodded.

“Otouto, I’m going to go and tell Mama what’s going on. Will you be okay with him?”

Tsuna slowly nodded and stepped out of Dino’s arms.

The two were silent as Dino made his way out from under the bridge.

He paused when he was level with Takeshi, “Don’t hurt my brother;” he murmured.

Takeshi glanced at him and nodded.

Tsuna eyed him warily.

“This one apologizes for the slight against you,” he began quietly, “This one will endeavor-”

He was shocked into silence as Takeshi’s arms went around him.

“Shut up,” Takeshi muttered into Tsuna’s ear, ignoring how he had gone stiff in the hug, “We both were fucked over last time, fuck you even told me. I was just too dumb and hurt to think, and I don’t deserve a friend like-”

“Fuck off, no one deserves friends, but you’re mine and fuck no it wasn’t stupid. I should have been more clear-”

“Shut up and let me hug you.”
Tsuna gave a weak, wet laugh, but stopped speaking.

They slid to the ground, still tangled together and let a silence settle around them.

After a while Tsuna pulled back a bit so as to look at Takeshi.

“Want to do something completely stupid?” he asked, a smile on his face.

“Yes,” Takeshi answered quickly.

Tsuna untangled them and stood up, holding his hand out to Takeshi.

Takeshi looked at it and smiled as he took Tsuna's hand.

Michiko Explores

Michiko Returns

Michiko slipped out of the portal that Gamabunta and Katsuyu had first taken her through.

She felt a pang, it had to have been a few days since she left. She hoped that her Tsu-kun wasn't too worried.

She slipped through the back of the building, glancing around.

She paused when she realized that the majority of her Tsu-kun’s group was in the front of the building.

She swallowed, suddenly worried for her Tsu-kun. She hurried home.

She meowed plaintively as soon as she was inside. From behind her the door opened and Mama's scent flooded the house.

“Oh, Michiko, there you are, I was so worried,” Mama said as she scooped up Michiko.

“Meowr?”

“I'm sure Tsu-kun will be happy to see you as soon as he gets home,” Mama's scent soured with worry.

*What happened to her Tsu-kun?!*

Chapter End Notes

It was pointed out to me that tomorrow is the one year anniversary of this fic (wow!!!!!), and while I would love to do something, a) it snuck up on me and b) I have no idea what to do (the only suggestion was some fluff, but guys, I have no idea what to do for that... and as Wandering_Shadows pointed out to me, I'm already not being as angst-y as I could be) (I mean, I could tell you all about what I am planning for the sequel, but.....)
Chapter Notes

Yay, new chapter done before the week is out! *tosses confetti*

Anyway the last two weekends were complete washes for writing, so this was written in a hurry over the last two days and thus is short. Them's the breaks.

Possitive things: Brynach Murdock's scene has happened! (reminder that you can see him over in NQaBB for a visual) Who is he? What does he know? What does he want? What other cliche questions can I ask? Who knows.

Also, someone else is joining the Michiko Gang! Yet another original animal character is joining this fic! Yay!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 25: Time Off

Dino wandered into Takesushi with a smile. It slipped from his face as he saw the group of people sitting clustered close together, worried looks on all of their faces.

“Uhhhh,” he scanned the faces before him, trying to find any clue as to the cause of the tension.

“Dino-san!” Kyoko all but jumped to her feet.


“Yes!” her voice was choked with tears as she answered him.

“Are he and Yamamoto-kun okay?”

Everyone seemed to freeze at that, a strange look coming over their faces. Nana and Tsuyoshi’s brows furrowed.

“You mean,” Reborn asked slowly, “that you believe they are together?”

Dino blinked at him, thrown by the question, “I mean, yes? I did leave them to have that conversation…. ”

“What conversation?” Touka asked in a growl.

“You mean the one we sent Takeshi to have three days ago?” Tsuyoshi blurted out, his eyes wide.

Dino looked at the two adults, “Um, yes? I thought they went home after that. A-are you telling me that no one’s seen them in three days?”

“Apparently no,” Reborn growled, glare flicking between Nana, Tsuyoshi, and Dino, “I was under the impression that it was longer than that.”

Nana glared right back, “I have no obligation to you, Reborn.”
“That may be Sawada-sama,” Hana said, standing up as Hiruzen’s shrewdness overtook her, “But we also care for Tsunayoshi, and have obligations to him. As such, I must respectfully ask that in the future you share such knowledge with us. As it is we have lost three days to track where either of them went.”

“I am relatively certain that wherever they went, they went together,” Dino told her, impressed with how the once Sandaime was handling the situation. His former mother was a woman whom many did not cross. “Do we know of where they might have gone?”

It was Kyoko who shook her head, “We’ve already looked at all the places we know Tsuna likes, and the ones Takeshi has mentioned he liked.”

Haru frowned suddenly, “Why don’t we ask Lambo-kun?”

Reborn rolled his eyes, “Yes, let’s ask the stupid cow-child; I’m sure he knows.”

Nana narrowed her eyes at him, but before she could speak Haru answered.

“Well, not child Lambo, but the teenage one. He has to know right?”

They all paused at that, the thought running through their heads.

“That,” Touka said slowly, “could work.”

They all slowly turned to where Lambo and I-Pin were fighting.

“Lambo-kun,” Kyoko called, “Please use your bazooka, we have a question for your older self.”

Lambo glanced at her and pulled it out, missing I-Pin lunging at him. She grabbed him just as the pink smoke enveloped them both.

The smoke cleared and there was Kakabo and An-Pin with An-Pin leaning back and playing keep-away with an orange book. Both froze when they realized they were in a new place.

“Uhhh,” An-Pin’s gaze darted between them all. That was all the distraction that Kakabo needed to flip around her, using her arm as a base, to kick the book out of her hands and into the air.

An-Pin hissed, eyes snapping back to him as she pushed him away. He pushed up at the same time and grabbed his book out of the air.

“Ha! I win!”

“Oh fuck you!”

“Ahem,” Nana interrupted them, a disapproving look on her face.

“Oh, right, was there something you all needed? Normally this type of thing doesn’t happen without some reason,” Kakabo asked.

“Oh please, you were always reaching for the bazooka back in the day,” An-Pin scoffed.

“We were wondering if you, well either of you, remember where Tsunayoshi and Takeshi disappeared to after the fight with Mukuro,” Hiruzen asked, cutting off the argument before it could begin.

The two stiffened, looking at them wide-eyed.
“I-Pin, I-Pin,” Kakabo said, awe in his voice as he smacked her with the back of his fist, “Is this what I think it is?”

“Fuck but I think so,” she breathed out, “Holy shit, fuck, where’s my phone, I need pics!”

An-Pin started to smack at her pants before pulling out a cell-phone and aiming it at them.

“I can’t believe we’re here for this!” Kakabo’s voice could only mean that he was beaming.

“I know!” An-Pin agreed, pressing down again and again as she moved the phone.

“It’s their first!”

“Spectacular!”

“Amazing!”

“A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!”

“What are you two on about?” Bianchi demanded, her hands on her hips as she glared at them.

“Oh, just that this is the first time; it’s exciting, you know?” An-Pin answered her.

“Have to make sure there’s at least some documentation!” Kakabo added cheerfully.

Elsewhere:

The man made gave a soft hum as the pair of men walked into the cafe. The two looked like a human version of a yin-yang symbol. One with fluffy, almost spiky white hair, sharp red eyes, and scars on his face, the other long, smoother black hair, wider black eyes, and smooth skin. They anticipated each other’s movements like brothers, or perfect rivals, or at least could.

He sat quietly, sipping at his coffee as they sat down, eyes scanning the cafe. A careful ruse, showing people only what they wished to see. He only caught the gazes catching on the well hidden weapons because he was looking for it. A casual look to make it seem as if they weren’t as experienced as they were. He repressed a chuckle, this type of subterfuge was far more effective now as opposed to the past where people were more cautious.

He did wonder how the darker one had managed to get that sword through customs though. That was a trick and a half. Apparently he wasn’t the only one who wondered, as Superbia fucking Squalo sauntered over to them, dragging a chair with him and inserting himself into their conversation, Mammon not far behind him, curiosity saturating the air around them.

This time he couldn’t quite suppress his chuckle even as he loosened his mental hold on his presence just enough to see the white-haired one twitch. He had to grimace when there was retaliation for that. Perhaps not his smartest move.

“Signor Murdock, is everything alright?” the waitress asked with concern as she picked up his empty cup. He gave her a quick smile before refocusing on the scene in front of him.

“Things are about to get very interesting Rosa. And I’ve told you, it’s Brynach.”

Rosa rolled her eyes, “Signor, you know I won’t do that. You’ve asked many a time and it’s never changed.”
“True. But I have to try,” he gave her another smile as he answered.

She chuckled and walked away. After a moment he also stood up and left the cafe, his minions would be missing him soon enough.

At the table:

“So what exactly brought you two to Italy?” Squalo asked the two strangers.

“Sightseeing,” the white haired one answered.

Mammon scowled at him for the lack of information and Squalo felt just about the same.

“Do you normally bring a sword on vacation?” he asked, his gaze flitting to the other one.

“Ahaha, I don’t have a sword,” he answered, “I just have a bat. Got to get in that practice!”

His companion gave him an indulgent look and nodded.

Squalo… didn’t understand.

“We would hate to run afoul of anyone, have any tips for tourists?” the darker one asked, his eyes flashing red for a moment.

“Uh…”

Tsuna and Takeshi wandered out of the cafe, leaving the two mafioso behind.

“So, what’s the plan to get the kiddos?” Takeshi asked, balancing his sword on his shoulder.

“I was thinking offer a lot of money and a chain,” Tsuna smirked at him.

“Aw, and here I was hoping we would ninja that shit.”

“I never said we’d use our money.”

“….why couldn’t you be my brother? We would have ruled everything.”

(Not) Michiko Explores

Had he been a fur-less one, he would have sneered at the clamoring of the others. They were pathetic as they tried to gain the attention of the fur-less ones. What did they need with those giants? They were proud predators!

One of the fur-less ones gave a coo and suddenly a hand was around his middle. No! This could not stand! He twisted and turned until he slipped from the grasp.

He hit the ground harder than he wanted. Dazed, he stumbled but was still able to avoid the grasping hands and the heavy feet. There! He could smell fresh air from that direction! He dashed forward, stumbling more than a bit. He wanted to never go back to that stupid cage with those stupid others.

A harsh grip wrapped around him and he screeched. He twisted and clawed and bit, and finally, finally, he escaped that grip as well. But now he was terrified. What if the fur-less ones
were angry at his escape attempts and retaliated somehow? He had to get away.

He stumbled forward and then - then warm hands gently scooped him up, cradling him.

"I don't think this one is fond of the cage," the fur-less one's voice was cutting, but his hands were gentle.

The fur-less one that he had bit made some reply, and a second fur-less one spoke from next to his fur-less one, sounding angry.

And then he could feel a breeze.

"I didn't expect that we'd also be bring home an animal," the other one spoke.

"Aw, but look at this little guy, he's got fire!" his person replied.

*That's right,* he thought, sleepy now, *I do.*
Okay, so something's up with my laptop *side-eyes it hard* but luckily I already had the chapter proper up.

Uhhhh, thanks for the reviews, kudos, and bookmarks, and come chat with me on Tumblr or Discord

Chapter 26: Vacation

Tsuna slipped into the hotel room, setting a bag down on the dresser. The solid genjutsu melted from his frame.

“We'll need to hit up a pawn shop tomorrow,” he told Takeshi. “How much do we even have?”

Takeshi frowned down at the piles of cash in front of him, the ferret curled up in his lap.

“Probably not enough. We might need to track down those two we talked to that first day and get some more names out of them.”

“It's just so risky. We don't know how well people recognize if they've been under a genjutsu.”

“Still, it's the only move we've got. That so-called tutor of yours was afraid of the Vindici.”

Tsuna huffed, “I know. Doesn't mean I have to like it.”

Takeshi just shrugged, gathering the money and moving it to the side table. The ferret gave him a baleful look at being disturbed, prompting Takeshi to coo at him.

“Suddenly I understand exactly what other people see when I’m talking to Michiko-chan,” Tsuna’s voice was mirthful as he spoke.

“But he’s just so adorable! How could anyone resist this face?” Takeshi asked as he cuddled the ferret.

Tsuna just chuckled and crawled into bed.

The next day they wandered around the cafe where they had met the two Mafia men.

“You!” a voice yelled from behind them, “What the hell did you do to us?!”

They turned and saw the two men.

“I’m sorry, I have no idea what you are talking about,” Tsuna raised one eyebrow.

The silver haired man scowled and stalked forward.
“Voi! The two of you did something to us! Mammon and I just…. told you what you asked! Mammon didn’t even Sense any Mist Flames!”

Takeshi blinked, adjusting to the volume the man spoke at.

“Tell us what you did,” the miniature person demanded from the other’s shoulder.

Tsuna and Takeshi exchanged looks and then turned as one and smirked at them.

“For a price,” they said in union.

The silver-haired man scowled but nodded.

“Hm, follow us,” Takeshi said, jerking his head.

The four of them slipped through the city and into an alley behind a club.

The two Mafioso glanced around with a look of disdain.

“Why are we here?” the smaller one asked, nose wrinkled.

“Loud, people expect to see others here, and yet it’s private,” Tsuna said.

“So, you’ll pay us for this information up front,” Takeshi told them.

“Payment after services rendered,” the smaller snapped back.

“Half before, half after,” Tsuna responded, “After all, otherwise there’s no reason for you to actually pay.”

Tsuna could actually hear the smaller one’s teeth grind. It only got worse as they negotiated the actual amount paid.

“Voi, we paid you, now tell us,” the silver haired man demanded.

“Different skill set,” Takeshi said cheerfully as he counted the money.

“You’re obviously used to however it is you Italians operate. We’re not Italian-” Tsuna said.

“Obviously not,” the miniature one snapped. Tsuna glared at them.

“We’re from Japan ,” he continued, “And further we are from a….rather traditional group.”

“Voi, don’t tell me you’re ninja ,” the silver-haired man snorted.

“We are used to operating more covertly,” Takeshi said humbly.

“Besides, we only asked. You could have chosen to not answer us,” Tsuna added.

The silver-haired one glare before suddenly laughing.

“I like you two!” he declared, “Superbia Squalo. This one is Mammon. You should come work for our organization.”

“Tobirama Senju. This is Izuna Uchiha,” Tsuna answered, blinking, “We are already sworn for, but thank you.”
He honestly had not expected that.

“Too bad,” Squalo said with a shrug, digging out the second payment, “If you ever feel like a change of pace, look up the Varia. We’re always open to new talent.”

Tsuna and Takeshi nodded and watched as they walked away.

“I...did not see that coming,” Takeshi commented.

“Yeah. Plus side, we have a good amount. I think we could do this,” Tsuna said, glancing down the alley, “Let’s go up. I don’t want to risk being, ah, recruited.”

Takeshi nodded.

The two of them strolled into the headquarters of the Vindici, confidence oozing off of them.

“What do the little mice want?” a voice called out.

Takeshi scowled, itching to let loose a Katon: Gōkakyū and burn down this whole place.

“We’ve come to make a deal, for three that you hold,” Tsuna spoke evenly, never raising his voice.

Suddenly, there was a bandaged face inches from Tsuna’s. The once Hokage’s hand twitched towards his flashlight, but otherwise he didn’t move.

“And what could some nobody offer us?” the face asked.

“Well, we have money for one,” Takeshi drawled, eyes half-lidded as he scanned the room, tapping out a pattern for each member he saw through the Mist Illusion.

“What use have we for money?” one asked from behind him.

For a split second, both the ninja were thrown. Money had seemed like an obvious answer.

Carefully, Tsuna shrugged.

“One can get many a thing for money. Novel concept really. We are open to negotiations for other....hm.... services.”

“From someone we’ve never heard of,” the one behind Takeshi scoffed.

Takeshi glanced back at them, a sharp grin on his face, “That is the point really. After all, we’d be pretty bad at our jobs if just anyone knew about us.”

“And yet if no one knows about you, how would you get hired?” yet another retorted.

“We find our clients as needed. There’s never been a lean time for us,” Tsuna’s lips quirked in a deliberate move.

“Enough of this. Who is it you want?” the voice came from a miniature version of the rest of them, traveling on the shoulder of a dark haired Vindici.

“Rokudo Mukuro, Ken Joshima, and Chikusa Kakimoto. What would you want in exchange for
those three?”

“Those second two are pawns. Them, you may pay for with cash. We will not release Rokudo Mukuro. He is too dangerous.”

Tsuna’s eyes closed, and he took a breath. Takeshi wondered what exactly the plan was to deal with this twist.

“And if I say that I have a way to keep him from doing his most dangerous technique? What then?”

“You cannot, so it is moot. Jaeger.”

The taller Vindici - Jaeger - began to turn. The other Vindici started to fade back into the Mist Illusion.

“Have you heard of Seals?” Tsuna’s voice made them all stop.

“That which Japanese monks use? They have no power.”

“And yet I can prove otherwise,” Tsuna’s hand shot out, flicking a seal to the feet of the Vindici that was in his face before jumping back.

“Fūinjutsu: Izanagi no Kushi,” he murmured as bamboo sprouted up around the Vindici, trapping him.

The rest of the Vindici stared in shocked silence.

“I can do more with Seals than simply that. Using Seals I can stop Rokudo Mukuro from using that technique.”

“...very well. You will place such a Seal on Rokudo Mukuro here and will pay for the other two. For Rokudo Mukuro, we will require a favor at some point in the future.”

“Only if it does not go against our own agendas and interests,” Takeshi raised an eyebrow, daring the Vindici to argue on this point, “If it is something that does go against, we have the right to refuse you.”

“Very well. Follow us,” the smallest Vindici commanded.

“I will need ink, a brush, and some of his blood,” Tsuna informed them, following after.

Takeshi kept pace, wishing he had studied more Seals, if only so he could have some idea of what the plan was.

They were brought to a room where Mukuro was laid out in the middle, unconscious, and Ken and Chikusa were being held by chains to the side by other Vindici.

“Go ahead,” Jaeger gestured them forward as yet another Vindici appeared with the needed tools.

Tsuna moved forward, taking the ink and brush.

“Izuna, I need kunai as well. Place them at regular intervals around the circle as I draw it.”

The Vindici watched silently as Tsuna drew two concentric circles out of ink. Takeshi followed him, placing down nine kunai.
After finishing that, Tsuna took the blood and mixed it with the ink and began to draw symbols from the inner circle to Mukuro and continuing them onto him after removing his shirt.

“What the hell are you doing to him!!” Chikusa demanded, straining against the chains.

“Leave him alone!” Ken added, a wild look entering his eyes.

Takeshi glanced at them before returning his gaze to Tsuna. While each stroke was steady and deliberate, he could see the hesitation for some. His mind raced, trying to figure out what was the cause.

He scanned the symbols, looking for some hint, but couldn't see one.

Finally, Tsuna stood, looking down at the circle around Mukuro’s eye. His hands began to move, forming seals.

Hare moved into snake, followed by horse and ram, and then bird and tiger. Tsuna repeated the sequence, and then seemed to start a third time but instead of tiger, he made the seal for dog and then ended with rat. His hand then pressed down over Mukuro’s eye and the ink lit up under Takeshi's Sharingan, before fading until none of the ink was visible.

“It is done,” Tsuna said, looking over at the two leaders.

“We will take these three now,” Takeshi said as he bounced his baseball bat on his shoulder.

The Vindici nodded and one stepped forward.

“We will portal you to where you are staying,” they said, putting a hand up.

The group was silent as they went through the portal and then the portal closed after the retreating Vindici.

Takeshi dismissed the henge, scooping up Apollo.

“You're Yamamoto Takeshi,” Ken blinked at him, mouth slightly agape.

“Oh good, Tsuna said, dropping his henge, “you recognize us.”

“Why are you doing this?” Chikusa asked, his jaw clenched.

“We made a deal. You might have been taken before we could cement it, but we still made a deal. I apologize for not being in a position where I could stop the Vindici from taking you,” Tsuna told him, counting out the money to see how much was left.

Mukuro stirred on the bed, “W-what-”

Takeshi pushed him back down.

“You need to rest. At least until we can have a qualified medic look you over. Tsuna’s word is his bond.”

Ken edged closer to Mukuro, eyes on Takeshi the entire time.

“You two seem...closer,” Chikusa observed.

“We had a rough patch,” Tsuna shrugged, “Takeshi, one of us is going to have to go out tonight.
We should probably top off before heading back.”

Takeshi nodded, “I’ll go. You went before we met up with those Varia folks.”

The former Kokuyo Gang gaped at them.

Michiko Explores

New Home Apollo

Apollo snuffled from his perch around his Takeshi’s neck. They had just gotten the odd trio settled in another ‘hotel room’ for a few days so that his Takeshi and the Other One smoothed things over. Apollo didn’t know what that meant, but so long as he didn’t have to leave his Takeshi, he didn’t care.

He perked up a bit as a bell rang overhead. Where were they now?

“Takeshi!” “Tsuna!”

Suddenly there were arms around his Takeshi, around him.

“Where have you two been?!” a small human demanded, jumping to a counter.

Apollo looked around, now that there wasn’t a form blocking his vision (even if said form was now at his Takeshi’s side). There were many tables and in the back a group of people, now all standing up, moving forward towards them.

“Meowr.” Apollo stiffened.

She stared at him, evaluating, probably planning how to hunt him. He would have to defend himself and his Take-

She nodded at him and turned back to the Other One, purring and pushing her face on his, and licking him.

Well alright then.

Footnotes:

1 Sealing Art: Izanagi’s Comb, Fūinjutsu: Izanagi no Kushi
Chapter Notes

Hi everybody! So, uh, didn't feel like writing this weekend due to excitement over my cousin having her baby girl (eeeeeeiiii!!!! I'm a first cousin once removed!!!!!!! bby Falcon! (family joke)) and my parents going on vay-cay because apparently I can't write in an empty house? idk guys, idk.

Anyway, there's a few headcanons implied or written out in this chapter, so feel free to discuss those with me (as always, feel free to chat about anything with me). Also, certain people were all over emotionally speaking in this chapter, but honestly the situation isn't exactly normal and almost everyone is a teenager so.... yeah.

Thanks again to everyone who's left kudos, bookmarks, and comments, you all rock and I love you. And with that, enjoy the chapter~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 27: Consequences

Tsuna rolled his eyes as he headed towards Namichuu the next morning. Reborn was sticking to him like glue, a glare on his face. Tsuna supposed he couldn't blame him, after all Tsuna and Takeshi had disappeared without a trace. (Also they had left the country but Reborn didn't know that)

The rest joined them quickly, Hana catching his eye with a frown on her face. Her hands moved deliberately even as a nonsensical conversation flowed between the group.

Debrief after training, she signed at the group, well more at him but still. Tsuna quirked an eyebrow at her. The reminders that she had once been a Hokage were always interesting, but she seemed to be forgetting that he had never served under her. Still, there were things that had to be discussed; he could humor her.

He tilted his head at Takeshi and signed, teammate, traitor, what do? to his friend.

Talk, debrief, Takeshi clumsily responded. Even with the Sharingan, the signs were difficult to make a smooth motion among other movements.

You bring in, Tsuna finished the conversation before turning to Haru.

“We'll see you later then,” he told her, slipping a piece of paper to her out of sight of Reborn before bringing his hand up to tug his ear with his thumb and middle finger, hostile contacts/enemies turned allies.

She nodded and turned towards her own school.

When they reached the school, Takeshi’s face twisted into a conflicted expression.

Tsuna nudged his shoulder and gave a nod. Takeshi smiled at him before jogging forward, searching for the one person he had to talk to.
He found Hibari just outside of the rooms that had been converted into a headquarters for the Disciplinary Committee.

Takeshi had a plan. He was going to get his once-brother alone and then he was going to calmly and as logically as possible talk to him about the events that had occurred after Izuna’s death, examining Hibari’s response for his own bias to either ignore or to take into consideration. The point was, Takeshi had a plan. It was a good one, one that he thought Tsuna would find acceptable should he run it past the logic focused former Senju.

His plan went out the door as soon as his eyes landed on his once brother.

“The MOON?!?!” he bellowed stomping forward. The various Committee members jumped at the sudden outburst from someone with a reputation for never losing his cool.

Hibari looked up, his brow furrowed.

Takeshi shoved past the last Committee member between him and Hibari - Kusakabe - to grab the lapels of Hibari’s shirt and shove him backwards, still yelling.

“A fucking plant? The literal shadiest fucking person you’ve ever met and you went along with their plans?!”

Hibari’s arms froze from where they were coming to knock into him, his mouth falling open.

“Iz-”

“No. Nu-uh. Nope. You gave your word, ” Takeshi hissed, his anger and disbelief not outweighing the need of secrecy even as Hibari gestured to Kusakabe to clear everyone else away, “and then you broke it because what? People didn’t treat you like a prince ?! And don’t even try to say it was for the Clan, as Kagami says that is horseshit .”

“You weren’t there,” Hibari said, his hands coming up to encircle Takeshi’s wrists, something desperate in his eyes, “You weren’t there but he was and he was never sorry for that!”

Takeshi took a step back, his eyes full of ice, “And yet you could forgive his brother for killing Uncle in self defense. I was trying to kill him, why shouldn’t he do the same?”

Hibari only looked at him, his eyes sad.

“There are four Hokage who remember, plus one who can stand for a fifth. They are going to decide what to do about you tonight. Your mother will bring you. Be there.”

With that, he turned away, trembling. He was so angry at his former brother. He had done something horrible and stupid for people who were already dead and gone instead of making a better future. But, but he didn’t want his brother to die. Part of him wanted to turn around and yell at Hibari to just run away, but he knew he wouldn’t. Besides, he trusted Tsuna. And really, that was all he had in this situation - trust.

After School:

Takeshi watched the door of Takesushi, nervously waiting for Himeko-sensei and Hibari to show up.
“They’ll be here,” Tsuna said, placing a hand on his shoulder.

“That’s what I’m afraid of,” Takeshi murmured.

“What I want to know,” Kyoko’s voice rose to carry throughout the empty restaurant, “is what this lot is doing here?”

“I don’t get why you thought Mukuro-sama needed help,” Ken snarled back.

Takeshi and Tsuna blinked, both running over the tail end of their trip to Italy.

“Obviously I was sent because I can make far superior illusion to trick Reborn,” Kyoko sneered, “And he has an uncanny sense of your type of illusion.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Mukuro snarled, bristling indignantly.

“It means that we have a different way of creating illusions, Mukuro,” Tsuna said, “All of us here, except you three, are reincarnations of a time long past.”

“We were of an age before Flames were recognized. Instead, we used chakra - a mix of spiritual and physical energies - to create all sorts of techniques including healing, illusions, and attacks. Here, let me show you,” Takeshi slipped over to the wall and began to climb it using only his feet.

The three gaped at him. Takeshi smirked. Before any more words could be spoken, the door opened. Himeko walked in wearing a grey kimono blouse over black pants with a green haori over it. Beside her was Hibari still in his school uniform.

Takeshi jumped down from the wall, eyes locked on his former brother; only able to watch him, scared of what the outcome would be.

Dino nodded and stood up, “Tsuyoshi-san, please lead us to the room you have prepared.”

Tsuyoshi stood up and began to lead the way, Dino, Tsuna, Hana, Himeko, and Hibari following after him.

Takeshi stared after them, unsure of what he wanted to do. Kyoko laid a hand on his shoulder.

Within the room, Hibari was seated alone in the middle while the other five created a semicircle around him.

“Hibari Kyoya, who was once Uchiha Madara, we are here to determine what shall be done with you in light of the crimes you committed in your last life,” Dino said solemnly.

“Each of us save Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, who was Jiraiya, were Hokage in our past life. Jiraiya was the teacher of the Yondaime, Namikaze Minato, and will be standing in for him. As for the Rokudaime, Hatake Kakashi, his reincarnation has waived his judgement as we can only speak to him in his remembered state for five minutes at a time, and the Nanadaime, Uzumaki Naruto, we can all agree would wish you to have a second chance to be better,” Hana added, gesturing to Tsuyoshi, “Do you agree to this set up?”

“Even if I didn't, would it truly matter?” Hibari asked with a raised eyebrow.

“It would,” Himeko told him.
“Very well, it is acceptable.”

“We all know that which you did, and why you did it. There is no doubt when it comes to your actions. The only thing in question is what we will do in regards to them,” Hana told him, “As such we will each present a case for the actions we, or the one we are representing, would take. For myself, as fond as I once was of you, sensei of my dearest friends, I must think of the danger that you present. As such, I call for actions to be taken against you to keep you from hurting anyone else - be those actions fatal or crippling.”

“We all have done things that are reprehensible,” Dino argued, “That his actions had such a reach is regrettable, but it does not make us better than him. I argue that we let him live unhindered by us unless he moves against us once more.”

“I have seen him grow up; he is like a nephew to me,” Tsuyoshi said slowly, “But in this, I must go with what Minato would want. This man is responsible for so much pain and suffering, he loses himself in his negative emotions - what you yourself named the “Curse of Hatred” Tsunayoshi - all too easily for us to not believe that he will find some slight or other from us to him for him to use as justification. In this case it is wiser to remove the threat than to sit back and let him have ample opportunity to attack.”

Himeko looked pained at that.

“I-” she started before being cut off by Tsuna standing.

“What both sides are forgetting is that we are not just who we were but we are also who we are . In this room is not Senju Hashirama, Shodaime, but rather Dino Chiavarone, who was Hashirama. Sarutobi Hiruzen would not spend hours at an arcade simply to outshine a bunch of high schoolers, yet Hana did so just last week. It is not Jiraiya, standing in for Namikaze Minato, Yondaime, but rather Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, who was Jiraiya. Senju Tsunade made her family from people she met, Himeko is a wife and a mother. Senju Tobirama was a solitary figure. I, Sawada Tsunayoshi, have many friends. And we are not discussing the fate of Uchiha Madara, but rather that of Hibari Kyoya, who was Madara. And beyond fanatically protecting the rules, Hibari Kyoya has done nothing to earn the punishments suggested. But neither has he truly proved that he will not repeat the sins of his past.”

Hibari stared at him, the part of him that was purely of this life stirring with glee at the words while the part that was purely Madara struggled to understand.

Himeko closed her eyes, pressing back a smile of relief.

“Then what, Nidaime, are you suggesting we do? As much as it pains me as his mother to say, he is too large a danger to simply let go.”

“I understand. I propose a modified Seal - based on the Fūja Hōin - to limit his more devastating techniques. We can start with Sealing most of his power and release it as he proves himself. I have already done one such Seal on Mukuro Rokudo,” Tsuna offered up.

“I can look at your modifications and see what we can do to limit the need to undo the Sealing and redoing it each time,” Tsuyoshi offered.

“Then are we in agreement?” Hana asked, glancing around at the other former Hokage.

They nodded.
“Do you agree with this ruling Hibari Kyoya?” she asked, turning to him.

“It is far better than what I would have offered in your position,” he replied, “But yes.”

“Very well,” Dino stood, “then let us share with the others the discussion, and Tsuyoshi can begin to examine the modifications.”

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Michiko Explores

Entertainment - Reborn style

Michiko had long since learned the schedule of her Tsu-kun so as to meet him as he returned from school, and she found it fitting to bring her Tsu-kun's Takeshi's new Companion with her.

Apollo had seemed confused when she had collected him, unsure why his human had left him alone, but then the Toad had been there to keep him from doing something foolish or pointless as she had done the first time her Tsu-kun had gone to 'school'.

She paused though, when they came across the newest girl that would stay around her Tsu-kun and three others. The four were Stalking the intruder. She watched, Apollo coming to a stop next to her, curious as well if for a different reason. Had she been human, she would have smirked as different energies coalesced around him, and he began to move off, away from where he would have crossed paths with her Tsu-kun and his People.

In a split second, Michiko decided to follow him instead, this would no doubt be interesting.

"What the actual fuck?!” the intruder shouted after some time had passed.

Michiko's tail flickered in amusement.

"Seriously Leon, what the fuck?" he demanded, "What the hell was that? It wasn't a Mist Illusion, at least, not fully. I honestly thought it was real..."

Apollo looked at her, radiating disbelief. Michiko glanced at him and then back at the show. She had no answers for him.

"O Dio², how could I have lost them again? What the hell kind of game was Iemitsu playing with that report? I mean, I get wanting your kid underestimated, but this is ridiculous..."

Michiko and Apollo stayed there for a while longer watching him wail about loosing her Tsu-kun and his Takeshi

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Footnotes:

1 Curse Sealing: What was used on Sasuke post Orochimaru in the Forest of Death. [Fūja Hōin](#)

2 Italian: Oh God. [O Dio](#)
Chapter End Notes

Oh, hey, totally forgot to say (though you already know if you follow me on tumblr), but I'm going to be at Youmacon in Detroit in about a month. I'll let all of you know the plan for what I'm cosplaying and how you can get in contact with me to try to meet up if you want closer to the event, but pre-reg closes at the end of this month so I wanted to let all of you know beforehand.
A Day Late, but oh so good. For those of you that don't check my tumblr (and as more info than there), I try not to type before going on a brew-crawl or otherwise going out with my family and at first the plan was to go out on Saturday, but that was changed to Sunday, and then I got an argument with my family Monday and just couldn't write. That being said, I am very happy with how this turned out.

Chapter 28: Reparations and Revenge

Tsuna’s eyes locked with Hibari’s for a second and then the former Senju was gone, shunshin whisking him into the front room once more.

“I’ll see all of you at school,” he nodded to his friends before tugging the former Kakuyu gang out the door as well.

“Uh, where are we going?” Chikusa asked, pushing his glasses back up his nose.

“You’re going to show me where you’re living,” Hayato said from behind them.

Ken glared at him, “Why do you need to know?”

Hayato shrugged. “I don’t. Mostly I think it would be best to have contingencies given your recent status as enemies. And, as I was one of the eldest of our lot in our last life and I can hold my own or out do the Uchiha, I make for a good option to deal with your illusion-using group.”

Tsuna gave a hum of agreement.

“Hayato also knows what it’s like to have to deal with enemies turned allies.”

The rest of the trip was silent. Upon entering the small apartment that Tsuna and Takeshi had found for the trio, Hayato gave a bit of a twitch.

“What? Not used to something so small?” Ken snarled.

Hayato raised one eyebrow, “I dislike the amount of take-out boxes.”

Ken blinked, nonplussed. “Um, what?”

Hayato sighed, disappointment saturating the very air around him.

“I’ll be coming over once a week and we’ll go get groceries. From there I’ll help you develop cooking skills,” Tsuna’s once-cousin informed them.

“We do not need you to do so,” Chikusa told him, the light catching on his glasses.

“And I don’t care what your opinion is, you aren’t going to live like this,” Hayato replies raising an eyebrow.
Tsuna’s mouth twitched in amusement before he pulled Mukuro into another room.

“Let Hayato browbeat them. My cousin feels strongly that each person should be able to care for themselves.”

Mukuro nodded at that, a cautious look in his eyes.

“I wanted to talk with you; our contract was sworn by your teammates,” Tsuna told him, arms crossed, “Are you comfortable with the arrangement?”

“As if I have a choice. You Sealed my powers remember?”

“You were an enemy. It is not wise to leave such a person able to repeat their attacks. Give it time until you have earned our trust and we can justify it to the Vindici.”

“That doesn’t mean I should be happy about it.”

“Nor does it mean that you should be dissatisfied with your situation.”

“Are you saying that I should be happy?” Mukuro hissed, “You’ve stolen from me my power and you think I’m going to like you?”

“You don’t have to like me, you just have to work with me. You claim to have been reincarnated several times, surely in one of those lives you’ve had to do that?”

Mukuro was silent for a while.

“What is it you want from us?”

“I want to right the wrong done to you by people who claimed you as Family. I am not a good person; I have been a murderer, a spy, a military leader, and a scientist in my own right. I have raised the dead and thought nothing of it. But I live by the code that you owe protection to those who you claim as Clan or Village. My experiments were never on those who fell under those categories, but rather enemies to be discarded afterwards. Hayato was clueless and then was an outsider. Tsuyoshi was an outsider as well when he was a hitman, and Anija, well, he experiences the Mafia from a place of privilege. If I am to understand that which I am being forced into, I need more information. You can provide that and be the ones to stand guard against us repeating such folly.”

“And in exchange you will protect us?”

“And help you develop further as warriors.”

“What would happen if we walk away?”

“A Seal to keep you from divulging our secrets and depending on how much of a threat you are, perhaps a Seal to keep you from attacking us.”

“I believe we can live with that. I assume that we will have more than Gokudera stopping by regularly?”

“Obviously.”

Mukuro hesitated.

Tsuna raised an eyebrow at him.
“There is a... girl,” Mukuro finally spoke, “I, our minds naturally connected.”

Tsuna blinked at that, contemplating what such an event could mean, especially if Mukuro was not a reincarnation from the Elemental Nations as he suspected. Perhaps a descendant of the Yamanaka Clan?

“She,” Mukuro struggled with the next words, “does not have the best home life. Would your offer extend to her as well?”

“Yes.”

Mukuro looked taken aback by the simple and quick answer, but nodded.

“Now, I am going to collect my cousin and go home. The illusion you and Kyoko placed on Reborn?”

“Should be wearing off soon if he didn’t figure it out already.”

“It won’t matter one way or another. I’ve accomplished that which I wanted to keep from him.”

With that Tsuna swept out of the apartment, snagging Hayato on the way.

“Remember! I’m coming back tomorrow!” Hayato yelled at the dumbfounded Chikusa and Ken.

The Sawada House:

Reborn scowled as he returned to the house late into the evening.

He needed extra supplies to continue this new search for his wayward student.

He froze as he entered Tsuna’s room. Sitting at the table, flipping through a manga book, was Tsuna.

“What?” Reborn demanded.

“Ah there you are. It wouldn’t do for you to simply disappear, would it?”

Reborn repressed the urge to scream. This, this little shit was acting like he had been here the entire time!

Tsuna just smirked.

Reborn growled. A thought occurred to him and he pushed down a smirk. He knew exactly how to get back at the brat.

Reborn slipped back out of the house and made a call.

In his room Tsuna quirked an eyebrow in amusement.

The next morning Tsuna woke up to see a body next to his bed.

“It looks like you killed him in your sleep,” Reborn said from the table.

Tsuna gave a hum of agreement.
“Then it is a good thing I had planned to spend the day with Hana-chan and Kyoko-chan.”

Reborn blinked at that. That… Wasn’t what he had expected.

All too soon, both girls had arrived along with Haru, explaining that they thought she could join them.

“We may have to change our plans for today.” Tsuna explained to them as they followed him up the stairs, “Or at the very least move things back a bit.”

“Oh? Why is that Tsuna-kun?” Kyoko asked, eyes darting to Reborn.

“I woke up to a body next to my bed,” Tsuna explained as he opened the door, showing the body. The girls blinked, eyes darting to Tsuna as he stood with his arms crossed, left pointer finger slightly raised as his middle finger tapped against his right arm three times.

“Well,” Hana said, “we can’t exactly lug him out of the house intact.”

“Sawada-san probably won’t mind us borrowing her cleaver,” Haru added cheerfully, “It really is lucky that she has a Western cleaver in addition to her deba bōchō.”

Reborn began to sweat, they couldn’t possibly mean…

“Does this mean that you’ll let me continue my research into how to get different colored flames when disposing of bodies?” Kyoko asked with a grin.

“Perhaps. We have to get it out of the house first,” Tsuna said.

“Ah, you’re right, you’re right,” Kyoko nodded, “Large bags would be noticeable. Unless….”

“Yamamoto-kun is on the baseball team and Sasagawa-senpai is the captain of the boxing club,” Haru said as she locked eyes with Kyoko.

“We should call them over with bags, no one would question it!”

“And then we could take the body to Kokuyo Land!” Hana jumped into the planning, “Everyone already knows that something went down there, no one would think to trace it back to us! And even if they did, they would assume it was a mistake, after all, kids dare each other to do stupid things all the time!”

“Afterwards we just have to clean up the mess from the dismemberment so that even if someone did get suspicious they wouldn’t find evidence!”

The girls beamed at each other before turning as one to Tsuna for approval.

“Very good, I like it. Shall we begin?”

“No!” Reborn shouted, jumping over and kicking the body, “Moretti! Get up!”

Tsuna smirked as the so-called corpse moved.

“This is Moretti, professional victim and part of your Famiglia. He has the ability to slow his bodily functions down enough to make it seem as if he is dead.”

“I, uh, was here on vacation when Reborn called me and I figured it was a good time to introduce
myself to the future Boss,” Moretti said, eyes darting between the teenagers, “It’s, uh, good to see how well you trust your subordinates?”

“Yes, it is,” Tsuna gave a single nod, “I’ll let Mama know that we’ll be having a guest tonight. After all, it would be rude for you to not introduce yourself to the lady of the house after having entered it.”

Moretti swallowed and nodded.

“Good, I’ll leave you in Reborn’s hands then. Girls, I believe if we hurry, we can stop at the cake shop before the spa.”

With that, the teens left.

Moretti looked down to where Reborn stood next to him.

“I think the Tenth has your number.”

Reborn sighed and nodded.

Michiko Explores
Adding to the Legend
Isamu stared as The Cat walked passed him. His eyes tracked her into the crowd before he rushed into the diner to meet with his friends.

He was wide-eyed as he flopped into the booth.

"What happened to you?" Ayumu asked, his brow furrowed.

"I just saw that cat of Tsunayoshi-sama's on the street," Isamu told them.

"So?" Yue ask, taking a bite of his food, "She tends to wander around."

"But there was a ferret with her!"

The other three froze before exploding into a cacophony of questions.

"Wait, do you think that the ferret belongs to Oyabun?" Kazuo asked.

"I mean, maybe?" Yue shrugged.

"I don't know, Tsunayoshi-sama has been making more friends lately," Isamu protested, "It could belong to one of them."

They all sat back, wondering at this new animal.
So late, so, so late. I'm sorry, this chapter was like pulling teeth, even after I decided to leave Mafialand proper to the next chapter and just skip the cruise all together. Ugh, but it's done now and I've straight up told you what the next chapter is going to be.

Ummmmm, let's see, what did I want to tell you all? Ohh, right, once again I'm doing NaNo this year with my original novel, but this time I'll dabble in SLnL stuff during as a way to take needed breaks. I'm not promising that a chapter will go up, but something might.

In addition, I'm going to Youmacon next weekend, so contact me on Tumblr or Discord if you want to meet up at some point, no promises, but I'd love to say hi.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 29: Monster Mash

Tsuna pushed open his sarcophagus and stretched as he stepped out. A smaller sarcophagus opened and a mummified cat climbed out.

“Tsuna! You’re up!” Haru smiled at him from where her head was sticking through the wall.

“Haru, I thought I told you to not do that,” he complained, rolling his eyes.

The ghost waited until he stepped into the hall to respond.

“It’s not like you’re ever not decent. I don’t see why I should have to call through a wall.”

“It’s the principle of the thing. Is anyone else here?”

“Just Hana and Takeshi,” Haru wrinkled her nose as she responded.

Tsuna gave a hum and nodded. They continued down the hall until coming to a large ornate double door. Tsuna pushed it open, revealing a furry Hana eating a rare steak and a mottled grey Takeshi drinking from a plastic head in his hands.

“Evening,” Tsuna nodded at them as he sat at the head of the table, “Haru, when is everyone supposed to arrive?”

“Well the Swamp Siblings have a Scare at 10, so they’ll get here after that’s done. The Magnate sent word that his Take-Out is taking a bit longer than usual but it shouldn’t be much long—”

“Yes, the little meal kept prattling,” Hayato interrupted her as he changed back from a bat upon flying in the window, “I had to be far more blunt than I prefer. Honestly, all I wish is to bite a neck, not know the backstory attached to it.”

The once-Pharaoh smiled and shook his head, “At least you finished quickly. I know how you hate to drag it out.”
Hana gave a nod to the Vampire as juices from her steak dripped down her chin. Hayato wrinkled his nose and pushed a napkin closer to her.

“So what’s the plan fo-”

The zombie was cut off by the heavy front doors slamming open, the sound reverberating through the castle. The monsters tensed, eying the entrance. Hana and Takeshi both put down their food, stepping away from the table. Fingers flexed and eyes darted around making plans. Tsuna let a few of his bindings loosen, getting them ready to send out at whomever it was that was invading his castle.

They were all silent as heavy steps echoed through the air. Lightning flashed, illuminating the shadow of a large man.

“Pharaoh, I’m glad I caught you,” the figure said stepping into the room, “I wanted to give you a gift.”

Tsuna blinked as a giant of a man made up of various mismatching parts stepped forward.

“Kyoya!” Takeshi yelped, darting around the table, “What are you doing here?”

Frankenstein's Monster blinked mismatching black and red eyes at the zombie.

“Takeshi, I was not aware that you were acquainted with the Pharaoh.”

“Acquainted with the Pharaoh.’ Who even says that?” Hana mumbled under her breath.

Hayato shushed her.

“The Undead One you call ‘Takeshi’ and Myself are indeed ‘Acquainted’,” Tsuna intoned, raising one eyebrow.

Kyoya swallowed, suddenly nervous.

The oppressive silence was broken by Takeshi’s laughing.

“Every time you pull on those old Court Manners it’s hilarious!”

The other monsters started to chuckle and then laugh as well, even Tsuna’s lips were curled in amusement.

Kyoya looked at them, bemused.

“Are we interrupting?” a sweet voice called from the door.

They all turned and saw two large piles of green..... something standing there, one shorter than the other.

“Ah, Kyoko, Ryohei, I take it that your Scare is done then?” Tsuna asked.

“It is,” Kyoko nodded at him.

“Wonderful,” Tsuna began to turn so as to address them all, “For tonight’s festivities-”

“Oh, Tsuna?” Ryohei interrupted.
Tsuna paused, and they all looked at the elder Swamp Monster, shocked by the break in protocol.

“Yes?”

“There’s kind of a, well, a mob on it’s way here. Lead by a Hunter.”

Tsuna stared blankly at him.

“Oh fuck all kinds of duck,” Tsuna cursed, “Haru, go play watch for us. Kyoko, Ryohei, lay in wait, let them pass you before springing forward to catch them from behind.”

The ghost and siblings nodded and hurried off, Haru evaporating into a mist.

“Takeshi, your body can take much damage, are you willing to be in the front of our defense?”

“Of course,” the zombie nodded, “this is my home too; I will defend it.”

“I thank you,” Tsuna said quietly, “Kyoya, if you and Hana could join him?”

Hana cracked her knuckles with a grin while Kyoya gave a slow nod.

“Good. Hayato, you and I shall work our Magics to banish this mob from our home.”

“If any get through the rest, I will stop and physically defend you,” the vampire warned.

All too soon the mob was entering the lands around the castle. Some were easily scared off by Haru, and some ran upon seeing moving vegetation or were thrown out by Kyoko and Ryohei.

More still fled from defeat at the hands of a werewolf, zombie and Frankenstein’s Monster.

On it went until only the Hunter was left. He was an older man, one who looked friendly, looked as if you could tell him your problems and he would offer sage advice while stroking his mustache.

The Hunter began to clap.

Tsuna paused in his Magics and stared at the Hunter.

“I, I know you,” he murmured.

“Yes, and I must say, I am impressed,” the Hunter replied.

Tsuna paled in outrage as realization struck.

“Attack,” the once-Pharaoh roared.

Kyoya took a lumbering step forward, his fist raised and it flew towards the Hunter.

With a start Reborn woke up.

“No more cashews before bed,” he mumbled, “Fuck, but I need a vacation.”

Actually, the more he thought about it, the better it seemed. A vacation was just what the doctor ordered. And it was a wonderful way to get back at the Brat.

Reborn scurried off to make arrangements, never seeing the calculating look Tsuna gave him from
A Few Days Later:

“Oh, Tsu-kun, look what came in the mail,” Nana held up a postcard and two tickets.

“Ah, are those for the cruise to Mafialand?” he asked, his eyebrow slightly raised.

Reborn barely kept himself from gaping.

“Un. Let's see, we've already got tickets for us, the kids, Hana-chan, Haru-chan, Takeshi-kun, Tsuyoshi-san, and Touka-chan. Is there anyone else who we could invite?” Nana tapped her chin with the tickets as she thought.

“Eh, Himeko-sensei and let her bring whomever?” Tsuna shrugged.

“No Hibari or the Sasagawas?” Reborn ask *not* pouting.

“Kyoko-chan and Ryohei-shidōin are on a family vacation and Hibari doesn't leave town if he can help it,” Tsuna shrugged with a smirk.

Reborn repressed a scream.

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Michiko Explores
Yeah, no actual Michiko Explores, like I said, pulling teeth. But Mummy! Michiko is fun!
Mafia Land Reunions

Chapter Notes

Sorry for missing all of December. I ended up being pretty busy between getting ready for Christmas, getting my Grandmother ready to move, moving my Grandmother, my other Grandmother's birthday, and the Twelve Days of Fic - which were just easier for me to write as I wasn't holding myself to as high standard as with this.

Thanks so much for all of your kudos, reviews, bookmarks, random asks over on Tumbler, all of it. I love hearing how much all of you like this. I'm already planning an omake and I am feeling reinvigorated for this story, so hopefully things will pick up and I won't have to take sudden pauses as I try to catch up with where I'm supposed to be in writing this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 30: Mafia Land Reunions

When they land, it’s to the view of a huge theme park that nearly covers an entire island. Their eyes widen as they take it all in. It’s simply not something that they had ever experienced before and they each were relishing the experience.

“Tsuna,” Reborn spoke up as they started to move forward, “You need to check us in. Or else we might be kicked off.”

Tsuna looked down at the hitman with an arched look.

“And you can’t, why?”

“Hm, I’m just the tutor. You’re the Boss.”

“Technically, Mama is the Boss,” Tsuna retorted.

Reborn frowned at him and Tsuna rolled his eyes.

“Fine, I’ll play along this time. It ought to be interesting anyway,” Tsuna capitulated, gesturing for Reborn to lead the way, “Takeshi, Hayato, if I don’t return in an hour, please track down Reborn and ask him where I am.”

The two smirked at Reborn as they nodded. Reborn glowered at them. Honestly, these kids, no respect, he thought to himself.

Tsuna followed him to the check in station. Without hesitation, the former Nidaime strode into the building.

A few minutes later he was stepping into a back room to prove that he was part of the mafia via bribing a so-called government official.

Tsuna let the cold of Tobirama wash over him, more amused than anything else as he looked over the man. He doubted that the man truly was a government official, but still. There were better
ways to keep someone from talking than bribes. After all, one could get greedy, and then where would you be?

Tobirama evenly gazed at the man, assessing what secrets the man didn’t want getting out.

Tobirama swiped a hand along his belt, unsealing his cat's paw glove. He channelled his Flames through it as he strolled forward.

+++++++

A few minutes later Tobirama was on a train, staring at Reborn, arms crossed and glove resealed.

“What,” the hitman finally growled, “was that?”

Tobirama very nearly rolled his eyes.

“Just bribing someone is a quick way to not have a secure connection within the government. Having an alternative to the bribe gives the person a reason to keep accepting it and not rock the boat as it were.”

Reborn groaned.

Tobirama gave into the urge and rolled his eyes.

Soon they were exiting the train into a forest. There was another person there, one like Reborn.

Tobirama raised an eyebrow at the tiny blond man.

“And this is?”

“Colonello. We’re…. old acquaintances,” Reborn hedged.

Tobirama looked at the two of them amused as they snipped at one another.

“Reborn, why are you here?” Colonello finally asked.

“I’m just here as an observer. Tsuna is my student,” Reborn said, keeping his voice nonchalant before turning to Tobirama, “On this island people are given one last chance if they fail by being trained by Colonello, former member of the Italian naval sub attack force Comsubin.”

Tobirama hummed his understanding before turning his gaze to Colonello.

“And what will you be having me do?” he asked.

“I see, you’re the Vongola Decimo. With Reborn as your tutor, no wonder you failed the test.”

Tobirama smirked even as Reborn glared at him.

“But don’t worry, I’ll train you good and hard to pass the re-examination.”

Tobirama frowned. How long was this posturing going to take?

“See that whirlpool over there?” Colonello turned away and pointed over the cliff.

Oh this is too good, Tobirama thought, repressing a smirk even as he tensed.

“Dive in it, kora.”
Tobirama exploded forward and dived over the edge, ignoring the yelp from the two behind him.

And then he was in the water and he released his chakra, manipulating the water with it, allowing him to travel through the water faster.

He left the two and headed towards where he could Sense the others. Let them catch up.

He exited the water to startled looks from the various beach goers as he strolled over to where the others were.

“Ah, Tsuna-kumichou! You made it!” Haru grinned at him.

“Un. Can I borrow your phone? I need to make sure that Takeshi and Hayato know that I’m here.”

She nodded and handed over her phone. A short phone call and the two other members of the group joined them.

They stayed on the beach, swimming and playing in the sand, occasionally getting food. I-Pin and Lambo worked on a sand castle with Nana’s help. Every so often Tsuna would check to see if Reborn and Colonello were getting close.

And then someone familiar entered his range, moving steadily closer. Tsuna frowned, looking out over the water. He still hadn’t fully placed the chakra, even though he knew he knew the person. They obviously had known who he was given the flare in that cafe in Italy, but beyond that….

That was when a cannonball landed on the beach.

The other mafioso screamed, and an alarm began to blare, instructions being broadcasted for everyone to follow.

“Tsuna?” Takeshi asked when the former Nidaime did not move in the direction of the castle.

“Someone is coming. The one from the cafe. They know us. I want to know who they are,” Tsuna told him.

Takeshi considered this.

“Alright, but can we at least get some cover from those cannonballs?”

Tsuna blinked at him, “Ah, right.”

They waited out the barrage, and stepped out as leather covered underlings landed on the island.

One of the men saw them and began to move forward.

Haru narrowed her eyes, and let her old life wash over her as she knocked the man down, kicking him away from them. She followed his body, reaching for her wires. She cursed as Lambo stumbled out after her with one of his many grenades.

“Lambo-sama will help!” he declared, before meeping at the amount of men, and pressing into her legs.

“Lambo-chan,” Koharu sighed.

Behind her, she could feel the others come out to fight as well.
Tobirama paused after tossing a man over his head. Lambo had just-
The bushy-haired child threw himself forward with a wail of “Chichi!”
The child-sized man in leather oozed surprise even as he caught Kakashi.
Koharu stumbled forward, her eyes wide.
“Sakumo?” she whispered.

Behind him, Tobirama could Sense Reborn and Colonello as they landed on the beach as well.

“Takeshi! Hayato!” he barked, striding forward himself.

As one, the two genjutsu masters did a heel-turn and trapped the two men in an illusion, knocking them out.

“They won’t remember that. Just that these guys were driven off the island,” Takeshi reported.

The leather clad men shifted at that.

“I think,” Tobirama said softly, “that we need to have a conversation. A battle would be counterproductive at this point.”

Tobirama nodded, telling his men to go back home. He had business here.

Koharu scooped him and Kakashi up.

“Not here, in our rooms on the boat. We’ll leave Colonello - the blond one,” Tobirama said, examining the stranger.

“I’ve got Reborn,” Touka said, lifting up the hitman.

“I-Pin, do you want me to carry you?” Tomoe asked the young girl. When she nodded, the former Senju Matriarch picked her up.

They stayed silent as they moved through the island.

Finally, they were on the boat.

“Please, introduce yourself,” Tobirama demanded.

The man removed his helmet to show purple hair and piercings.

“I was once Hatake Sakumo, but in this life I have a few different names given- well. The most well know would be Skull the Immortal Stuntman.”

Izuna frowned at that, “Immortal Stuntman?”

Sakumo gave a bark of laughter, “I can’t die. Pretty funny fate for someone who was so cowardly as to take their own life after causing a war.”

Koharu scowled at that, but before she could respond Kakashi smacked him.

“No! Everyone- everyone else was wrong! I was wrong,” he cuddled up to his once-father, “My best friend taught me that. My nindo after his,” his breath hitched, “his presumed death was ‘those who break the rules are trash, but those who abandon their teammates are worse than trash’. You
weren’t trash. You, you—"

He began to sob and Koharu started to rock the two of them, shushing her student’s child as she did so.

“I do not know the full story what you did and how it affected others,” Tobirama told Sakumo, “But there are those who most likely will back in Namimori.”

Sakumo looked startled at that.

“Un,” Hiruzen said, also starring at Sakumo, “I bet if Himeko-sensei had been able to come, she would have had something to say. Well, punch. Same with your dad, Takeshi-kun.”

Sakumo blinked at them.

“It’s probably best if you contact your people and let them know that you are taking a vacation,” Nana said, releasing the craftiness of Tomoe.

Sakumo nodded at her.

Michiko Explores:

The Top Fighter?

Mukuro sat cross-legged on the floor, staring down at his opponent. Ken and Chikusa bookended him, nervously glancing between the two.

Michiko starred up at this new person that was staying in their Home while Mama and her Tsu-kun were gone. Apollo yawned as he curled around her. Neither furred being knew what the three were doing.

“Mukuro-sama, are you sure this is a good idea?” Chikusa asked.

“Tch, why wouldn’t it be?” Mukuro asked, narrowing his eyes at the cat.

“I think what Kakapi means is that Sawada might not be happy if we upset his cat,” Ken eyed the ferret, wondering what had drawn that man to it. It probably was up there like the cat.

“Oh which is why we aren’t fighting her, ” Mukuro responded, “But I still want to know how she’s the number one fighter under 16.”

Michiko yawned, growing annoyed. At this rate she was going to have to collect those dogs and go hunt a badger to deal with it. She glanced at the ferret curled around her. Maybe she would take him. His Person and her Tsu-kun seemed to be close….

Mukuro shrieked and stumbled back when Michiko swiped at his face as he leaned in.

She growled and got up, dislodging Apollo, and began to stalk out of the house. She was going to hunt.

Chapter End Notes
And now you know who dear old Brynach Murdock~

And Lambo remembers being Kakashi! Isn't it wonderful? (／ΨωΨ)/*:・゚✧
Chapter Notes

Thank you all for all the reviews, kudos, and bookmarks! They always make my day!

Fair warning for this upcoming week, I've been a little sick, so I might not be a verbose as usual when answering reviews (which is also true for this last update....). I also will say that Skull kept changing his mind as to what his Tragic Backstory was so.... (this is actually lighter than an earlier version, let me tell you).

The title is a quote from David Attenborough

Chapter 31: *Crying Wolf is a real danger*

“Do you really think that Reborn is going to fall for the same trick twice?” Haru asked as Takeshi, Touka, and the Kokuyo gang slipped into Takesushi.

“Frankly,” Skull said as Tsuyoshi poured him a cup of sake, “Reborn isn’t nearly as observant or smart as he likes to think. We’ve known each other for decades and he still thinks of me as a fool and nigh incompetent civilian.”

“So that’s a yes,” Himeko said said dryly.

“Speaking of decades,” Yusuke said, “What happened to you? None of us knew that you were reincarnated and both Tsuyoshi and I have had extended contact with the Italian Underground, though mine has been more of a distant contact via the Triads.”

“Right, so, I’m several decades older than Reborn to start with. I’m pretty sure I once saw him as a kid…” Skull trailed off, contemplating his memories.

“When did you regain your memories?” Tsuna asked, petting Michiko in his lap.

“When did I regain my memories…..

I was twenty and driving back from a race. Da had died during the War and café races were an easy way for me to bring in a bit of extra cash outside of my low paying job. But I hadn’t realized that I had embarrassed some kid with a rich daddy and a cruel streak a few weeks previous. The bastard had asked around, with some lie or other and had gotten my home address.

I had opened the door just in time to be thrown back by an explosion. Mum and my little sister were inside, probably having a late supper and I could only stare as our home went up in flames. Well, no. I had, at the time, assumed that I had blacked out from being thrown back, but now I’m fairly sure that I actually died.

When I woke up, I had a deep cut that almost hit my left eye,” he gestured towards the purple teardrop tattoo, “A puncture wound on my cheek, and a third degree burn on the opposite. The only wounds that never healed enough to disappear. And memories of an entire other life.

I, I had thought that I was in hell. I had committed suicide after causing a war, and now I had to
live through one War, and my family died because of me. So I ran. I ran from my home and spent the night on a friend’s couch. Said friend was the one that told me that the little bastard had been asking about me - of course, my friend thought that the bastard would be able to help me. Except I remembered being a shinobi and I get suspicious of all of the questions he’s been asking.

So I tracked him down, got creative to get the truth and well. By doing so I really couldn’t stay. Da’s own mother was a war bride from Italy that Grandda brought home, so I thought I’d go and see if I couldn’t find some family there.

To get there, I joined up with a circus that was leaving for the Mainland. When I got to Italy though….

Well, I found that my grandmother’s family was part of the Mafia and had been a lower end one at that. They were struggling so hard to just make ends meet; had been for generations. Just a little more than a civilian family save for the fact that they had Flames and knew the true history of the Mafia.

I stayed there for few years before leaving. I couldn’t quite connect to them, so I left once more to travel. I went between different circus troops, passing time, though I made many connections and took small jobs under a variety of assumed names. Brynach Murdock was just the latest in a long line. I would send some of that money back to my family in Italy. It wasn’t often and it wasn’t a lot, but they had helped me when they had opened their home to me when they hadn’t needed to.

Of course, I very quickly realized that I could not die. A bit ironic really.

Then about twenty years later, in ‘75, I received a letter to a meeting of “The Strongest Seven”. I admit I was intrigued, so I went, scoping it out beforehand just to get an idea of what it was. None of those that showed up, even the extra one, noticed I was there. Though Fon did come close.

We worked together for a year under the orders of a man we called Checker Face. At the end of that year, he did…. something. The others called it a Curse, and I don’t really have a different name for it. But after that we slowly drifted apart. It probably would have happened regardless, we were an explosive combination of personalities.

After that I “let” myself be recruited by my family and began to find other civilians who were forced to join the mafia because they learned of Flames and other outcasts and recruited them for the Carcasa. My cousin stays in charge simply because I have so much other things to take care of, especially as the other Arcobaleno seem to think that I am their lackey to call upon at any time.”

They all looked at him as he finished, unsure of where to take the conversation from there.

“What did you mean,” Lambo asked quietly, “by the fact that you ‘very quickly realized that you could not die’?”

Skull looked startled at that, looking at his former son in no little surprise.

Haru sucked in a breath, “Yes. What did you mean?”

Skull was silent for a moment.

“I did not want to be alive. I didn’t repeat what I had done before, but…. but stunt riding is very dangerous now, and the bikes available then weren’t exactly safer, believe it or not.”

Lambo threw himself at Skull with a wail. Skull took the tiny fists ineffectually beating him in bemusement.
“D-don’t d-do t-that!” he wailed, his fists slowing until he was just clinging to Skull.

“Even if I did, it wouldn’t stick.”

Haru smacked Skull over the back of his head.

“Just because it won’t stick doesn’t mean that those of us who care for you want to ever have to deal with it again!” she snapped, “You were my last remaining student! I loved you like a son and you killing yourself broke me! I couldn’t even look at your son until it was years too late! Do you even know what it did to him?!”

Skull stared at her for a long moment before he bowed his head, still wrapped up in Lambo’s embrace.

“I am sorry you had to deal with that sensei. It was never my intention.”

Hibari sighed from his place leaning against the wall.

“You know, someone recently said that ‘we are not just who we were but we are also who we are’. We have a second chance, we don’t have to be chained by the standards of that society. We can be who we wish we had been,” he pushed off the wall and made his way to the door before pausing, “But, if you break the Rules while you are in Namimori, Kamikorosu.”

Tsuna blinked after the older boy. Just what was that?

Takeshi snorted, “You heard him. Stick around, find your footing and rebuild your relationship with both your sensei and your kid.”

Skull shifted, uncomfortable but nodded.

“Well with that out of the way,” Touka said, stretching her arms over her head, “Given your unique position of multiple identities within the mafia, what is the current status of the Vongola?”

“And who is the current ‘known’ heir?” Kyoko added, swinging her legs as she sat on a table.

“Well, a few years back each of the current Don's kids were killed under very suspicious circumstances with the exception of the youngest. Usually that would mean that it's an open secret that it was him behind it, especially given that he was in charge of a group of assassins,” Skull’s eyes met Tsuna’s and the former Hokage quirked an eyebrow, understanding what Skull was hinting at, “but the kid spent his first few years on the streets with a mother who, ah, ‘had many gentlemen callers’ and was very obvious about how much he cared for them. Shortly after the last legitimate kid died, there was a huge ruckus at the Vongola mansion and no one’s seen him since. His crew has been seen around Italy, but not outside of it, which is surprising. Some say that the kid attempted a coup and was killed, but given his pet assassins are not going after the rest of the Vongola, I doubt it.”

“Then what do you think happened?” Ryohei asked, his brows furrowed.

“Maybe there was a coup, or maybe he did something else to piss off his old man, but I think he's being held somewhere, if only to keep the rest of the Varia in line.”

“Question,” Hana raised a finger, “Would attempting a coup knock him out of the succession?”

“Not really,” Touka answered instead, “In general bastards aren't looked upon as a viable heir, but if there's no other option and they've been raised in the Famiglia, then maybe. It's what my father
was planning on with me.”

“So they’re banking on me even though I’m a ‘civilian’ because I’m legitimate,” Tsuna summed up.

“Most likely. It would give us more resources, plus a platform to deal with our enemies,” Nana said.

With Reborn:

"No no no no no !" Reborn chanted as the Tsuna, Hana, Haru, Takeshi, and Kyoko he had followed to Kokuyo Land faded like a mirage.

How?! How did they keep doing this?! He kept away from them, following from a distance! He knew of only one Mist who could make Illusions from that distance, and he was pretty damn sure that Viper was in Italy!

Bianchi patted his back.

Michiko Explores:

The Stranger:

Michiko gave a yawn as she slipped through the crowd of humans, making her way towards the grassy area she usually hunted at. The stupid latest Outsider couldn’t stop being annoying and staring at her.

Behind her she could hear the squeak as Apollo tried to keep up with her. The ferret just wasn’t used to these crowds…

Someone stepped in front of her.

She looked up, and up, and up. The person - man stared back at her.

Apollo caught up with her and looked at the man, leary of what he might do.

The man hummed and bent down, opening up his bag.

“I do believe you will get out of this crowd faster with my help,” he said, his voice soft.

Michiko narrowed her eyes. She didn’t trust him, but on the other paw it would be faster. And on a third paw, it wasn’t like she couldn’t defend herself, plus if needed Byakko-nii might be able to help.

She sniffed and stepped into the bag, making sure to first snag it with a claw.
Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who left kudos, comments, and bookmarks!

I know that both on the Discord and on my tumbr I said that this might be late as I'm gearing up to find a new job, but hey! I got it done! This is a bit early as my grandma is in the hospital (hopefully it's not serious, it hasn't been treated like it is as of yet), so I wasn't sure when I'd be home or what the plan was, so, since this was ready, I figured I'd post on my lunch break.

As I'm on my phone and don't have my go to for html for footnotes, a certain conversation is either taken or slightly tweaked from Episode 34.

Chapter 32: Shark in Namimori

Tsuna woke to a feeling of dread. Something had happened. He wasn’t sure what, but something had happened.

He slipped down the stairs and found the rest of the occupants, sans Nana, crowded around the door. He joined them and shot an inquisitive look at Bianchi. The pink haired woman shook her head.

“We don’t know what’s going on. When I came down, Nana-san was just sitting at the table, staring at that postcard.”

Tsuna raised an eyebrow and slipped past them.

“Mama? What is it?” he asked softly, sitting down across from her.

She glanced at him and then back down to the postcard. She gave a sigh and pushed it, picture of a penguin side up, across to him.

She tossed back a cup of tea and poured herself another cup, adding whiskey to it.

Tsuna frowned and flipped the postcard over. His eyes widened as he read what was written.

“Tsuna?” Reborn asked, a slight frown on his face.

“My father is returning.”

“Ehhh?”

Some Time Later:

Tsuna slipped from the house with a sigh.

“Yo, Tsuna.”
He glanced up, the edges of his lips twitching up.

“Takeshi, what are you doing here?”

“I thought we could spend the day together?” Takeshi grinned as he spoke, then he noticed Tsuna’s demeanor and frowned, “Wait, what’s wrong?”

“Mama got a postcard this morning. My father is returning. I’m…not entirely sure how to handle it.”

“I thought your father was dead?” Takeshi said with a frown.

Tsuna blinked at him, and chuckled.

“No, my father is very much alive. He just let his boss slap a Seal on me and left when I was a kid. I admire that he wants to keep us safe and keep us from worrying about him, but I disagree that the correct plan for such is to keep the truth from us until he has no choice but to share, nor that he has stayed away for so long. Given his position, I’m also worried at the fact that he suddenly has decided to come home.”

Takeshi blinked at him.

“Yeah, we’re having a hang day. Let’s get the others!”

Tsuna snorted at him, but smiled.

“I’m pretty sure Hayato is going on some sort of trip with his ducklings today and Ryohe was going with them, but the girls should be free.”

Soon Takeshi, Tsuna, Haru, Hana, and Kyoko were moving through the market, making a day of it. Reborn joined them with I-Pin grumbling something about Lambo disappearing. Haru’s mouth quirked at that, thinking about how her student was being more or less held captive by his once-son.

“Tsu-kun, bet you can’t beat me at Tekken!” Hana grinned at him.

Tsuna smirked at her.

“You’re on.”

And they were off, slipping through the crowd, rushing for the arcade and the games there. The others laughed and hurried after them.

After an intense match on a dance machine, Tsuna and Takeshi slipped out to sit down and have a snack.

“How is it,” Tsuna asked amused, “that even when I am the same age, that lot tires me out?”

Takeshi laughed at him. He was interrupted by an explosion on top of a nearby building.

The two former ninja turned, frowns on their faces and hands at the Storage Seals that held their weapons. More explosions joined the first and the civilians in the area scattered.

A blond boy crashed into their table as he fell from the roof, a blue flame flickering on his forehead.
“Oww,” the boy hissed, before his eyes fell on Tsuna, “It is thou!”

Tsuna raised his eyebrows at the boy, even as the rest of their group ran to join them.

Reborn saw the boy and murmured, “Why are you here?”

But before anyone could acknowledge that, a voice called out “VOI!”

They turned back to the roof. Standing up there was a silver haired man, dressed all in leathers and with a sword arm.

Takeshi and Tsuna exchanged looks. Squalo was in Japan, and that couldn’t be good.

“Well, pretty noisy in the outfield,” Squalo jeered, “I’m gonna kill the scum standing in my way.”

“Don’t tell me this is another monologuing asshole,” Tsuna huffed.

“Feels like a storm’s coming,” Reborn muttered.

The former ninja rolled their eyes at him.

“Shut up!” Squalo yelled, swinging his sword down, creating an explosion of air.

Takeshi gritted his teeth. This was stupid and he was very thankful that his best friend was a Seal Master.

Squalo continued to swing his sword, creating a dust storm. Under the cover of the cloud, Hana, Haru, and Kyoko slipped to the sides of the courtyard, as Reborn lead I-Pin back as well. Tsuna and Takeshi stayed by the strange boy, though both unSealed their weapons, still in their dormant form.

“This one humbly apologizes,” the boy stuttered out, “Sawada-dono. This one was followed”

Tsuna turned to him and raised an eyebrow. Just who was this kid?

“Who are you?” Tsuna asked, more because he wanted to see if the kid would reply than anything else.

“We have only just met, and yet this one has placed thee in great peril,” the kid said, truly looking contrite.

Tsuna raised his eyebrows, giving the kid an unimpressed look. Then the kid grabbed at his wrist.

“Ah, no. No touchy,” Tsuna narrowed his eyes at the kid, “You want me to go with you, sure. I’m a bit intrigued to be honest, but you don’t get to manhandle me.”

“Ah, y-yes, of course, Sawada-dono. Please, come with this one,” the kid finished his sentence with a small bow.

Tsuna gestured him to lead the way. The kid hurried out of the cloud and away from Squalo.

“We must seek out a place of safety,” the kid said over his shoulder, “There is a matter of great import that this one must impart to thee!”

Tsuna quirked an eyebrow.
A burst of wind from a sword swipe rushed in front of them, causing an explosion, as Squalo landed behind them.

“Hide-and-seek time is over,” Squalo leered, partially bent down.

Squalo noticed Tsuna and sneered, “Who is this guy?”

The kid said nothing, but started to inch in front of Tsuna.

“I am not involved in whatever this is,” Tsuna said, drawing both their attention, “But if you are available at a later date, there are a few of my, hm, more traditional acquaintances whom would enjoy speaking to a European sword user.”

The kid looked betrayed, which Tsuna thought was hilarious, while Squalo looked vaguely shell shocked.

“Yo, Superbi,” a voice called out from the side.

They all turned.

Dino smirked at Squalo, his Guardians behind him.

Squalo frowned at him.

Dino caught sight of Tsuna and beamed at him.

“Otouto! You look wonderful! Is the beautiful Bianchi around?”

Tsuna sighed.

“Aniji. Please be serious.”

Squalo frowned, glancing between them.

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Michiko Explores

Another

Michiko jumped up to the shoulder of the New Person, sinking her claws in when he shrieked and flailed.

A sigh came from next to them.

“Honestly, don't flail about, just adjust to take her weight. Michiko-chan is willing enough to be carried,” the Touka-Hayato said, lifting Michiko off of the Silly One.

Michiko resisted for a moment, the Silly One needed to learn his place after all, but let the Touka-Hayato cuddle her.
She wasn't sure where this lot was going, but today was most likely going to be a calm day, and she needed to get away from the interloper.

She ignored much of what was said. It wasn't about her or her Tsu-kun beyond a mention and therefore wasn't worth her time.

The Touka-Hayato did one of those weird human things and made himself look older and more like Mama to talk with some strangers. Michiko was more interested in the thin girl-child peeking around a door.

Michiko jumped down and sauntered out of the room to see the girl-child. She purred with satisfaction. She was right, the girl-child looked like the Silly One.

The girl-child slowly reached out and started to pet her. The Smart One obviously was better than the older Silly One. Perhaps they were here to exchange them?

“Ah, there you both are. Michiko-chan, we're leaving,” the Touka-Hayato said from behind, “Nagi was it? You'll be coming with us. Your mother just signed over custody to my employer.”

The Smart One looked unsure and scared, until the Silly One smiled and winked at her. Well, he was good for something.
Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who left a comment, kudos, and bookmarks, you all make my day. Work recently blocked AO3 so it'll take me a bit to respond by virtue of having to wait until I get home, but seeing comments is always wonderful <3

I, uh, forgot to name this chapter and very nearly just used that as the title, so whoops?

Also, I'm posting this from my phone so I'll be coming back later to add in the Footnotes

Chapter 33:

Dino sauntered closer to the group, cooing at Tsuna “Come oooonnn, otouto, answer the question~”

“She’s with Mama,” Tsuna deadpanned.

Dino pouted and then brightened as he leaned on Tsuna’s head.

“Hi~ Squalo~” he said with a wink and wagging his fingers, “You look absolutely lovely.”

Squalo frowned at him, his eyes narrowing, “Are you mocking me?”

“No, no, no,” Dino shook his head before giving Squalo a half-lidded look, “You’re silver hair is just that, silver like a precious metal, no, it is like steel, and the length is…”

Dino sighed, ignoring Tsuna’s disturbed look.

“Excuse me?” Squalo demanded, wide-eyed.

“I can just imagine how striking it would look against dark sheets? Perhaps forest green?”

Squalo reared back at that, turning red.

Tsuna rolled his eyes and elbowed Dino’s stomach, dislodging him.

Dino squawked and stumbled back.

Squalo took advantage of the kid’s distraction and darted forward, grabbing at the box he held.

Dino pouted as Squalo darted away.

“Aww, leaving so soon sweet-shark? We haven’t even really talked yet.”

“VOI! I won’t fall for such underhanded tactics!” the leather clad man yelled as he jumped up to the nearest roof.

“But I want to take you to eat out! And then eat you out!” Dino called after him.
Romario winced at that, even as Gioele and Tammaro slapped hands over their mouths in shocked amusement. Brutus just nodded sagely.

“Anija, you are terrible,” Tsuna said, and then smirked, “Just imagine how Bianchi will feel when she finds out that you’ve been flirting with someone else.”

“VOOOOOOOOOOOO!” Squalo yelled before running over the roof and away from them.

“You’re so cruel, otouto!” Dino wailed, clinging to Tsuna.

Tsuna rolled his eyes.

Later, at the Sawada House:

Tsuna entered the house and paused. There was an extra set of shoes in the doorway.

He held back a sigh and hurried towards the kitchen. He truly did not want to deal with this after learning about the Vongola Rings at the hospital.

“Oh! Tuna-fish!” Iemitsu cheered from the table, glancing towards the food, “Come join your Papa for this meal!”

“Of course. It has… been a while,” Tsuna said, sitting down next to Iemitsu.

Nana swanned into the room and grabbed the food off the table.

“Ara, how silly of me,” she gave a small laugh, “I wasn’t done with this yet~”

Iemitsu starred after her adoringly, missing the way Tsuna raised one eyebrow.

Tsuna held back a sigh, keeping Nana from killing Iemitsu was going to be difficult.

“Mama, weren’t you going to go out for drinks with Tsuyoshi-san and Himeko-san tonight?” he asked, staring his mother down. Nana blinked at him for a moment before smiling and nodding.

“Do you mind, anata?” she asked, turning towards Iemitsu.

“Aha! No, no, me coming was last minute. Of course you have plans!” he laughed, somewhat forcibly.

Nana kissed his cheek and slipped out of the house.

Tsuna turned back to Iemitsu.

“If you do not mind me asking,” he said slowly, “why now? You have been content to stay away these past few years.”

Iemitsu blinked at him, surprised.

“Papa just wanted to see you and Mama!” he said, nervously.

Tsuna eyed him and held back a sigh. He should have gone with Takeshi.

With Takeshi:

Takeshi blinked at the girl-child and then eyed Hayato.
"You just took her from her parents?"

Hayato sniffed at him, "They could barely be called that."

Takeshi decided to let that go for now.

"And why are you bringing her to me?"

Hayato sighed, "The boys are barely able to keep the apartment in an adequate state as it is. I don't want her to be there and accidently be shoehorned into taking care of them. Takesushi is fairly close, which is preferable given her and Mukuro's connection."

Takeshi turned back to the girl-child and his eyebrows went up. She was sitting on the ground, dangling a piece of string for Michiko to play with. Except, except the string didn't exist.

"I'll take her in," he told Hayato, "but I'm also going to teach her. You can teach the boys, but she's my student."

Hayato narrowed his eyes, "Only if she agrees."

"Of course."

The girl-child looked up at them, eyes wide.

Takeshi gave his usual smile to her before letting it melt into a sincere one. Her mouth slightly fell open. Takeshi felt giddy at the idea of taking a student. No wonder Tsuna was so fond of his.

The next day:

Tsuna sighed as Reborn slipped closer holding one of the Vongola Rings.

"If we are going to do this," he murmured, eying the man who was nominally his tutor, "then I will decide who gets each of those. Not you or Iemitsu."

Reborn shrugged.

"I figured as much. I also figured that you would want to surprise everyone with it."

"You're learning."

In honor of Valentine's Day, no Michiko Explores, but rather a future date:

Touka cackled as she took pot shots at the other group before diving behind a short wall for cover.

Takeshi popped up on the other side of the wall taking his own shots.

"What'd I tell you?" he grinned at his datemate, "This is way more fun than just going to dinner or on a picnic!"

"Move it pretty boy!" she ordered with a smile, "We need to change cover. We've got six more to take out!"

He grinned and complied with her order.

Touka crawled after him, only a vague worry for the chocolate still sitting in her bag outside of the paintball range. Hopefully the locker wouldn't get too hot...
Team Selections

Chapter Notes

Sorry for missing the last update - I was dealing with a Thing. It's taken care of now.

I do want to let you know that there may be a week where I don't update suddenly - my grandma told us that she was going off of cemo, so..... we don't exactly have a date, but we aren't exactly expecting it to be far off.

Thank you so much for all the kudos, comments, and bookmarks - they make my day, I truly can't say it enough.

Chapter 34: Team Selections

The first thing Tsuna did was send out a mass text to the entire group asking them to meet at Takesushi in the morning before turning to Reborn.

“Where are the rest of the Rings?”

Reborn let out an aggrieved sigh.

“With your father; he’s heading out to his choices for you now.”

“Hm, good. That will confuse any intelligence that might have slipped out. Are you able to keep that man busy tomorrow?”

Reborn squinted at him.

“Why should I? He expects that I will train you-”

“So tell him that I agreed to do some exercises while you get as much information about the current state of things as possible from him. Make up some excuse about how you left me to fend for myself on a cliff or something else equally ridiculous. Isn’t that what you do?”

Reborn scowled.

“And what if I want to know your plan?” he asked.

Tsuna raised an eyebrow, “Let me be clear: if you do not help then I will go behind your back to do as I want. You already know that I can slip away from you easily enough; it would not be a hardship for me. If you aid us, then I am willing to give you hints at least.”

Reborn’s scowl deepened.

“Or are you willing to try to follow when every other time you’ve tried you have failed?”

“Fine,” the hitman ground out.

Tsuna smirked at him.
Reborn let out a frustrated growl and threw a second ring at Tsuna.

“He has a vague idea for your Mist, but no one solid!”

Later, at Takesushi:

Tsuna looked around at the assembled group.

“Who has what Ring?” he asked.

Takeshi, Touka, Hibari, Ryohei, and Lambo held up the Rings.

Tsuna nodded, leaning back.

“Tsuyoshi-san, are you aware of any way to tell who has what Flame?” he asked.

Tsuyoshi raised one eyebrow at him.

“They are mostly a manifestation of one’s aura, so meditation can make them manifest and then the color can be used to name which type they are. Though one can also look at the effects of the Flames to name them.”

Tsuna smirked.

“Then we need to figure out who has what Flame. Obviously some have already been figured out, namely those who were given Rings. I assume that you three know what Flames you have?” he looked to the Kokuyo Gang.

The three nodded.

“Nagi-chan has Mist Flames as well,” Mukuro added, squeezing Nagi’s hand in his as he spoke.

Tsuna nodded, a plan already forming in his mind.

“Alright, let’s figure out who has what Flame. I think I know who I want to have what Ring. I also want to make sure that no one but us knows who has them until we absolutely have to reveal it.”

“Subterfuge. I like it,” Himeko smirked.

Elsewhere, in a park:

Reborn resisted the urge to rub his temples for an eighth time and then gave in.

“Iemitsu, you really don’t want to stay at your house if your kid isn’t there, trust me ,” he sighed.

A cup of espresso was placed next to his elbow along with a ciambella. He glanced up at Bianchi with a tight smile of thanks. He damn well hoped that Tsuna’s plan was worth it. It was like Iemitsu had gotten dumber with age.

“But, why?” Iemitsu whined.

Reborn felt an eye twitch.

“Ahh, do you not understand the intricacies of love?” Bianchi asked, sitting down close enough to cuddle Reborn, “No wonder Nana-san is feeling slighted.”

That made Iemitsu sit up, a gobsmacked look on his face.
“What?” he asked, his voice hoarse.

Reborn leaned slightly back to watch his protege speak to the CEDEF Head.

“Not that he ever would, but I would be fairly annoyed if my beloved Reborn took off and didn’t say anything to me for years,” she said, blinking guilelessly at Iemitsu, “Why, I don’t know how I would react!”

Iemitsu’s eyes darted to the second ciambella as it rotted from Bianchi’s touch, and swallowed.

“But I think it would take some time before I would be willing to even try to hear the reason behind it. Especially if his return to me only came after he sent another to be a tutor to our child…”

Iemitsu’s eyes widened.

“Reborn!” he wailed, “What do I do?!”

Reborn felt like slamming his head down.

“Give her space until she actually asks you to be around?” he suggested, “Don’t antagonize her, especially through anything with Tsunayoshi.”

“I can do the first, but the second won’t work,” Iemitsu sighed, “If she gets any idea about what’s going down soon, she’ll probably kill me.”

She’s going to kill you now you idiot, Reborn thought disgustedly. He still couldn’t believe that Iemitsu was so blind to the fact that Nana wanted him dead. Then again, right up until it was actually stated, he had no idea that Nana was an Oyabun himself. The woman was terrifying.

Iemitsu stood.

“Well, I can’t do anything about that except stay away until my little Tuna is home, so let’s go check on his Guardians!”

Reborn’s eyes widened. He could not let Iemitsu go looking for the kids! Then Reborn wouldn’t get hints!

“Ah, Reborn,” a voice came from behind them.

Reborn turned and saw Shamal with Gokudera a little farther back, hands on (his? her? he hadn’t checked this morning, too busy trying to distract Iemitsu from Tsuna’s actions) their head, looking bored.

“Shamal, where are you two off to?” Bianchi asked, saving Reborn from having to admit he didn’t know.

“Ah, Toto begged some extra lessons off me,” Shamal waved a hand dismissively.

“You mean Himeko-sensei threatened you again,” Gokudera smirked even as Shamal pouted.

Reborn narrowed his eyes. Did this mean that he could stop distracting Iemitsu now?

“Ah, alright,” Iemitsu nodded at them, “if you’ll excuse me, I have a few things I need to look into.”
Iemitsu walked off, going to spy on his chosen Guardians.

“Oh, and Reborn?” Gokudera called, even as the pair started to move on, “Tsuna wanted me to tell you ‘owan to tama’.”

“What does that mean?” Reborn demanded.

But Gokudera just shrugged, back towards the hitman. Reborn groaned.

Iemitsu snuck through the city, tracking down each of his Tuna’s Guardians.

His first stop was Namimori-chuu to see Dino sparing with Hibari.

(He missed Hibari’s quick movements signing *maybe enemy behind, engage?* and Dino’s equally quick movements for *keep play, fox-trick*)

After he felt confident in the fact that Hibari would keep fighting, would be a strong Cloud for his Tuna, he left and made his way to the Yamamoto Dojo. He watched from outside as Tsuyoshi and Takeshi traded blows.

Good, the Yamamoto boy was learning to add spirit to his sword, the one thing it was missing.

He slipped away from the Dojo.

(He missed the two jumping back from one another. Takeshi smirked at his father and rid himself of most of the protective gear, preparing to actually get serious in their training)

Next was Colonnello and Ryohei where they were laying on the ground on the cliffs.

Iemitsu couldn’t wait to see him blossom.

(Ryohei couldn’t help but be amused by the both of them and how they missed his hidden self)

He wondered where Reborn had taken Tsuna, but he trusted his old friend to make sure Tsuna was ready for when the Varia made their move.

He vaguely wondered if Reborn found someone to be the Mist Guardian, but the man was meticulous in his work. No doubt it would be someone appropriate. Everything would work out.

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Michiko Explores

Michiko and Masaru

Michiko twisted around with a “merp?” as some *thing* landed on her.

On her back was a little yellow bird had landed.

She looked at it and tilted her head. Just what *was* it?

“Masaru!” it*- he* chirped.

He pulled a clump of loose fur off of her and fluttered away.

Michiko followed his path with her eyes.

That was….. interesting.
Sorry for the delay, for those who aren't on my tumbr or in the discord, I started a new job, my grandma was in the hospital over the weekend and we spent every night at her house when she was released, and the beginning of last weekend I hyper focused on other things. As a consequence, there's also not going to be a Michiko Explores because I honestly have no idea what to do for it. Instead, I'm going to take a few art prompts over on tumbr as an apology.

Chapter 35: The Best Laid Plans

An explosion sounded as Iemitsu headed into the clearing where Shamal and Gokudera were training.

His eyes narrowed and he hurried up. The bombs were getting closer and closer to Gokudera as Iemitsu arrived. Damn, that's not good, he thought. With a burst of Dying Will Flames, he darted forward, intent on the young silver haired Italian. A hole to pull the child into would work.

His Dying Will Flames intensified as he pulled out his trusty pickaxe. He hit the ground, dislodging dirt behind Gokudera and then reached out. His arm wrapped around the child and -

Iemitsu blinked up at the sky, trying to figure out what had happened. A voice cursed above him and suddenly there was an explosion overhead, followed by a second farther away.

“What is wrong with you?!” a voice demanded of him.

Iemitsu blinked and focused on where the voice was coming from. The Gokudera child. But, what was the issue?

“What kind of dumbass tries to jump into a bomb expert’s training?! You could have died!”

“Toto,” and that was Shamal. Right, Shamal was the mentor of the Smoking Bomb, “He most likely did not recognize that you had things under control. I wouldn't have thought you did until recently either.”

The Smoking Bomb snarled and stalked off. Dazed, Iemitsu accepted Shamal’s offered hand to help him up.

“You want these children to fight, you have to have faith in their teachers,” Shamal warned him quietly.

Iemitsu blinked at him, still trying to shake the after effects of Gokudera’s throw.

His gaze drifted to the side where Gokudera had disappeared and saw Tsuna, Reborn, and Basil with the child. He slightly stiffened, and tried to pull away from Shamal to walk off. Shamal rolled his eyes and tightened his grip.

“Ahaha, Tuna, I was just-”
Tsuna rolled his eyes as he approached the two men.

“That was stupid. Brave but stupid. Shamal-sensei and Touka were practicing, you can come with us. Basil-san and I were going to spar.”

“Uh, spar?” Iemitsu asked, wondering if somehow Tsuna had figured him out.

“Un, there have been…. unsavory types hanging around lately. I do not wish to worry Mama any more than need be.”

Iemitsu blinked, and then nodded, wincing as pain shot through his head at the action. That was a good enough excuse.

Elsewhere:

“This is sort of weird.”

“So you’ve said. I for one welcome the height change.”

“But I had gotten used to my new body!”

“Hiruzen, please shut up.”

“Sorry sensei.”

Izuna spotted a swirl of silver hair from the corner of his eye and leaned back in his chair to glance in that direction.

He smirked at what he saw, nudging Tobirama’s foot.

Tobirama shot the rest of the group a look, fingers twitching in movement, and the conversation turned seamlessly into one about the recent episode of a TV show.

“Yo! Squalo!” he called out, arm in the air.

Squalo stopped, pulling the teen next to him to a halt as well. He pulled the young man over to the table.

“Voi! What the fuck are you doing here?” Squalo demanded as he pulled two chairs over to the table and sat on one backwards.

“Oyabun is here, so we are here,” Touka told him, leaning forward, “but I must know, how do you know this guy?”

Squalo narrowed his eyes at her.

“When we went on our sojourn a few weeks ago,” Tobirama told his cousin, smirking when she frowned at him.

“And where was that?” she asked through gritted teeth.

“Oh,” Izuna grinned, waving a hand in the air, “around.”

Squalo barked out a laugh.

“Pezzente, chi è questo?¹” the teen demanded, his red eyes flashing with an orange glow.
“Non i tuoi nemici Squalo mi ha offerto Izuna e io un posto nella tua organizzazione,” Tobirama told the boy, “We turned him down.”

The boy stared at him, distrust on his face.

“Voi, Shitty Boss, these two are... Quality. Not sure about the rest,” Squalo added.

“If you mean if they’re, like us,” Izuna said dryly, “then the answer is yes. This is my brother, Madara; his underling Kagami; Tobirama’s underlings Homura, Hiruzen, and Koharu; the ever lovely Touka; her underlings Kotetsu, Izumo, and the twins Shinju and Souma.”

“Xanxus di Vongola,” the boy said, wary.

Tobirama gave him a nod, holding back a smirk with a lifetime of practice.

The plan was going wonderfully.

Footnotes

1 Trash, who is this? Pezzente, chi è questo?

2 Not your enemies. Squalo offered Izuna and I a place in your organization. Non i tuoi nemici Squalo mi ha offerto Izuna e io un posto nella tua organizzazione.

3 purely pseudonyms to keep who they are secret. Kotetsu, Izumo, and the twins Shinju and Souma.
Chapter Notes

*pokes head out* uh, sorry? I got swept up into a resurgence of my Hobbit fics and before that I was suddenly busy, and this chapter just didn't want to happen until I cracked the code of it not being with Tsuna and co. But here it is!

Chapter 36: A Rumor in Namimori

Where The River Meant

Kensuke couldn’t help but flinch when he walked past Takesushi. He wasn’t sure how it had formed, but all of that strange group that was centered around that damn Sawada seemed to hate him.

(he deserved it, gods he deserved it. Kyoko Sasagawa-chan deserved to make her own choices. (hedestroyedeverything,hebetrayedShishou’steachings,Sageabove whathadhedone ?))

Still, there were whispers. People saw things, weird things. They said that sometimes there was smoke surrounding the little ones and then two strange teens would take their place. They said that Sawada’s Demon Cat would Hunt for things she should not be able to kill. That recently she had been joined by a Ferret and a Canary.

They said that the group got into fights and that unnatural things happened during those fights.

Rumor didn’t have to tell him that the group now included members of the gang that had been attacking everyone. He had seen them in the park and had frozen, unable to move.

Gokudera had seen him, had glared with a snarl and stepped between him and them, as if he were the threat.

(he had been furious at that, how dare anyone look at him as if he was a bigger threat than, than those monsters

(butwouldn’tShishoucallhimamonster?Wouldn’tKagami?))
Then, Kensuke sees a different group, one that makes his blood run cold in a way he cannot comprehend, talking with a pair of foreigners. He runs home, locks himself in his room and refuses the dreams dancing at the edge of his mind.

\[ \text{Oh, the Truth is but a flame} \]

Iemitsu frowned as he walked behind Basil and Tsuna as they drifted back home.

His son….. his son was nothing like what he imagined.

From the half-listened to calls to Nana, the barely skimmed postcards, and the reports he cherished, he had thought his son different than what he was.

Tsuna was a civilian, of that he had no doubt, but…

But when Nana claimed that school was a chore for their boy, he had assumed that she meant Tsuna struggled.

\( \text{(how could he not when Iemitsu had agreed to Seal his Flames?)} \)

He had thought the lack of any name other than the vague group of “the girls” meant that the only friends he had were pity acquaintances of girls seeing him as a clumsy puppy.

\( \text{(he had seen what Sealing could do. Flames were needed to keep one balanced, but such strong Flames in one so young, he couldn’t risk it, not when he couldn’t be around to protect his son. So he let him be Sealed)} \)

Iemitsu tried to wonder how much of the difference was because of Reborn, but his old friend kept glaring at him. It didn't help that when he went to go ask Yamamoto, the once-hitman gave a derisive bark of laughter and refused to answer his questions.

“Have you asked Nana-san?” Yamamoto had asked, placing a plate of fugu sashi in front of Iemitsu. The head of CEDEF ignored the plate and left. As if Nana would know. He was sure that it was because of Reborn. It had to be because of Reborn.

Iemitsu sent his underlings around town to get information on the children that Reborn had proposed for Tsuna’s Guardians. The Hibari and the Yamamoto were from fighter stock, a good base to mold from. The Gokudera brat was both better and worse being already in the Mafia but then the kid was a bastard from a kept mistress. The male Sasagawa would be good. He was a fighter. But Reborn had also mentioned those girls that hung around Tsuna.

Iemitsu shook his head. They were good friends, he supposed, but they weren't fighters.

The Bovino brat was a good idea if only to make an alliance. But then, who could be his Mist?

\[ \text{When I had him, he was mine...} \]

Xanxus couldn’t help but wonder at Squalo’s new friends. They were... he wasn't sure what they were, but they weren't mafioso, they were different in a way that he wasn’t sure he liked.

He didn't like how Squalo was so charmed by them. His Rain talked with the one about swords with a curl at the edge of his mouth. Or how as soon as his Mist had shown up, the twins and Kagami dragged the small Varia into an intense discussion on illusions; both the chit with the topknot and the male with the hedgehog hair occasionally adding their opinions.
He definitely didn't like how the white-haired one smirked at him, one long leg tossed over the other, leaning on his elbow on the table. This Trash might have been Quality but he wasn't Varia or even properly a Mafioso. He was some Yakuza Trash but he acted as if he were equal to Xanxus.

“From one fashion expert to another, do the feathers in your hair ever get in the way when fighting?” the man drawled.

The hedgehog man looked between them suspiciously, even as Xanxus tensed.

“My own fur collar is a horror to clean, but well worth it,” the man added.

And that was. Well, it was something. Xanxus relaxed a tick, tossing back his head. He ignored the contemplative look the hedgehog man was giving Tobirama.

“They're not a problem with my fighting style,” he said, keeping it vague, “How the fuck did you meet the shark trash?”

One white eyebrow was quirked at him.

“We ran into each other at a café. Izuna and I were on a,” he paused, eyes sliding around them, “working holiday of sorts. Reconnecting and all that. Squalo and Mammon were kind enough to give us some information tourists should know.”

“Voi! Are you talking about how you hypnotized us?” Squalo asked, turning away from his discussion.

Xanxus stiffened, glaring at the trash that dared touch what was his. Tobirama raised one eyebrow at him even as Izuna swung an arm over Squalo’s shoulders.

“If memory serves, and it always does,” Izuna looked far too smug as he said that line for Xanxus's taste, “you and Mammon tracked us down at the club to offer us a place in your organization. Do not tell me you are bitter we said no!”

Wait, what? Were they... teasing? Xanxus stared at the two as they tossed comments over Squalo. Teasing an assassin, huh. Maybe these Yakuza Trash were Quality.

“So this is where you're based from?” he asked, cutting into the conversation.

Tobirama glanced back at him and nodded.

“My little cousin lives here,” Xanxus told him, “only found out about him recently - my uncle ,” he couldn't help but sneer the title (as if Iemitsu could be called that), “doesn't talk about him. So, what's the lay of the land?”

“Depends on what you are asking,” the woman with the topknot - Touka - said, turning into the conversation, eyes observing him half-lidded, “Is he one of ours? Because then we can tell you plenty about him, but not much about what goes on around him. Is he a civilian? Then it becomes a matter of what school. Namimori-chuu and it's affiliates are very strict about following the rules, but are a little wild. Midori is very prim and proper. Kokuyo is home to criminals. Ne, Souma-kun, wasn't there just a group of Kokuyo gaki who skipped out of jail?”

The boy with slicked back brown hair started at being addressed.

“Um, y-yeah,” he didn't look at Xanxus as he spoke.
Xanxus rolled his eyes. That one was definitely not Quality. He'd probably never even been in an actual fight.

He opened his mouth but before he could say anything, Tobirama stood up.

“Well, we have plenty to do today, so we will be off. Should we see each other again while you and yours are in Namimori, I am sure we will be able to speak more.”

The rest stood and followed Tobirama off. The hedgehog man deliberately slowing down to be behind Tobirama before Izuna darted back and smacked his head.

Ew, flirting.

Dios, but these Yakuza were strange. It must be how painfully normal this shitty city was. They had to entertain themselves.

Footnotes:

1Fugu (pufferfish) sashimi cut into translucent strips, all fugu dishes are poisonous but prepared properly it is reduced. Tsuyoshi may not have prepared it properly.

fugu sashi
Chapter Notes

What's this? Am I actually back on schedule?! *throws confetti*

Seriously, this is great, and thank all of you for enduring that whole mess.

Chapter title is from:
“When fishermen cannot go to sea, they repair nets.”
— Nabil Sabio Azadi

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 37: Repairing Nets

Touka flipped Ken over her shoulder, watching with a critical eye as he slammed into the ground. She kicked back, catching Chikusa in the belly and making him fold over. She placed her foot back on the ground. Chikusa stumbled backwards.

Something tightened around his foot.

The trap swept him up into the air, dangling from a tree.

All was silent. Two out of her three attackers were down.

There was no one else around in Kokuyo Land.

A wave of Storm Flames and Chakra spread out from her, destroying the illusion.

Her elbow hit Mukuro’s temple and he went down.

She snorted, hauling him up and dragging him over to the bench and tying him up. Then she dragged Ken to his feet and over as well.

Chikusa pouted from where he was trying to untie the rope with little success.

“Gaki, you need to start carrying more than just your yo-yos,” she told him.

“Just get me down,” he grumbled.

She raised one eyebrow.

“Please,” he added.

“There we go,” she smiled before cutting him down.

He stumbled over to the bench. A quick jutsu and Mukuro was awake.

“Wait, what?” he asked.
“You don’t pay enough attention to your opponents. You just **assume** that they fall for your illusions. Plus your physical defense is shot with your eye Sealed. So,” she clapped her hands together before turning to the other bench, “that is why you failed the most! And will therefore not get lunch.”

She reached out to pick up the two bento and frowned when her hand only touched air.

*When did-* she focused her Chakra and muttered “**kai**” under her breath. The air around the bento shimmered.

“Ah! That’s my chickadee!” Izuna cheered from under the tree he and Nagi “Please call me Chrome” had settled.

“What did you do?” Touka asked, head tilting.

Chrome blushed.

“I distorted your perception as soon as part of your body entered an area round the bento. You would **perceive** grabbing at them, but in reality you would fall short, or be right above them,” the girl explained.

Touka nodded.

“Impressive. Especially given that you’ve barely had any time to train. What about—”

“Senju, you have your students, she is mine,” Izuna cut her off, firm, but a slight smile on his lips, “I will handle her training; concentrate on yours. Especially with what they’re doing.”

Touka whirled around, and laughed.

Chikusa and Mukuro were weaving together small amounts of their Flames to get her to ignore them as Ken bent over and tried to untie Mukuro with his teeth.

“Boys! The first one that should be freed when the one untying is the tank is the other physical fighter! Keep your subterfuge user for last, just in case you need to run before untying them!”

She stalked back to her students, already plotting out the next lesson. Let Izuna have Chrome, her boys were **adorable little murder machines**.

**Across Town:**

Tobirama kept his eyes closed.

“If you do not cease moving, Koharu, you will find out just what a riverstone to the head feels like,” he murmured.

Koharu flinched, “Sorry Hanshi.”

“Um, not to question your methods Sensei,” Hiruzen piped up from next to Koharu, “But shouldn’t we be, you know, actually training?”

“How often do any of you actually use your Flames?” Tobirama returned, “We must primarily use Flames in these battles, thus we must train them. I talked to Tsuyoshi and this is a good way to learn your Flames so as to access them.”

“By balancing on top of trees over a rushing river?” Homura asked, eying the river.
“They are called *Dying Will*,” Tobirama said, “According to Tsuyoshi, Sakumo, and Touka, when training, one needs to feel as if death is near. So, you know. There’s that.”

And his clones pushed them off the tree, a second clone on each, just in case.

*Tomorrow*, he thought, *I’m going to spar with them until they all drop.*

Below, his adorable students yelled curses up at him. He smirked.

Elsewhere:

Kyoko did *not* startle when someone stalked up to her table in the cafe.

She *did* take a long sip of her coffee before placing it back on the table.

“Can I help you, Hibari-san?”

“I… need your help with something,” the former Uchiha Clan Head said.

Kyoko blinked at him.

“Eh? Shishou needs help?” she asked, eyebrows raise.

He flushed, but nodded.

Kagami stood.

“Let’s go.”

"And what does Shishou need this one's help with?" Kagami asked, staring ahead as they walked.

Madara's face tinged pink.

"It... has to do with your Hanshi.”

"Ehhhh?"

---

Michiko Explores: (thanks to ONDER for pointing out I had forgotten about this)

**Michiko vs The Smelly Man**

Michiko looked at the Interloper. This one wasn't even worth the effort to Stalk from a Hunter like herself.

He reached for her, cooing out nonsense.

Michiko hissed out a warning, he'd better not be trying what she thought he was!

The smelly man *was!*

She swiped at his outstretched hand.

He snatched it back.

"Nana!” he wailed, and Michiko's disdain grew, "Tuna's fuzz ball scratched me!"
Mama came over and reached for Michiko. She allowed this.

"Are, she seems fine to me. Perhaps you were too agressive?"

Chapter End Notes

EDIT BECAUSE I FORGOT I WAS GOING TO ASK!

What do you guys think Madara/Hibari is up to?
Thanks so much to everyone for the kudos, comments, and bookmarks! You all rock!

Notice up now: I'm planning on doing NaNo - I keep not finishing the Original Novel I'm working on, so I'm going to try to finish it this year. Hopefully. But that means that I'm going to probably not write new chapters in November. Maybe some omake or ficlets when I need a break from my Fantasy Pirate Book....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Ne, Tsuna?” Takeshi asked as they drifted through the streets, away from where Reborn had been ‘training’ Tsuna, “Do you think that weird guy with the sword-hand is going to show up again? I want to ask him stuff.”

“Oh, what kind of things?” Tsuna asked, ignoring Basil’s twitch at being ignored. Or at Squalo being talked about casually.

“Well, why strap a sword to his hand for one. Also, why he’s dressing like a bad BDSM novel cover model.”

Basil and Reborn tripped at that.

Tsuna’s lips twitched.

“I’m sure that we’ll run into him again. Dino-nii seemed pretty interested in him.”

Takeshi snickered, “I can’t wait to see how Toto drags him over the coals for that. I mean, really, what about Bianchi?”

Basil wheezed behind them.

“Hm, she seems the type to be open to that sort of thing. If Dino-nii ever gets around to confessing of course.”

At the Hibari Mansion:

“Thank you again for the assistance Himeko-sensei,” Tobirama told his once-grand-niece, inclining his head.

“Things tend to build in situations like these. Best get everyone equipped right off the bat. Are you sure just the standard for the genin?”

He nodded, “Izuna wants to get the basics down before trying to find Chrome’s preference, and Touka wants to get the boys used to mixing chakra into their current styles before adding in too many new weapons.”

She nodded.
“I just apologise for not having kunai that match what you wish readily on hand,” she said, a smile tugging on her lips.

Tobirama narrowed his eyes at her. She knew something, something she thought was hilarious, but wasn’t sharing.

“Yes,” he said slowly. “a shame. Still, these will do for now. Where is your son?”

“Kyouya? He’s... training. After all, the word is that the External Advisor of the Vongola pegged him to be the Decimo Candidate’s Cloud.”

“Of course,” his voice was dry.

Himeko smirked at him.

“Hime~” a voice called from down the hall.

Himeko lit up.

“Anata!” she started to gravitate towards Ken and paused, looking back at Tobirama.

He waved her away; the two of them were adorable.

He walked towards the entrance, already debating how he was going to modify the kunai to hold his Hiraishin Seal. It would be better than the one he had once used in battle against Izuna - writing all of those kanji into the Seal on wrappings had been a pain. Minato-kun had made many improvements when he had reverse-engineered it and streamlined the Seal itself.

Plus the blond hadn’t used wrappings on his.

Tobirama slipped through Namimori, the scrolls snug in his bag.

He joined the others in the karaoke that he and the girls had claimed as theirs so long ago.

He lifted the bag, “Presents~”

Chikusa, Ken, Mukuro, and Chrome jumped.

“Where did you-” Mukuro sputtered.

Touka sighed.

“Kiddo, we really need to work on your Sensor ability. He wasn’t masking and even at a low level it can help.”

“Himeko-sensei was able to find most of what we needed. We divided it up according to each person’s preference or their sensei’s requirements,” he nodded at Izuna and Touka, ignoring how the pseudo-genin pouted.

Tobirama pulled out each scroll and handed them over.

“Was she able to get you kunai more like that Minato guy’s?” Izuna asked, unSealing his scroll to look over the extra weapons Himeko had gifted him.

“No, a few regular ones, but larger handled kunai apparently aren’t normally made. She thinks it might take a bit,” Tobirama answered.
He paused as Kagami had a burst of excitement. He’d have to think about what she could be up to; his adopted student was a trickster spirit in disguise he swore. He continued to hand out the scrolls.

“And one for Lambo,” he paused, realizing something, “Where is Lambo?”

“Ah, he was… helping Madara with something,” Kagami said, avoiding eye contact with everyone by looking over her new weapons, “Basil and I-Pin were going to catch up with him after and wander around before dinner.”

Tobirama absorbed that for a moment, casting out his Senses. The three young ones were, in fact, on their way home, with Sakumo trailing behind them like his pet octopus.

“Question,” Koharu raised a finger, drawing attention to herself.

Tobirama looked at her and nodded.

“You explained that you wanted us to train our Flames and also work on integrating them into our Chakra use, but you haven’t said why,” she said, “So what’s the game plan with that?”

Izuna blinked at her, “You mean you don’t see it?”

“Obviously,” she huffed at him, arms crossed.

“Our strongest moves - attack and defense - were created with Chakra in mind. We can do things that only their strongest can do, but I don’t want us to lose the edge Chakra gives us,” Tobirama explained, “So we must blend it so that none but us know.”

And then he paused.

There were hostiles near the young ones.

“We have to go, the kids are in trouble. Koharu, Kagami, Hiruzen - get Izuna's and mine’s Clones. We can’t let Reborn have any idea that we can be in two places at once.”

And then they were off.

Later Tobirama would smirk because that went wonderfully for something so unplanned.

The Varia were still underestimating them for all that they had easily dispatched three of the Lightning Squad and Iemitsu had unwittingly played the perfect role of assistant when he announced that they were going to have a tournament to decide who was to inherit from Nono.

But right now? It was a race to get there in time.

He really needed his Hiraishin Seals.

__

Michiko Explores:
Michiko And Target Spotted
Michiko slipped through the crowd towards her favorite Hunting Spot, looking forward to bringing back one of the large birds for Mama and her Tsu-kun. Then she stopped.

There were strangers - or at least two-leggers she didn't recognize - on the edge of the Market. Something about them said Predator, though less than her Tsu-kun and his Cloud (or were they a Pride? She'd have to ask Byakko-nii).
And one had a feather hanging behind his ear.
She had to have it.

Chapter End Notes

Ugh, Mada-Kyou you were suppose to do the thing this chapter. But you said no.

*sigh* welp, still open to potential answers as to what he's up to. Maybe it's now obvious? Maybe not.
Chapter Notes

A day late because somebody~ came down to visit me over the weekend, and I'm sorry, but frankly That Pretty Girl trumps writing. (aka I spent the weekend with my best friend)

Thanks so much for all the kudos, comments, and bookmarks!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 39: The Time to Ponder and Deliberate is Behind

Tsuna wasn’t quite sure why they all went to school as if nothing was wrong the next day, but they did. Though it was fun to see how their classmates were all jumpy around them. But then they were all leaking just a weak bit of Killing Intent. Barely enough to comment on. Why, back in Tobirama’s day civilians wouldn’t bat an eye at the level.

But it wasn’t enough to make the day go faster, the day simply dragged on. Finally, finally, the day was over. They could ready themselves for the battles ahead of them.

By unspoken agreement, they each darted home to quickly change and met down the street from Namimori-chuu. Iemitsu twitched as the girls walked up with the rest, and downright frowned as Hayato’s genin and Chrome showed up - though that could be due to both Reborn’s obvious surprise at their presence and the porcelain masks they each wore.

“Let’s get a move on,” Iemitsu said, tense as he stared at the school.

“Wait,” Tsuna spoke the word as if commenting on the color of the sky.

“We don’t have time-”

“Our Son was cautioning you that I was coming, Iemitsu,” Nana interrupted as she strode towards the group, Isamu and Ayamu flanking her and a handful of Momokyoka members behind.

“Nana?!” Iemitsu yelped, eyes wide as he took in her wrapped chest, loose black pants, and loose red haori with gold and silver cranes.

“Mama, please cheer for us,” Tsuna asked, slightly bowing.

“With the deepest pride, I will,” she answered. She tapped one finger on the sword she had balanced on her shoulder and nodded towards the school, “Shall we?”

“A moment, Sawada-dono,” Hibari murmured, eyes as locked on Tsuna as they had been since his arrival.

Nana raised one eyebrow as Kyoko hid a giggle.

Tsuna eyed Hibari as the older male took a step forward. Tsuna’s eyes darted to Takeshi, one eyebrow quirking in question. Takeshi shrugged, he wasn’t sure what Hibari was up to.
“Here,” Hibari thrust out a package.

With a nonplussed blink, Tsuna took it. His eyes widened and his lips parted in surprise as he opened it up.

“How did you—”

“I kind of obsessed over it, and Kyoko saw it often enough, so it, uh, took a while, but…”

Tsuna slipped a few of the thick-handled kunai up his sleeves and in his boots before tying the pouch - for the package was in fact a pouch - on his belt.

“Thank you,” he told Hibari, lips slightly tilted up. Hibari turned crimson.

“If you two are done flirting,” Reborn snarked, annoyed that they continued to drag this out. The damn Varia were going to make him have to stick around for this insanity far longer than he’d originally planned already. He really didn’t need his so-called-student adding to that timeframe.

“Tch,” Tsuna jerked his head away from Reborn, disdain in every inch.

“Please don’t point that out again,” Takeshi glowered at Reborn, “I get confused as to whom I should be angry at.”

Reborn stared at him, confusion and disbelief warring each other on his face.

Before anything else could be said, Tsuna strode forward towards the school. The rest followed.

“Eh?” Ryohei squinted at the school, his voice just shy of mocking “Are we early?”

Tsuna snorted contemptuously, “Only fools pretend to have the high ground in a poor metaphor for being of higher status. Even more is the fool who tries to intimidate by an obvious show of skills.”

His friends smirked, Takeshi grinning broadly as the girls giggled.

Iemitsu frowned at them, but jumped as a snarl came from above.

The two pink haired judges pouted as Squalo drew attention to them. The Varia did not look amused. Tsuna tilted his head back, exposing his throat and smirked.

“After a thorough discussion, we have determined the order for tonight’s Ring Battles,” one said.

“The first match will be between the Guardians of the Sun Ring,” the other continued.

The Sasagawa siblings glanced at each other at that, hands lifting to twist and tug hair and to lightly touch skin. There and gone in between breaths.

Up for it?

Tora missions more dangerous

The half-bald, green haired Varia member stepped forward, the orange feathers on his collar barely moving.

“I’m fighting that little boy?” he asked, a wicked grin on his face, “I can’t wait to add him to my collection~.”
Kyoko cracked her neck, Kagami’s fire rolling over her skin as she grinned up at him with a deranged Uchiha smile.

“No. I’ll be your opponent.”

Michiko Explores

Michiko On The Hunt

Michiko stalked closer and closer to her prey, eyes darting away from it to check on the rival predators only to return to the glorious feather.

Were she human she would sneer at how she did not even register as a threat to them. Still, it made things easier. If they were too stupid to see a Threat when It Appeared, well. It showed who were the Larger Predators in Namimori.

She tensed as she got into range. Unlike her Tsu-kun, they still did not see the obvious Threat she was. (not that She was ever a Threat to her Tsu-kun, but the point still stood she thought)

She Pounced.

The damn feather would not come loose! And now there was screaming. Ugh.

Chapter End Notes

Oh look, two reveals. Or at least one and the start of another.

Madara-Kyouya resisted so hard to speak ya'll. Seriously, boy, you need words to Woo Tsuna-Tobirama

Edit 6/16/2019: apparently I had forgotten to put the title. And my numbering in my working doc is off and I didn't catch it
Chapter Notes

Hi! Not dead! Sorry about that. I got busy at all the wrong times and when I wasn't busy I literally could not write even though I knew what I wanted to write. It was weird, not the usual writer's block I get. But! This chapter is finally done!

Fair warning, I'm now looking for a new job because I was "let go due to funding issues" (and that the client has a limited time to direct hire and decided to do that), so I'm not sure how much I'll actually keep to that once-adhered to schedule. I'll try though (though my Saturday Before Scheduled Tuesday when I normally do most of my writing is currently shot as the remaining shows on my Touring Broadway Subscription are those evenings and it's a whole Thing. Sundays are fine usually though)

Chapter Title from a Princess Kagami from the 7th Century poem that KitsuneKage88 on Tumblr (Kage88 over here) sent me upon request. Thanks dear~

Chapter 40: Flowers All Around, At the Height of Bloom

“Please direct your attention this way,” one of the two pink-haired judges said, gesturing to the side.

The Varia half-turned as one, keeping half their attention of their enemies. Tsuna and his crew, along with Nana, completely turned while the mafia members and the Momokyoka echoed the movements of the Varia.

There was a large cage with multiple stadium lights on the top pointing down.

Hibari audibly growled.

“We specially built this ring for the Fight for the Sun Ring,” one of judges said.

“And who granted you permission?” Hibari demanded, “I will bite them to death.”

“Save it for later,” Tsuna said with a roll of his eyes, “let’s get this over with.”

“Each Guardian pair will be given an area to battle in according to their abilities,” she actually seemed petulant as she spoke.

Kagami shot her a grin full of mischief.

“Must of laid down a lot of cash on that,” the blond member of the Varia commented.

“Yes,” the Arcobaleno with them added, bored, “but we know who is going to win.”

“Eh?” Hana asked, tilting her head to them, “Would you lay money on that? Say fifteen hundred grand?”
The Arcobaleno with the Varia smirked and nodded with a murmured “easy money”.

Hana grinned.

“Hear that Kyoko-chan? I’ve got money riding on you now~”

“You just want more porn,” Kagami tossed over her shoulder and headed towards the ring.

Reborn glanced at Hana at that. The girl grinned and shrugged.

“Guardians of the Sun Ring, please come to the middle of the Ring,” one of the judges projected.

“Yare, yare, there’s no rush,” Kagami waved one hand.

“And here I thought I was going to have some fun,” the Varia member pouted.

“Beat her quickly, Lussuria,” Mammon told him, “I want that money.”

“Knock ‘em dead,” Squalo told him.

Upon getting to the the ring, both Kagami and Lussuria presented their rings to their respective judges.

“It is confirmed,” the judges said.

“The rules dictate that the rings must be worn around the neck,” one judge said.

“Just so you know,” Kagami said, shrugging off her pink jacket, “I’m going to take every comment and thought you’ve had about my aniki out of your ass.”

Lussuria laughed, “Oh, you are adorable.”

He whipped his long coat off and slipped into a muay thai pose, arms bent so his hands were near his shoulders and one leg raised.

Kagami’s eyes slipped closed for a half breath, then she opened her eyes and mirrored the pose.

In Tsuna’s arms, Lambo sucked in a sharp breath.

“You know Muay Thai?” Lussuria asked.

“It would seem so,” Kagami replied, a smirk inching onto her face.

Above them, floodlights turned on.

Kagami slammed her eyes shut against the harsh light, biting back a swear. Of course this was rigged in favor of the creep. No matter, she had been from a clan famously known for their Dōjutsu - a favored way to try to take them out was to obscure their vision. She knew how to fight blind. But the other was wearing sunglasses.

Kagami smirked, oh, they were making this easy for her. A small flare of the oh so new Sun Flames to boost her hearing just enough, and then Kagami shifted, categorizing the sound of her own clothing.

Lussuria rushed forward with the subtle squeak of his leather pants letting Kagami track his movements. Her arm twisted back, sliding along her belt for the sharp section to cut her thumb
even as she bent backwards away from his kick.

A slight metallic and dusty scent tickled her nose as her hand closed around cold metal. She slipped the metal over the rest of her hand, keeping her middle finger over the top and dropped into a back handspring, catching Lussuria on the chin with one of her boots.

The assassin snarled, stumbling back a step before recovering and starting to move towards her yet again. She’d only have one chance at this. If it didn’t work, Lussuria would be on her and she would struggle to get any other weapon out.

She doesn’t move. Listens as Lussuria comes forward again. Ducks under his high kick, twists over his arm - like fuck is she going to trap herself in his arms. Swings the kunai down, down, down, towards his neck, feels him flinch back, chin going down to try to protect his vulnerable throat.

That’s when she switches hands, left flashing upwards, tossing the kunai between them and slams the rounded end into his sunglasses before throwing herself back. That’ll do for now.

In front of her, Lussuria laughed, voice derangedly delighted.

“It looks like this is going to be fun!”

He punched down, Sun Flames flaring, and Kagami tensed. Yet the Sun Flames ignored her and shot up, up, up the poles and shattered the floodlights.

“Let’s keep this on even ground shall we?” Lussuria asked.

Kagami opened her eyes, smirked and tossed her head.

“I’d have to be mostly dead for us to be even near even ground.”

Lussuria rolled his eyes.

Oh, she was so kicking his ass.

Her red eyes locked on Lussuria and she slid into the same pose that he was in.

Behind her, she could hear Lambo reverently whisper “The Ivy Mirror”. Well. Looks like she had a fan; she’d have to give it her all then.

Lussuria moved forward and she mirrored him. He stopped and so did she.

“What the hell are you-” he started and her voice overlaid his.

He jerked back and so did she.

“Stop!” They said together.

He jumped forward, kicking out just as she did, barely twisting to avoid the other’s kick, though he was caught on his head.

He stumbled back as she stood strong.

“What the fuck are you?” he growled.

“The better mirror,” she told him, reaching back and re-opening her thumb to unseal her favorite
weapon, the scent of dust, old wood, and metal drifting up even as she spun it around and pointed it at him, “Tsuta no Kagami.”

He stared at the naginata now pointed at him in confusion.

“She didn’t let him continue and rushed forward.

Lussuria tried to dodge but each time he moved in one direction, Kagami was there with her naginata, the blade cutting into him or the ishizuki2 smacking him. Lussuria bit back swears as Kagami drove him back, Sun Flames racing over her arms and legs, letting her push herself faster than she normally would be able to go.

She swept Lussuria’s feet out from under him, twisted the ishizuki around the chain holding Lussuria’s ring and yanked it off. The ring and chain went flying.

Kagami jumped back, pushing off using her naginata even as Lussuria scrambled to his feet, trying to go after the ring.

A surge of chakra to push her even faster and Kagami twisted in the air, swiping at Lussuria with one hand on the naginata even as her other closed around the ring. She landed and Lussuria snarled as he lunged.

“It is over,” one of the judges intoned, stepping into the ring and drawing both their attention even as Kagami side-stepped Lussuria, “Kyoko, Sun Guardian for Tsunayoshi, is the winner.”

Behind them, Hana smirked at the Varia Arcobaleno and held out her hand. Said Arcobaleno hissed but handed over the money.

Footnotes:

1 Ivy Mirror; lit. Mirror of Ivy

2 The Cap on the bottom of a naginata

Michiko Explores

Michiko Vs The Strangers: Part One

Michiko tilted her head. This Stranger was…. different. She wasn’t completely sure how they were different, but they were. They looked familiar in the same way the Smart One looked familiar to the Silly One. She just was not sure who the Stranger looked like.

He swacked when he realized she was watching him. He flailed and fell back.

Michiko almost wished she had those ridiculous fur-caterpillars above her eyes so that she could raise one.

The Stupid One squatted down in front of her, his bat-wing like garment bunching up around him. He pointed at his face with his shiny hand and talked excitedly.
Michiko looked him in the eyes, not listening to him, and jumped through to go rub against her Tsu-kun, begging him to pick her up.

The Stupid One fell over again, wailing.
Lightning Strikes

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back? Yeah, so I really had trouble with this chapter because I don't care for Levi and he's kinda needed. Plus motivation was low for other reasons, sorry.

And I've been going back and forth on whether or not to be a Petty Bitch (because I am), and, well, I'm not going to completely be one, but two things I do feel I need to address:
1) I will defend my fav characters (OCs and Canon alike) no matter what and will be the aforementioned Petty Bitch should you insult them - especially using false premise on their character. I'm willing to chat about different interpretations, but, like, come on. (if you have not guessed, Tobirama is one of those favs)
2) I am, in fact, a woman. I know on AO3 it is a bit difficult to know, but while I am more amused by the assumption that I am male, it can be upsetting to others to be misgendered. If you aren't sure of someone's gender, genderneutral pronouns such as They/Them work wonderfully.

Now on to the show!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 41: Lightning Strikes

“Tomorrow we will hold the Lightning Battle,” the Cervello announced, nodding at the groups as they tensed to jump away.

“Why wait?” Tsuna asked, tilting his head, “We have no issue with continuing tonight. Unless Xanxus-senpai has an objection?”

Said man clenched his jaw but said nothing. The Cevello looked shocked and exchanged glances.

“While not complete, the field is serviceable at this time,” the one in frills said. The other scowled but slowly nodded.

“Follow us.”

The prepared field was on the roof and consisted of four completed large rods reaching up to the sky and the bases of three more.

“This would have been the Electro Circuit,” the non-frilled Cervello said.

“Send in the pipsqueak already,” Levi grumbled pushing his way forward.

Lambo began to move forward, eyeing the cables connecting the rods, both finished and not, but Tsuna tightened his arms around the boy. Hana strolled forward, rolling her shoulders as the mantle of The Professor settled on her once more.

“I’m the Lightning Guardian not the cow,” she said, holding up her Ring for inspection.
The Cevello nodded with a sour look.


Hiruzen unsealed her bō and settled into a defensive stance, eyeing the grid pattern below.

“Begin!”

The word had hardly been uttered before Levi rushed forward.

Hiruzen dodged his charge, swinging her bō at his legs, trying to knock him down. She gathered her chakra for one of the Earth Jutsu she knew to temporarily trap his leg-

“...We must primarily use Flames in these battles,” Hanshi had said. Lightning didn’t do something like that.

She released the chakra, stumbling as she danced back. Shit, she was going to have to concentrate. She didn’t have a cheat of a Bloodline to give an edge.

Levi pulled one of his umbrellas out, charging it as he swung at Hiruzen. The electrified umbrella struck the bō.

It heated in Hiruzen’s hands, a burning smell filling the air. And then it exploded.

Fuck. That was inconvenient. The kunai were out - metal was an even worse idea. Note to self - she needed a bō that was attuned to Lightning. Ugh, she wasn’t the hand-to-hand expert, that was Kagami. Her thing had always been jutsu. She’d have to try though.

Grimly, she launched at Levi.

This was going to hurt.

The Next Day

Tobirama and most of the others sat in a cafe the day after the Sun Battle, waiting to hear how Hana was doing after her hard defeat at the hands of Levi, electricity having run through her body at multiple times. The former Nidaime raised one eyebrow while watching Lussuria dodging Xanxus’s hits as Levi preened. He pursed his lips in displeasure before pushing to his feet.

“Yo, Squalo,” Tobirama called, catching the attention of the group.

They turned towards the former ninja almost as one. Xanxus’s scowl deepened and he stomped over to them.

“Trash,” he growled, “you’re working for that kid.”

Madara bristled, but Tobirama simply sank back into his chair and leaned until he was balancing on the back two legs, one arm hanging over the backrest.

“We told you we were here because Oyabun was here. Before we left we even said that if he were one of ours we could tell you a lot about him. That you did not try for more information after that is on you.”

“Then I’m asking now,” he growled, “were you sent to gather information on us when you ‘ran into’ Squalo and Mammon?”
Tobirama gazed back at him, face expressionless as he took a drink of his tea.

“No. It truly was a coincidence. Though that trip did lead to reconnecting with another who was around,” Tobirama nodded at a silver-haired man, “Sakumo had information based on his own life and what was readily available.”

“In the interest of you calming the fuck down,” Izuna continued, his eyes catching the light and revealing their red color, “why don’t we tell you a little about Oyabun and Wakagashira? Nothing that you wouldn’t find out at with minimal digging, but we’ll save you time.”

Madara frowned and his hands twitched as he gripped his own teacup, making Xanxus eye him in anger. Tobirama, though, simply rolled his eyes and flicked his hair back using his first two fingers and flipping his hand around in the process - half-truths.

“Fine,” Xanxus snarled, snagging a chair, slamming it down and sitting, “The fuck was up with that byplay between the Lion-trash and the old lady?”

It had caught his attention last night even as Levi was preening at taking down the girl - though she had given him a run for his money. Once she got manipulating Flames down, she’d be a contender for sure. The brat had made eye contact with that trash Reborn and the World's Greatest Hitman had seamlessly led Iemitsu away, keeping the fool away from his wife.

The rest of the Varia followed suit, pulling another table over to join with the original one.

Tobirama pursed his lips at the terminology. Nana was no one’s Old Lady.

“Oyabun doesn’t exactly share, but the chain of events is this: she learned who was in charge of the largest Yakuza in the area several years back and showed up at their base with only a kitchen knife. She challenged the then Oyabun and won. So Wakagashira - the one you call “kid” - is her heir.”

Kagami took over, “It would make sense to train up one of his pre-existing friends as a bodyguard - no one would question a kid his own age hanging around. The one girl has a brother who likes to fight, so she would make sense to pick. Apparently the other of his friends before recent months was more on the book side. My money is on her helping in other ways than physical.”

“Ah,” Lussuria blinked at that, “so Kyoko-chan is a bodyguard. She’s quite good.”

Izuna shrugged, “That’s the rumor.”

“What happened?” Xanxus demanded.

Madara gave him a deadpan look.

“No one knows. Oyabun won’t speak of it. All we know is that she hates her husband. So probably something to do with that.”

Both groups fell silent at that.

“Mou,” Mammon spoke up, breaking the silence, “will each of the Guardians not be chosen as the rumors suggest?”

Sakumo was the one who answered, a careful shrug accompanying his words, “We don’t know; Wakagashira will chose as he deems fit.”
Mammon scowled at that.

"You must have some idea," she pressed.

"There are at least thirteen individuals in Wakagashira's inner circle without counting the adults. More branch from there," Sakumo shot back, "it could be any of them, excluding the two whom already fought."

Mammon scowled at him, arms crossed. Sakumo stared back, nonplussed.

Levi spoke up next, "Could you pass a message on to the girl from me?"

Kagami leaned forward, eyes narrowing, "Depends. What's the message?"

Levi grinned, snarp and thirsting.

"Tell her to look me up in a few years once she gets fighting with Flames down. I want to see how well matched we'd be when she's got that down."

Kagami smirked and nodded.

(Coincidentally, Hana herself was contemplating how she was going to have to spar with Lambo more as Kakashi was rather well known for his original lightning jutsu. Though both Haru and Skull would end up there as well given that whole situation. Perhaps she should first visit Tsuyoshi and get him to sign something to trade?)

Michiko Explores:

Michiko and the Fool

She had noticed that the smelly man, the Fool had left their home, yet Mama still was not happy. Michiko figured that that meant the nuisance was not yet dead. Perhaps she should go fix such an oversight?

A wicked gleam entered her eyes making the little green thing shiver and cling the the Interloper's hat.

Yes, she would go Hunting for the Fool. She would grab the two brutes for muscle and collect Apollo and Masuru. She wouldn't need any of them, but an entourage would be nice. Show the Fool she meant business.

Mind made up, she slipped from the house.

Chapter End Notes

I always knew that not everyone was going to win their Ring Battle, and Hana/Hiruzen was a good fit. Hiruzen's thing was jutsu and she has had mere days to try to transfer that style and knowledge into Flames. And she doesn't have a biological cheat like Kyoko.
Michiko is a Himalayan cat, they are so cute, seriously go look them up.

Come and talk to me on my tumblr: rinrinp42

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