On August 1st, across 3 dimensions, three teams of DigiDestined are taken out of their
worlds to another where they'll have to work together if they wish to return home. New friendships will be made. Old and new enemies alike seek to destroy them. This other Digital World promises to test our heroes more than ever before!
A season crossover that covers seasons 1-4. This is the start of the Ultimate Gathering of the DigiDestined!

Notes

I had originally intended to have the casts of both Adventure 01 and 02 in this, but after a long time I realized that it would be too confusing with two sets of the same characters. Sure older Tai could go by Taichi, Matt by Yamato, Izzi by Koushirou and so forth, but Mimi, Sora and Joe (even if I could spell it differently) don't have another way to say their name and it got confusing for me as the writer to keep straight who was talking. So I dropped that idea and just stuck with the 02 cast. I played around with many different scenarios of how to start this story and this one turned out to be the best. I hope to have moments for every character at least once (this is gonna be very long so if you hate cliff hangers and waiting hold off on reading this story for a year or two :D). I've grown up with the English version of these shows so I'm going to use their names from the English dubs. This'll be following as much of the story lines in the animes as closely as possible. Sora and Matt are together even though I am a huge Taiora fan but this is for accuracy sake. I hope you enjoy my first fan fic, and just so we're clear:

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.
In the last thirty years alone technology has surpassed itself at an amazing rate. The computer alone has advanced far beyond its original capabilities. Now people all over the world are plugged into the network as its technologies continue to advance. This story begins in three districts of Tokyo Japan, but in three different realities. This is the story of the greatest adventure of adventures. This is the story of the ultimate gathering of DigiDestined…

The Human World – Adventure DigiDestined

Hikari “Kari” Kamiya and Takeru “TK” Takaishi were waiting at the park in Odaiba for their friends to join them for the anniversary of the day that the original eight DigiDestined defeated Myotismon. It has been four years since then and TK and Kari were the only two of the original eight DigiDestined to receive the new upgraded version of the digivice, the D3, and continued their adventures in the Digital World with the new and current group of DigiDestined who had joined them just over a year ago. The other six original chosen children helped them from behind the scenes, supplying alibis and excuses for the others so that they could perform their duties within the Digital World without their families knowing.

The first foe that this new group of DigiDestined had faced was a boy known infamously in the Digital World as the Digimon Emperor, but he had turned out to be the boy genius, Ken Ichijoji. Ken had been under the influence of a dark spore virus that had entered his body the first time he’d gone to the Digital World as a little boy. It had consumed him with darkness but when Ken finally
realized that what he had been doing was wrong and that Digimon were actually living creatures he cast aside his alter ego. It took a while, but he finally joined the DigiDestined after a lot of prodding and encouragement from the new leader of the group, Daisuke “Davis” Motomiya, who was the only one at the time willing to give Ken a second chance after all that he had done as the Digimon Emperor. Now there were twelve DigiDestined in their group and many others all over the world. After all they’d been through, the twelve DigiDestined of Tokyo Japan were gathering for a reunion.

TK and Kari had run into each other on their way to the park and decided to wait together. They were awfully close to each other these days much to Davis’ dislike. The young leader had had a crush on Kari for years and hadn’t bothered to hide that fact.

“TK! Kari!” a girl’s voice suddenly called out to the couple.

The two turned in unison to see a lavender haired girl with large round glasses come bounding toward them with a small, short brown-haired boy. This was Miyako “Yolei” Inoue and Iori “Cody” Hida. They lived in the same apartment building as TK and his mother.

“Hey guys!” Kari smiled.

“Why didn’t you wait for us, TK?” Cody asked.

TK shrugged. “I went out for a walk and ran into Kari.”

Cody didn’t need any further explanation. He wasn’t one to pry into TK and Kari’s private affairs.

“Hey there!”

This time it was Sora Takenouchi, one of the original eight DigiDestined.

“Where’s Matt?” TK called over to the redhead.

Sora gave an exaggerated sigh.

“Where else? Band practice. He said he’d catch up in a few.”

“You’re too easy on him Sora,” Kari scoffed teasingly. “If he was my boyfriend, he’d be with me and not his stupid band.”

“He means well,” Sora laughed.

Yamato “Matt” Ishida was TK’s older brother. Their parents were divorced, so they had different last names, but becoming DigiDestined had managed to keep the two brothers close in spite of the separation. Matt and Sora had started going out sometime after Christmas last year and were planning on celebrating their sixth month anniversary soon.

“How’s the flower shop?” Yolei asked, changing the topic.

“It’s the same as ever,” Sora smiled. “Mom said she could handle it by herself today so that I could come and join you guys.”

“That’s good to hear,” a low voice said as two arms suddenly held Sora from behind in an embrace. Matt had arrived and joined them unobserved while they were all talking. He gave Sora a quick peck on the cheek before releasing her.

“Aww c’mon, Matt!” the voice of Kari’s older brother, Taichi “Tai” Kamiya, sounded out from
behind them. “I just ate!”

Their friend and computer wiz, Koushirou “Izzi” Izumi, was with him.

Matt and Sora just ignored Tai and gave each other another quick kiss.

“Where are the others?” Tai asked, ignoring them right back.

“Joe had a test this morning but I believe he was going to pick up Mimi from the airport when he finished,” Sora mused.

Mimi Tachikawa had moved to New York shortly after their first DigiDestined reunion three years ago, but she had always made the long flight back just for this day. Joe Kido had recently graduated from high school and was now going to medical school to become a doctor like his father. His knowledge in the subject had been more than useful over the past year when he had been available. He was still good old reliable Joe: tall, lanky, and as cautious as ever.

“What about Davis and Ken?” Izzi asked.

TK shrugged.

“Who knows? Davis probably slept in again and Ken lives all the way in Tamachi. He’s probably on the train right now.”

“Correction,” a soft voice said from behind. “He’s right here.”

Ken Ichijoji smiled as he joined the group. It was hard for everyone to believe that not even a year ago he had been the evil Digimon Emperor.

“Hey! Don’t start without me!” called out a loud voice.

Davis Motomiya. Who else?

“It’s about time, Davis!” Tai called out. “We were about to send out a search party!”

“Really?!” the younger boy asked incredulously.

“No, silly,” Kari laughed. “You’re not that late. Ken just arrived as well.”

“Great! Hey wait, where’s Mimi and Joe?”

Before anyone could reply, Joe’s voice called out to them.

“Sorry we’re late!” he laughed.

“I ran into some good friends before leaving American and asked them to join us last minute!” Mimi beamed beside Joe as they drew closer to the waiting group. There were two others following them. Both were blond and blue eyed, but it didn’t look like they were related. Davis was the first to recognize them.

“Hey! It’s Michael and Willace!”

Michael Washington was Mimi’s friend from New York. Everyone had met Michael in passing, but only Davis and Mimi knew that he was the son of a famous western movie star. Willace Globerman lived in New York as well, but was originally from Colorado. He was the only known DigiDestined that had received twin Digimon partners. However, as he approached the group the
twin Digimon were absent from their usual hovering position next to their human partner. They were probably stuck back in the Digital World with the rest of the world’s DigiDestined’s Digimon partners. Ever since the defeat of MaloMyotismon the partner Digimon had been unable to regain access and return to the human world. Not even Tokyo’s twelve DigiDestined had been spared from this unforeseeable occurrence. However, it appeared that they were still able to occasionally travel to the Digital World if they had access an operational Digital Portal and a D3 digivice.

“Willace?” Ken repeated, puzzled. Unlike the other DigiDestined he’d never even heard of Willace.

“Oh! Sorry, Ken,” Yolei gasped. “You don’t know about him do you? We met him back when you were still the Digimon Emperor.”

Kari picked up the story from there.

“TK and I were in New York visiting Mimi when I sensed a crying Digimon nearby. We found Willace in the middle of a fight between two of his own Digimon. He ran when he saw us so I called Davis telling him to come to America with Cody and Yolei. They met Willace hitchhiking while we were taking the train. I’m sure he’ll tell you the full story later.”

“Yeah,” Davis smiled. “We’ve become good friends. He did say he’d get in touch if he ever had the chance to come to Japan. Looks like Mimi took him up on his offer.”

When the four newcomers finally join the others, introductions were made for Willace who had only ever met Kari, TK, Davis, Cody and Yolei. Now everyone, expected and unexpected, was accounted for. Davis had a feeling that this was going to be an eventful reunion.

The Human World – Digimon Tamers

In another reality, Digimon was a TV show, trading card game and a video game series. That is up until a few months ago when they became real and had found a way to enter the human world. The few Digimon that had found human partners referred to them as their Tamers.

In Shinjuku one Tamer, Takato Matsuki, was hurriedly changing into his usual blue pull over and grey slacks. He was a special kid. He had come up with and designed his own Digimon and somehow it had come to life. After meeting two other children who also had Digimon partners of their own, they fought together to save their world from rouge Digimon known as “Wild Ones,” and a government computer program, the “D-Reaper,” that had gone out of control. In the end, the Digimon had to return to their own world, but Takato had found a portal last week where his Digimon used to stay.

Today he was supposed to be joining his fellow Tamers at the park where he’d found the portal, but it had taken too long to help his parents in their bakery so now he was late. Today the Tamers were going to attempt to return to the Digital World to see their Digimon partners.

“Man oh man! Rika is gonna kill me!” Takato groaned as he snapped his round yellow goggles on over his messy mousy-brown hair.

He pulled his bike out of the side yard and peddled as fast as he could. He could only imagine Rika Nonaka’s scowl. The redhead didn’t like waiting. Sure enough, when he finally arrived Rika was already in a foul mood. She was famously known as the Digimon Queen in the trading card game tournament world. She had never lost a game to anyone but one person. That very person, Takato
noticed, was standing behind her.

Ryo Akiyama.

If Rika was the Digimon Queen, than Ryo was the infamous Digimon King. He had won every card tournament before his mysterious disappearance a little over one year ago. He was the first person to become a Digimon Tamer, gain a Digimon partner, and go to the Digital World, but no one, not even Ryo himself, knew how it had happened. Ryo had disappeared the day he’d defeated Rika in the final round of her first tournament but no one saw him again until Takato and the other Tamers had found a way to the Digital World themselves almost one year later.

Ryo waved lightly as Takato pulled up to where everyone’s bikes were.

“You’re late, goggle head!” Rika growled.

“Give him a break, Rika,” a tan, raven-haired boy with blue eyes sighed.

This was Henry Wong. He was holding his five-year old sister, Suzie Wong, by the hand as he stepped forward to greet his best friend.

“It’s about time!” one of Takato’s oldest friends sighed.

Kazu Shioda was standing next to another old friend of Takato’s, Kenta Kitagawa, a few feet away from Rika and Ryo.

“Hey, Takato!” a girl’s voice called out.

Takato blushed. He hadn’t seen Jeri Katou standing beside Ryo behind Rika. For once she was without her hand sock puppet, but Takato didn’t really notice. She probably had it in her bag anyway.

“Hen-wee,” Suzie pouted. “Let’s go! I wanna see Lopmon!”

“Yeah!” two other voices chorused.

Two little kids around Suzie’s age were sitting just out of Takato’s sight next to Jeri. One was a little boy, Mako, around the age of five with brown hair and eyes. His sister, Ai, who was a year older, held his hand.


The brother and sister nodded. The two of them were the only Tamers who shared a Digimon partner. Ai currently wore their shared digivice around her neck. In this reality the Tamer’s had started calling their digivices D-Powers after Henry’s father, Janyu, started calling them that while he was analyzing the ways the devices help the Tamer’s Digimon ‘power’ up using the trading card game’s Modify Cards.

Out of the corner of his eye, Takato noticed Henry frown. Henry had been greatly distressed when Suzie had become a Tamer and now kids her age had also been given a Digimon partner and wanted to go the Digital World. It was dangerous enough without having little kids to look after. What had happened to Jeri and her partner was proof enough. Jeri’s Digimon partner, Leomon, had been deleted the last time they were there, but she still had her digivice. Even though her partner was gone now, she continued to help the others no matter what and would brave the Digital World once more even if they told her to stay.
“Well everyone is accounted for,” Rika huffed. “Now show us where you found this portal Takato!”

“No wait a minute!” Henry said. “Say we go through this portal, how exactly are we going to get back?”

Rika paused. Henry had a point. As much as she wanted to see her Digimon partner she didn’t want to be stuck in the Digital World. Ryo had been stuck there for an entire year before they had come along and brought him back with them. If he hadn’t found a way back without outside help over the course of a year, how could they hope to do so now? They hadn’t told their parents what they were up to and Janyu Wong and his co-workers had been instrumental in bringing them home safely. So now the question on everyone’s mind was, “What now?”

The Human World – Frontier DigiDestined

In this third and final reality there is no public or even government knowledge of a Digital World or Digimon. The only ones who knew were a bunch of confused kids that had hopped onto a special train that had taken them to the Digital World. Most of these children were sent right back and hardly knew that Digimon even existed and simply marked off their trip as a strange dream. However, there were six children that had been allowed to stay, but they didn’t have Digimon partners like the chosen children from the other two realities. That is because they didn’t need a Digimon partner. They themselves became Digimon. Or at least they had been able to when they were infused with one of the Ten Legendary Digimon Warriors’ spirits. Now they were back in their own world where they were fully human again. It has been almost one year since the children had received the mysterious phone call from the Digital World telling them to go to the Shibuya train station and board a train Digimon called Trailmon that would take them to the Digital World. It was these six who had been chosen by the spirits of the Legendary Warriors and chose to stay and fight the battle against the evil that had threatened to take over the Digital World.

One of these six DigiDestined, Takuya Kanbara, was looking uneasily at the clock on the wall. He was sitting in his doctor’s office with his mother waiting to hear the results of some medical tests they had run over the previous two weeks. His mother was fidgeting in her seat, worrying, while Takuya’s mind was elsewhere. Today was his friend and fellow DigiDestined, Tomoki “Tommy” Himi’s birthday, and because of this appointment he was going to be late to the party. The other four DigiDestined were going to be there too and he hadn’t seen any of them in a long time.

Finally the doctor came in but his face was grim.

‘Uh-oh,’ thought Takuya. ‘No good news comes from a doctor making that kind of face.’

His mother’s head shot up and despair immediately set in.

“Well?” she asked breathlessly.

“I’m sorry, ma’am,” the doctor sighed. “Our tests came back positive. Your son has lung cancer and… I’m afraid it’s terminal. If we had found out about it sooner something might have been done, but the tumor is just too large now and spread out. We can go ahead and give him chemotherapy and see if it helps, but I’m afraid that there isn’t much hope.”

Takuya was shocked. He’d always been perfectly healthy up until a few months ago when he’d started have chest pains and some trouble breathing after playing soccer, but he’d never have thought that it would have to do with cancer. It just didn’t seem possible. How could he have an
advanced case of cancer when he’d shown no signs until recently?

“I don’t care,” his mother said gruffly. “I’ll take what I can. Little hope is better then no hope at all. What are the symptoms?”

The doctor sighed and began rattling off a list of conditions.

“Shortness of breath, chronic coughing, coughing up blood, wheezing, chest pain, weight loss, hoarse voice, and difficulty swallowing.

Takuya felt numb. Within the last week he’d experienced all of those symptoms except for the coughing up blood one, but it was probably only a matter of time before that started too.

“How long?” he asked. “You said it was terminal. How long do I have to live?”

The doctor gave him a long calculated glance.

“…At the rate your tumor has been growing? …Two years max. And that’s without the chemo.”

Takuya nodded. He felt numb. His mother squeezed his hand and then returned her attention to the doctor.

“How soon can we begin the chemotherapy?”

The doctor sighed before turning to his computer.

“At least a week. I’ll make the arrangements for next weekend and you can bring Takuya to the main hospital here in Shibuya,” he said, handing her the folder that held Takuya’s records and test results.

“Thank you, doctor,” she smiled sadly, taking the folder and handing it to Takuya.

Takuya nodded his thanks before following his mother out of the hospital. When they got back to the car he grabbed his bag from the back seat, stuffed the medical folder in it and took off down the street.

“Takuya?!” his mother yelled after him. “Where are you going?!”

“To Tommy’s birthday party!” he yelled over his shoulder. “I’m late!”

“Takuya! Please come back! We need to talk about your-!”

“I’ll be fine Mom! See you later!”

That was the last thing he wanted. Takuya didn’t want to think about the cancer right now. He just couldn’t wrap his mind around it. A part of him had already accepted that he might not live to see his high school years, but the other half of him was determined to live that remaining time to the fullest. And right now he needed to be with his friends. This terminal lung cancer thing was too depressing.

As he raced for the park his chest began to hurt so he had to stop and breathe. His eye caught his reflection in one of the corner mirrors that were placed on specific street corners to help drivers see if there was any traffic or pedestrians coming around one of their blind spots on the corner.

Takuya was wearing his usual yellow shirt with the black spiked swirl design on the front under a red short sleeved button up over shirt, grey cargo pants, red and yellow sneakers, and the grey
square framed goggles over his favorite olive green hat that was worn backwards like all of the cool kids. But despite the colorful clothes and tan skin he saw how pale, thin and sick he looked. How could he face his friends when he looked like such a wreck?

Tommy was worried. In his big orange hat, he looked even smaller then he really was. His party had started a little over an hour ago and everyone he had invited was there but Takuya. Takuya was like a second older brother to Tommy and not seeing him around made him worry. Takuya had never been this late before.

He looked around at the other party guests and saw them all having fun, but he wasn’t. How could he when one of his closest friends wasn’t there? Tommy wasn’t the only one who was worried though.

Koji Minamoto was constantly looking towards the park entrance. His twin brother, Koichi Kimura, could feel anxiety coming off of him in waves. Koichi didn’t know Takuya as well as his twin, but he knew Takuya well enough to know that he’d never been this late to anything before. He could see how worried little Tommy was too.

A pretty blond Italian girl with green eyes approached them.

The twins eyed her nervously. She looked ticked.

“Where is that stupid Takuya?” she huffed. “Poor Tommy has been waiting for this party and isn’t having any fun because he isn’t here.”

“Chill, Z,” sighed a big heavyset boy with brown hair “This is Takuya we’re talking about. He probably lost track of time and is on his way over right now.”

These were the remaining two DigiDestined of the group: Izumi “Zoe” Orimoto and Junpei “JP” Shibayama.

“I’m sure JP is right,” Koichi said gently. “He wouldn’t want to disappoint Tommy. They’re practically brothers.”

Koji nodded.

“He’ll be here,” Tommy’s little voice said.

Tommy had come up to them while they had been talking. He had seen them gather while the other partygoers played and laughed, oblivious to the serious conversation. The four looked away from him guiltily. Even though Tommy was one of them, he was the youngest in their group and still just a little kid. He was ten years old today and everyone else in their group was twelve except for JP, who was thirteen.

“Hey! Sorry I’m late!” they heard a loud voice call out.

Tommy’s face lit up instantly.

“Takuya!”

Takuya was hurrying towards the group while shrugging a bang off his shoulder.

“Hey buddy! Sorry I’m so late. I had trouble wrapping your present and then I missed my train and
the next one was delayed and yada yada yada… Happy birthday, kid!”

Takuya handed Tommy a rather sloppily wrapped present with rather lumpy sides, but Tommy didn’t seem to care. He tore apart the wrappings and gasped. Inside was a whistle, a cool pair of gloves with a matching sweatshirt, and a soccer ball autographed by his favorite player, Kazuyoshi Miura. He was speechless.

“Oh wow,” he gasped, unable to come up with anything else.

Takuya grinned. The whistle and clothes were something that his mom had thought would make a good gift and he’d gotten lucky when he had won that soccer ball for Tommy. Takuya had entered a soccer camp competition and worked hard to win that for his friend because he knew how big of a Miura fan Tommy was. If Takuya was good at anything it was soccer. It was his favorite sport… that he may never be able to play again soon because of the cancer…

The depressing thought had entered his mind, making his chest hurt just thinking about it, before he could stop himself.

“Thanks, Takuya!” Tommy beamed.

Takuya quickly snapped out of his depressing thoughts, but not before Koji noticed. Something wasn’t right.

“Are you alright, Takuya?” Koji asked.

Everyone looked at him, confused by his question.

“Yeah,” Takuya shrugged. “Just a little tired from running all the way over here.” It wasn’t a complete lie, Takuya reasoned, but it wasn’t the complete truth either. He never liked lying to Koji. His best friend had this uncanny way of catching him in the act and ferreting out the truth.

Koji eyed him suspiciously, but let the matter drop. If Takuya wanted to talk about it then he’d tell him when he was ready. Until then, Koji decided to keep an eye on his best friend.

“So what does the little man wanna do?” Takuya asked Tommy, ignoring Koji’s critical gaze.

“How about soccer??” Tommy asked enthusiastically, setting aside his new prized ball and picked up his old beat up one.

“Sounds good to me!” Takuya grinned.

“But I’m wearing a skirt!” Zoe complained.


“That’s never stopped you two before,” Koichi lightly pointed out, a small serene smile spreading across his face.

That seemed to settle the matter. All of the other kids joined in and soon they had an epic soccer game in the works with cones set up as the goal posts.

Tommy grinned. Even though Takuya had arrived late to his party, he was having an awesome birthday.
So the groups of DigiDestined are now gathered! What's going to happen now? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!
The Storm And A Shocking Meeting

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Digimon Adventure World - The Odaiba DigiDestined met at the park. Mimi brought along Michael and Willace with her from America. We found out that after MaloMyotismon was defeated in 02, that the partner Digimon have been unable to gain access and return to the human world for some unknown reason, yet sometimes those with D3s can still make the trip to the Digital World if they can find a working portal.

Digimon Tamers World - Takato is late for a Tamers meeting in the children’s park in Shinjuku. Once there, the team starts to puzzle over what to do next.

Digimon Frontier World - Takuya has found out that he has cancer and ditches him mom to go to Tommy’s birthday party. Koji noticed that Takuya was a little off and decided to keep an eye on him.

Chapter Notes

Hey readers! Chapter 1 was more of a prologue, but now we get to the real story! Davis is the most centralized character in this chapter. I decided that I needed a higher authority in this story and those of you who have seen Tamers will recognize the Digimon Sovereign. They are the ones who bring our heroes to this new Digital World. Enjoy chapter 2!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

The Digital World: Location: The Celestial Digimon’s Domain

“We need the DigiDestined,” stated a white tiger creature with purple stripes and a metal facemask.

“I agree with Baihumon,” agreed Azulongmon, a blue dragon Digimon with a long serpentine body decorated with silver chains.

A red flaming bird Digimon shook his head.

“No offense, Baihumon, but what use are those children going to be?”

“Now, Zhuqiaomon,” Azulongmon sighed. “You know that these children have proven themselves. Our counter parts in the other worlds have seen them prove themselves over and over again.”
The fourth and final member of the group, Ebonwumon, a giant two headed turtle with a tree growing out of his back grumbled to himself. He was the oldest of the Celestial Digimon and didn’t like the idea of trusting the fate of their Digital World and all other existing worlds to a bunch of foreign children.

“Zhuqiaomon is right to be cautious,” he spoke in his Irish brogue.

The phoenix Digimon puffed out his chest with pride.

“But,” the ancient Digimon rasped, “Azulongmon and Baihumon are right about the children. The question is which group do we send to fight this great evil?”

Zhuqiaomon glowered at the tiger Digimon who was now beginning to look a little too smug for his liking. Ebonwumon didn’t like it either.

“Don’t get cocky, youngster,” he reproached. “As the youngest of us four I suggest you mind your manners around your elders.”

“Let us not bicker,” Azulongmon sighed. “There are far greater things at stake then pride.”

“Exactly,” Zhuqiaomon huffed. “Now back to Ebonwumon’s question. Who do we send? This is not an enemy to be taken lightly.”

It was quiet for a long time before they all came to the same conclusion.

“All of them.”

**The Human World – Adventure DigiDestined: Location: Odaiba Park**

Davis was lying on his side at the edge of the picnic blanket that had been laid out. He was staring off across the group at Kari. He’d had a crush on her ever since he’d first laid eyes on her, but he knew now that there was no way that she liked him back the same way. She had TK.

Davis had been jealous of the blue-eyed blond and had taken an instant disliking to him the moment he realized that the two of them had a history. His dream girl belonged with someone else. He’d been childish at first, calling the other boy names like TO, TJ, TP, anything other than TK and jumped irrationally into any argument with him, but lately he had come to terms with their relationship. He’d started calling him by name and had actually become good friends with the guy… but he didn’t have to like it.

Yolei had brought food from her family’s convenience store and everyone else had brought something to add to the makeshift potluck. They were all laughing and catching each other up on recent events, school and reminiscing memories.

Only Davis and Tai seemed to be out of it. They were the first to see the slowly encroaching clouds on the horizon.

“What’s wrong, Tai?” Izzi asked, when he realized that his comment meant for the older boy had been ignored.

“Nothing,” Tai frowned, his expression contradicting his own words. “But do you remember the weatherman mentioning anything about rain today?”
“Hmm… no, I don’t. Let me check,” Izzi said.

As always, Izzi had his trusty laptop computer with him and instantly began clicking away. The few who had heard the exchange watched with very little interest, and quickly went back to conversing with the others who hadn’t heard.

Izzi made a face after a moment of searching. He’d pulled up a satellite image, but there was no sign of the storm system that was now hovering overhead or any kind of heavy cloud cover in the area. Thunder rumbled in the sky and at last everyone else was aware that their plans might be ruined. There was a sudden flash of lightening and the ground seemed to crumble apart beneath them and swallow them whole.

Davis’ last logical thought was to look for Kari and, sure enough, he found her in TK’s arms as they fell together. The old Davis would have been petty enough to wish that it were his arms that she was in, but this older and slightly more mature Davis was just glad that she wasn’t alone. TK would look after her. Or at least that’s what Davis chose to believe as he fell unconscious…

The Human World – Digimon Tamers: Location: Shinjuku Park

Henry watched as Rika waged war internally with herself. She knew that he was right, but sometimes the redhead was too proud for her own good.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to go after all,” he said finally to break the silence.

Everyone looked at him shocked. Henry shrugged. Someone had to say it. Suzie removed her hand from his with a hurt look on her face.

“But Hen- wee,” she pouted. “I wanna see Lopmon. Don’t you wanna see Te- wee- ermon?”

Henry sighed.

“I just don’t think it’s safe for us to go right now. Our parents don’t know about this and remember the last time we all disappeared to the Digital World?”

Guilty faces met his all around. They remembered. It had been tough leaving their parents behind, some without any warning other than a note that wouldn’t and hadn’t been found until after they’d already left. Even the parents who had known about the expedition to the Digital World hadn’t wanted their child to go.

“Henry’s right,” Ryo said unexpectedly. “I was trapped there for a year, but I don’t even remember how I got there or what happened before I met Cyberdramon. My whole experience over there is a huge blur up until I met you guys. I say we wait. Maybe the Digimon can come back on their own.”

“But~!” Suzie, Mako, and Ai spluttered and whined. “We wanna see them now!”

“Uh guys?” Kenta squeaked while tugging on Kazu’s sleeve.

“What, Kenta?” Kazu huffed.

Kenta wordlessly pointed upwards drawing everyone’s attention to the sky. Dark clouds were circling overhead and the crackling of lightening could now be heard.
“When did that happen?” Jeri whispered. “It was clear only minutes ago.”

“Kids!” a man’s voice called out.

“Dad?!” Henry and Suzie gasped, startled.

Janyu Wong had just run all the way from the laboratory he worked at. A colleague of his that headed an organization known as Hypnos informed him that there was a weird anomaly happening at the children’s park. Somehow Janyu had instinctively known that his kids were there and had rushed to get them. He had nearly lost them when they had gone to the Digital World last time. Something told him he had to go to them and stop them from going again.

When Janyu was only half a kilometer away the ground started to quake. Suzie screamed and hugged her brother as tightly as she could. Henry held her close, determined to keep her safe from whatever was happening.

Takato glanced towards the old empty storage building in the park where his Digimon partner had once stayed. A light was glowing from within, presumably from the hole he’d discovered the portal. As if drawn to it, Takato ran towards the light.

Henry, alarmed and concerned for his friend, picked Suzie up and chased after Takato with the others right behind him. He heard his dad call out helplessly, too far away to stop them, but Henry knew that there was no turning back. They were going back to the Digital World again and this time they didn’t have a choice. Henry knew this even as the light flashed out of the hole in the ground and all the Tamers fell into the widening empty space. Henry knew that the only thing that he could do in that moment was hold his sister as closely and as tightly as possible so that wherever they ended he could look after her…

The Human World – Frontier DigiDestined: Location: Shibuya Park

Tommy watched his party guests leave one by one and thanked them for coming. His older brother, Yutaka, was helping their parents move all of his presents to the van, but Tommy noticed how he eyed his remaining friends suspiciously. Tommy sighed. Yutaka had a very gruff disposition when it came to Tommy and had viewed his little brother as spoiled and naïve. Tommy had never really appreciated how his older brother looked out for him until he went to the Digital World and met Takuya and the others. What was unsettling his brother at the moment was how much older Takuya and the others were compared to the other kids Tommy had invited to the party and Tommy was sadly aware of this. He’d tried to explain it to Yutaka, but there was no real way to clear up how he knew the others without telling his brother about the Digital World and that was something that he and the other Warrior DigiDestined had agreed never to do.

“You ok, Tommy?” Takuya asked.

“Yeah,” Tommy smiled sadly.

Koji joined Takuya and saw where Tommy’s thoughts were directed.

“Something to do with your brother?” Koji asked a little too bluntly, earning him an elbow in the ribs from Takuya. “Oww!”

“Yeah,” Tommy sighed.

JP, Zoe, and Koichi had joined them as well.
“What’s the matter?” JP asked.

“He doesn’t approve of me being friends with you guys,” Tommy explained. “He just doesn’t understand and I don’t think I can get him to without telling him about how we all met in the Digital world.”

Takuya gave him a sympathetic pat on the back.

“He’ll come around. He just doesn’t know us and he’s only looking after you. I know how he feels. Or have you forgotten that I have a little brother too?”

Tommy smiled. He liked Takuya. He was his idol and, as far as Tommy was concerned, Takuya was his older brother as well.

“Tommy!” Yutaka called out.

“Yeah?” Tommy answered.

“It’s time to go!”

Tommy sighed. Sometimes it sucked to be the little kid.

“Thanks for coming you guys!” he smiled up at his friends.

“Anytime, buddy!” Takuya grinned, giving him the thumbs up.

“This coming from the guy who was late,” Zoe smirked.

Koji and Koichi coughed behind their hands and JP chuckled openly.

A sudden crackle of thunder rumbling overhead made them all look up. It had been sunny only seconds ago, but now everything was dark and eerie. Zoe rubbed the goose bumps on her arms. Something didn’t feel right. Everything was suddenly too still. Tommy’s parents became uneasy as well and called their son over to them, but Tommy wouldn’t move. Yutaka had the urge to reach out and grab his baby brother, but he was frozen as well. There was a tension in the air and it felt that if you broke that tension by moving then everything would fall apart.

Takuya could feel his heart beating loudly in his chest, his lungs breathe in and exhale the air, but most of all he could suddenly feel the tumor. It felt heavy and as if it was expanding in his lung. He almost stopped breathing altogether, his chest hurt so badly. Then a bolt of lightening split the air with a loud deafening crack and the ground seemed to open up and swallow all six of them up in an instant. Yutaka and his parents were helpless as Tommy suddenly disappeared from their sights with the other five children. One minute they were standing there, looking up at the storm, and the next they were gone and there was not a single cloud to be seen in the sky…

**The Digital World: Location: Unknown Cave Tunnel**

Davis groaned. He felt as if he’d had the stuffing knocked out of him.

“Hey, Davish! Are ya up yet?!” an annoying yet familiar voice nagged.

“Veemon?” Davis moaned.

“Yup!” the cheerful voice enthused.
Davis opened his eyes and found himself staring right back at his Digimon partner.

“Veemon!” Davis cried out with joy. “It’s been a while!”

“Too long, Davish.” Veemon agreed. “You need ta visit more often.”

Davis grinned. Same old Veemon. He looked around and realized that he was alone. That wasn’t good. Nothing ever was when everyone was separated.

“Have you seen any of the others?” Davis asked.

“Nope,” Veemon frowned, which was a rare expression for him. “One minute I’m playin’ soccer at Primary Village with Wormmon, Patamon and the new baby Digimon when a weird storm hit ush and tha next thing I know ‘s I’m here and you fall outta the ceiling.”

“A storm hit you guys too?” Davis mused. “If only Izzi were here. He’d have a theory.”

“Izzi!” a distressed voice called out.

“Yeah, Izzi,” Davis repeated and then realized that it wasn’t Veemon who’d said it. “Let’s go Veemon!”

“Right behind ya, Davish!” Veemon said cheerily as he raced after his human down the tunnel they were in, in the direction of the voice.

They came to a chamber where tall bulky contraptions that looked like old computer systems and wires lined the rocky walls of the cave. Electrical currents caused sparks and arcs to spurt around the wires that had been torn off the walls by something that had crashed into them. A moan sounded from the far end of the room where there was the most damage.

“Izzi!” the voice cried again, only this time Davis and Veemon recognized it as Izzi’s Digimon partner Tentomon.

They rushed over the wreckage and found Izzi lying unconscious in a tangle of wires and circuitry. Every short hair on his head stood up from the electric shock he must have received when he got tangled up in the wires. Tentomon spotted them and cried out in relief.

“Davis! You have to help him! He just fell out of the ceiling and ending up pulling down all these wires with him. I’ve told him not to move because every time he does he gets shocked.”

“All right, Tentomon,” Davis said, trying to soothe the frantic insect Digimon. “Easy. All we have to do is cut the power. Then we can move Izzi out without worrying about electrocuting him.”

But that was easier said then done. Davis was no good with computers or any electronics for that matter and the best person to walk him through it was tangled in the very mess he was trying to fix! In spite of that Davis looked for a solution anyway, moving around the walls of the room praying that there was a big off switch somewhere. Veemon helped too while Tentomon remained with Izzi so that he could prevent him from moving and causing anymore harm to himself.

Davis was on the point of giving up when he looked behind one of the computer banks and ran into another boy, but not one that he knew. He looked as if he had just woken up and sure looked confused to see Davis.

“Who are you?” the boy asked, straightening the visor he was wearing.
“Actually, I was just going to ask you the same question,” Davis smiled. “I’m Davis.”

He held out his hand and the boy took it.

“Kazu,” the other grinned. “I was beginning to think I was alone here.”

“Davish?” Veemon’s voice echoed around the room. “Who are ya talkin’ to?”

Davis was helping Kazu get out from behind the bulky contraption when Veemon came to meet him.

“Davish, who’sh that?” he asked.

“Kazu,” Davis grunted as he finally pulled the boy out.

“Thanks,” Kazu grinned. “Wow! You have a Digimon too! A Veemon!”

“Davish, who ish thish guy?” Veemon asked.

“Dunno,” Davis admitted. “Found him while I was looking for a way to turn off the power.”

“Why would you want to do that?” Kazu asked.

“A friend of ours is stuck in the wires and we can’t move him until we turn off the power source so that he won’t get electrocuted.”

Kazu thought for a moment. He wasn’t too good with computers either, but he knew that most systems had an emergency kill switch or shut down procedure.

“Wait,” Davis said, looking at Kazu. “You said ‘you have a Digimon too.’ What did you mean by that? Are you saying you’re a DigiDestined like I am?”

“A DigiDestined?” Kazu repeated. “Well, yeah, of course I am, but everyone in my group prefer to be called Digimon Tamers. I haven’t seen him in a while, but my partner is-”

“Kazu!” a robotic, yet undoubtedly cheerful voice cried out.

The two boys and one Digimon turned to face the end of the large computer room and saw a large bulky iron Digimon make its way towards them.

“Guardromon!” Kazu exclaimed with a wide grin. “You’re here!”

“Kazu!” the robot Digimon cried with delight. “You have no idea what I’ve been through! After I returned to the Digital World with the others everything seemed to be fine, but today there was a terrible electrical surge and beams from the core shot out at us and pulled us all into different fields. I arrived here and tried to perform a life form scan but there was electrical interference so I came to the source to shut it down and see if it enables me to perform my scan, but thank the Sovereign you’re here!”

“No worries!” Kazu grinned. “I’m glad you’re here too.”

“Ah, Kazu?” Davis said, trying to catch his attention.

“Oh yeah!” Kazu gasped. “Guardromon, this is Davis and his Digimon partner Veemon. They have a friend who’s in trouble and needs the power shut off as soon as possible. Can you do that bud?”
“Roger!” the robot chirped, all business now. If his Tamer wanted something done that was within his capabilities then Guardromon would do it. He stretched out his arm and tiny cables shot out and attached themselves to the nearest computer bank.

“Processing…” the Digimon hummed, and lights flashed across his eye sockets as he downloaded the data he needed.

“…Far wall third switch,” he replied finally and pointed to the wall he mentioned.

Davis was off in a rush, but tripped over another prone figure. At first he thought he’d run into another Digimon, but when it groaned and swore, he was sure it was human. Digimon just didn’t have that kind of vocabulary. At least none of the Digimon Davis had ever met. It was another boy and as this one sat up he rubbed the back of his head while staring grumpily at Davis.

“Thanks, kid,” he grumbled. “The one part of my body that didn’t hurt now does.”

Davis gaped. The boy was big, sure, but he couldn’t be that much older then he was, so what was this about calling him a kid?

“Sorry about that,” Davis tried to laugh it off, but that only seemed to annoy the bigger boy.

“Davish, whatcha doin’ now?” Veemon cried exasperatedly. “Do ya wanna help Izzi or not?”

“Ah!” Davis panicked, suddenly jumping to his feet and rushed to the wall where he found the switch just as Guardromon had said.

“Which one again?!” Davis called out.

“Third,” came Guardromon’s monotone reply.

“Say,” the new boy said, joining him. “What are you doing?”

Davis flipped the switch and the darkness was instant. This startled the big boy and he nearly knocked Davis down when he collided with him.

“Oww!” Davis complained after bumping his head into the wall.

“Sorry,” the big boy grunted. “Didn’t know that you were going to kill the power. I’m Junpei, by the way, but everyone calls me JP.”

Davis sighed. “That’s ok. It’s not like I gave you any warning. Oh! And I’m Davis.”

There was a thudding sound that could only have been footsteps and then a bright beam of light hit them.

“You alright, Davis?” Kazu’s voice asked.

The light was coming from a headlight on Guardromon’s forehead. Veemon was sitting on his shoulder looking at JP curiously.

“Makin’ more friends, Davish?” Veemon asked.


Kazu helped him up and Davis introduced JP.
“Now let’s go help Izzi before Tentomon blows a gasket,” Davis sighed.

“And that’s not fun,” Guardromon stated knowingly.

“He was being sarcastic, Guardromon,” Kazu sighed. “It’s a figure of speech.”

“And you wonder why I find you humans to be so complex,” the robot tittered.

The three boys grinned.

“Oh! Hey, do you have a Digimon?” Davis suddenly asked JP.


“He means do you have a Digimon partner?” Kazu asked.

“No,” JP shrugged. “Never had one.”

“Really?” Veemon asked. “Then how come you’re here in the Digital World? At least I think that’s where we are. It’s sure not the human world.”

“I don’t know why I’m here. I was just at a friend’s birthday party when some freak storm came out of nowhere. Now I’m here,” JP shrugged.

“Really?” Kazu gasped. “That’s what happened to me and my friends. There was this storm that came out of nowhere and then I woke up here and Davis found me.”

“Speaking of finding,” Tentomon’s voice cried out, “Hurry up and get over here! Izzi may be seriously hurt!”

“Geeze, Tentomon! We’re coming already,” Davis sighed. “Man that Digimon can be annoying.”

“Sounds like a real nagger,” JP agreed.

They finally found Izzi and with the aid of Guardromon’s light and strength they quickly got Izzi out from under all those wire and cables. Tentomon wasted no time trying to revive his human partner.

“Izzi! Please speak to me!”

Izzi moaned, but other than that there was no reply. He was out and the only thing that could be done was to wait for him to wake up on his own…

~*~*~*~*~*~
Four boys from three different circles of DigiDestined meet but where's everyone else? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The Digimon Sovereign of another unknown Digital World have decided to call upon the DigiDestined from the Adventure, Tamer and Frontier worlds and have summoned them to theirs. Davis woke up and found Izzi trapped in electrical wiring. He then met Kenta and JP while looking for a way to turn off the power in an effort to help Izzi. He succeeded in turning off the power but now everything is dark and they have to wait for Izzi to wake up.

The Digital World: Location: The Computer Chamber

Izzi woke up with a huge headache. It didn’t help that Tentomon was blabbering nonstop until he was reassured that Izzi was going to be fine. Izzi was relieved to see that he wasn’t alone in this strange place and he was certainly glad to see Davis, but quite honestly he wished that Joe were there instead. Davis was too much like Tai and was often rash. He needed someone more calm and patient. A long time ago Joe would have been the last one to turn to, but in recent years Joe had gained more self-confidence and very useful resource and medical knowledge, living up to his Crest of Reliability. In his current condition Izzi would have preferred to have the soon-to-be doctor with him, but he’d just have to make do with Davis.

“Where are we?” Izzi asked after he was frustratingly unable to come to a conclusion on his own. This headache of his was insane!

“I was hoping you’d have an idea,” Davis sighed.

‘Odd,’ Izzi thought. ‘Davis seems down about something.’

“All I know is that we’re either underground or in some sort of cave,” an unfamiliar voice said.

Izzi realized that Davis and their Digimon partners weren’t the only company he had. Two other boys and a Guardromon were sitting nearby. It was then that he realized that their light source was coming from the spotlights on either side of the robot Digimon’s head. The boy wearing a blue visor was the one who had spoken.

“And they are…?” Izzi inquired after no one bothered to introduce him to the other boys.

“Oh!” Davis gasped, realizing his error. “Izzi, this is Kazu and JP. I found them while trying to turn
off the power so that we could untangle you from those cables.”

Izzi faintly recalled that while falling he had seen the cables on the wall. He must have dragged them down with him instinctively to slow his descent and received a sudden shock when a few of them snapped free from their housings. No wonder he didn’t feel good.

“Oh… Thanks,” Izzi mumbled as he tried to stand but his legs felt like jelly and he instantly fell back down.

“Hey!” Davis yelped as he caught his faint friend. “Easy, Izzi. You were electrocuted, you know.”

Izzi moaned.

Introductions were given once again for Izzi’s sake, even though it was redundant, and after a few more minutes Izzi felt well enough to stand. Walking was another matter entirely. Kazu offered to have Guardromon carry him and Izzi concluded that it would be idiocy to refuse.

He had Guardromon take him back to the computer’s power switch and once the power was back on he hooked up his surprisingly still intact and functioning laptop to the nearest computer terminal to access the mainframe and hacked his way into the system where he could try to access any information that could give him a hint as to their location. He fiddled with the system’s settings and reset the power’s surges so that there was no longer an excess of energy flowing through the cables. He eventually found a map of the layout of the area they were currently in. It appeared that they were in a vast series of tunnels. It reminded him of the time that he had been in temple ruins on File Island after their first enemy, Devimon, had split it apart in an attempt to separate the DigiDestined. The ruins had been a labyrinth just like the one they were currently in only this one was far more complex.

Satisfied with his work for the moment Izzi disconnected his computer and turned to his waiting companions.

“It’s useless to remain here. Guardromon, could you run that life forms reading that you said you had attempted? There shouldn’t be any electrical interference this time.”

The robot Digimon obliged and ran the scan.

“My scans are picking up the seven life forms that are currently in this room.”

“In other words, you’ve found our life readings, buddy,” Kazu laughed.

Izzi pulled up the map he had downloaded from the network and hooked his computer up to the Digimon. With Guardromon’s permission he synced their systems so that whatever Guardromon picked up on his scanners Izzi’s laptop would process the information automatically, preventing the need to continually hook it up to the Digimon. Now he’d have the life form readings and not just Digivice signals.

Kazu wasn’t sure he liked the computer geek messing with his Digimon partner and ordering him around, but he looked as if he knew what he was doing so Kazu remained silent. The weird redhead could be the key to finding his friends and getting out of this place so he could deal with the other boy’s tampering… for now.

Izzi suddenly cried out with joy.

“Hey guys! I’m getting our digivice signals. Four of the seven readings that are in this chamber have an overlapping digivice signal! All right! I’m no longer getting interference from the power
source here. It seems our system synchronization is working as well Guardromon.”

Then he suddenly frowned.

“Odd… I wonder why they are different. You see these four different kinds of readings?” he asked.

They nodded.

“Pull out you digivices,” he demanded suddenly, revealing his own digivice.

“Digivices?” JP repeated, confused as they rustled through their pockets and pulled out their own version of the digivice.

Izzi realized that all four of them had distinctly different models. His was a small white device that was square with rounded sides curved in at the corners with a mini square screen within a circle in the center of the device. There was a short antenna in the top curved in left corner, two blue buttons to the right of the screen and one on the left.

Davis’ digivice was white and oval shaped with a square screen in the top half of the device. The bottom half had a round button that looked like the toggle buttons on some video game systems that were used to scroll over to select something or move characters around. Next to the screen on the right there were two black buttons that formed an oval shape together. One yellow button was between them and the toggle button. Its sides had blue grips and an antenna was positioned on the top left of the device.

Kazu’s digivice was like a rounded T. It had a square screen in the center of the orange circle. On the top of the T there was an orange strap and clasp that looked like it could hook onto something like a keychain. Below the screen in the bottom of the T there was a toggle button like the one on Davis’ D3 only this one had one orange button on the left and right side of the circle. One other button was located near the bottom left corner of the mini-screen. There was a slit in the bottom half of the device where it looked like you could swipe or scan something though it.

JP’s digivice was blue and had a shape similar to Davis’ but it was larger and more angular. It had a mini-screen in the top third of the device inside a yellow hexagon with pronounced corners. The bottom half had a yellow grip, there were two white buttons side by side above one little yellow one, and one white button on the left side of the device.

“Wow,” Davis whistled looking from his device to Kazu and JP’s. “I’ve never seen digivices like that.”

“My friends and I call them D-Powers,” Kazu smiled. “All Digimon Tamers have these. Although Izzi’s digivice looks a lot like the ones from the TV show.”

“TV show?” Izzi and Davis blinked.

“Well ours are called D-Tectors,” JP frowned, looking at his device. He had thought that all of the D-Tectors had turned back into cell phones once they had left the Digital World that last time. When had it made the change back?

“Fascinating,” Izzi breathed. “None of the other DigiDestined around the world had devices like those either. They all looked like mine. You guys are Japanese right? So where are you from?”

Kazu looked at Izzi oddly before answering.

“Shinjuku, Tokyo.”

“We’re from Odaiba,” Davis stated. “What does that have to do with anything Izzi?”

“Don’t you find it odd Davis that there are other DigiDestined in Japan that we haven’t met?” Izzi questioned. “Think about it. Especially after the Oikawa incident and all those Digimon entered our world? Don’t you think we would have noticed other children battling Digimon in our own backyard?”

“What are you talking about?” Kazu gapped. “It wasn’t a Digimon that attacked the world. It was that computer program, the D-Reaper, that went nuts and nearly destroyed everything.”

“I have no idea what either of you guys are talking about,” JP frowned. “No Digimon ever came into our world. I admit that one came close, but it was stopped.”

“Wha?” Davis cried, clutching his head. “Izzi, what’s going on here?!”

Everyone looked at the older boy who was deep in thought.

“I see now,” he mused after a few minutes.

“Well I don’t,” Davis, Kazu and JP grumbled in unison.

“I think that the reason our digivices are different is because we come from different worlds, or different realities. That’s why our digivices are so different and so are the readings. We all live in Tokyo yet none of our stories match up with the other two accounts of the Digimon encounters within our world. These digivices are merely one form of proof that there are different realities. Different realities and, therefore, different Digital Worlds that needed their own group of DigiDestined to help solve their problems. You called yourself a Digimon Tamer right, Kazu?”

“Yeah…” the visor boy said slowly as if he was unsure of Izzi’s mental state.

“What does your group call themselves?” Izzi suddenly asked JP.

“Huh?” the big boy gaped. “Uh… DigiDestined. Or at least that’s what we were called when we were in the… uh our Digital World.”

Izzi nodded.

“Do you guys not have Digimon partners?” he asked when he recalled that no Digimon was accompanying JP.

“Well we had Neemon and Bokomon,” JP mused, “but I wouldn’t call them our partners. Friend’s sure, but they were next to useless in a fight.”

Izzi looked thoughtfully at JP and that made him uncomfortable. He wasn’t sure what he’d do when Izzi finally asked him how his friends were of any use to their version of the Digital World without a Digimon partner. That is, assuming that Izzi was right about them being from different realities with different corresponding Digital Worlds.

Before Izzi had the chance to ask him, however, his laptop went off.

“Looks like we’re getting new digivice readings,” he announced.

Guardromon ran a scan and found more life form readings too, but this time it was strange. There were four life form readings on Izzi’s laptop, but there were five digivice readings separate from
them. Before, each digivice reading had overlapped one life form reading. Izzi glanced at their current location to find that it was still true.

“Are you getting this Guardromon?” he asked.

“Affirmative,” the robot beeped. “Most unusual.”

“What is?” Davis asked.

“I’m hooked into Guardromon’s life form scanner and we’ve picked up four life forms, but there are five digivice signals. Two yellow, one orange, one red and one blue. After a quick analysis of our readings and our current positions, I can assume that the yellow signals belong to those with a digivice like mine, the orange must belong to those who have Davis’ model, the blue belongs to those with Kazu’s model, and the red signals belong to those with JP’s model. …They’re not too far away. I suggest that we go check it out.”

The other three nodded and off they went…

The Digital World: Location: The Ice Cavern

Joe sighed inwardly since he could not do so externally. He, Cody, Michael, and two others were frozen solid inside a block of ice. Outside he could see Gomamon with three other Digimon pacing back and forth trying to figure out how to unfreeze them. How did he get into these kinds of fixes? One moment the three of them were falling and the next they crash land with two strangers in a freezing icy cavern. One of them was a boy a few years younger then Cody wearing a large orange hat and had introduced himself as Tommy. The other, a boy named Kenta, reminded Joe a little bit of himself when he was younger, or maybe it was just the glasses the boy wore. The point was that they were all clueless as to how they had gotten there or how to leave. Shortly after exploring the place they had found their Digimon companions.

Cody’s Digimon, Armadillomon, spoke with a southern accent that reminded Joe of the old American John Wayne western movies.

Joe had never actually met Michael’s partner Digimon, Betamon, until now. He looked like a green tadpole with blue wavy stripes on his back, red eyes, four pronged legs, a white underbelly and an orange fin that stuck straight up out of his back, doubling his height.

Kenta had a tiny pink Digimon that reminded Joe of a mini-Gomamon. It had green eyes, wings, a gold collar, and a red heart on its tiny chest. It had no legs, but at least had two hand-less arms (or at least Joe assumed they were arms). The mini Digimon had squealed with delight and zoomed around Kenta’s head when he saw him.

Joe noticed that Tommy was alone and had no Digimon partner to reunite with, but he didn’t seem to be missing one either. He had merely looked at the others curiously. After the short reunion the ground had suddenly begun to shake and a cold blast of air separated Digimon from DigiDestined and then next thing any of them knew the five humans were frozen alive, yet were somehow able to breath and see what was going on outside their block of ice. Joe prayed that the others were here too and that they would find him soon. He didn’t like the idea of spending the rest of his life as a popsicle.
Davis, Kazu and JP had followed Izzi up to the wall with Guardromon bringing up the rear. Davis and Izzi were a little frustrated because neither of their Digimon had been able to digivolve to the next level and blast through it. Even Guardromon, a champion level Digimon, had been unable to put a noticeable dent in the icy wall blocking their path.

“According to these readings our friends are just on the other side of this wall,” Izzi was saying. “We’ve tried normal digivolving, so now we’ll have to hope that Armor Digivolving works. If not, then we are really in for it.”

“Armor Digivolving?” JP asked, confused. “What’s that?”

“It’s a rare form of digivolving that only Davis and a few other DigiDestined friends of ours are capable of doing,” Izzi explained. “In our world it’s an ancient form of digivolving that allows a Digimon to digivolve when all others can’t.”

“How come only Davis can do it?” Kazu asked, thinking that Davis didn’t look that special to be granted what was obviously a rare ability.

“Well, to tell you the truth, Davis hasn’t been a DigiDestined for nearly as long as I have. There were eight of us originally, but two and a half years after we original DigiDestined defeated the evil Dark Masters and returned to our world, our leader, Tai, got an urgent message for help from his partner Agumon via his digivice. I’m still unsure of how he got there but he was somehow able to return to Digi-world. He found out that another human had entered Digi-world calling himself the Digimon Emperor. He had enslaved hundreds of Digimon and used his black digivice and structures he called control spires to prevent Digimon from digivolving.”

He paused here and glanced back at Davis. No one was comfortable bringing up Ken’s past as the Emperor, but it was easier to do so when he wasn’t there. Davis took it particularly hard because the two of them were now best friends.

“What?” Kazu and JP exclaimed. “Why would he do that? Didn’t he know that Digimon are living, feeling creatures?!”

“No,” Davis said coldly. “He didn’t. He regrets his actions as the Digimon Emperor to this day. It still bothers him and it wasn’t his fault for the most part.”

This last sentence was said rather sadly, earning him looks from everyone.

“The point,” Izzi said to resume his story, “is that Agumon couldn’t digivolve even with Tai there. Two others, Gatomon and Patamon, found them and they ran for cover inside a cave where Tai messaged the rest of us for help. Inside that cave was a Digi-egg with the Crest of Courage on it. Tai, being the DigiDestined of Courage, tried to pick it up but it wouldn’t budge. Instead, three lights shot out of it and zoomed away.

“At the time, I had received Tai’s message for help and came to Davis’ middle school to use the computers. I met Davis for the first time when I found Tai’s sister, Kari, and another DigiDestined, TK, on my way to the computer lab. Two others, Yolei and Cody were with them, which was just my luck because I was looking for Yolei anyway since she was made the new computer club president after I graduated to high school. With Yolei’s permission we gained access to the computer lab and after Yolei and Cody left I was able to open a digi-port to the Digital World. While TK, Kari and I where getting ready to enter the portal, Davis was arguing with us about letting him come along, but we pointed out that he needed a digivice. It was around that time the
computer flashed and three new upgraded versions of the digivice shot out of the computer. Davis got a blue one, Yolei got a red one and Cody got a yellow one.”

Davis took over the story from there.

“I was excited because I remembered Tai mentioning the Digital World one time and the others had just been proven wrong about me being able to go. But anyways, Izzi ended up staying behind while I accompanied TK and Kari to Digi-world for the first time in my life. When we got there I had no clue what to expect. We quickly found Tai and he took us to the Digi-egg. TK and Kari tried to pick it up, but they couldn’t. Then Tai suggested that I have a go and I picked it up without a problem. After I picked the Digi-egg up Veemon came out of the spot where it had been.”

The blue dino Digimon looked up at his partner.

“I’d been waitin’ a long time for someone ta move that egg. It felt so good ta be free! We’ve had some pretty awesome adventures together since then haven’t we?”

“Yup!” Davis agreed.

“All right, I’m with you so far,” Kazu said, “But how did releasing Veemon help the situation? The Digimon couldn’t digivolve, right?”

“Right,” Izzi said picking up the story again. “The digi-egg that Davis had picked up was a special egg and enabled him to use an ancient form of DigiVolution known as Armor Digivolving. With the Digi-egg of Courage Veemon is able to Digivolve with the attributes of Tai’s crest. When Yolei and Cody came to the Digital World for their first time another DigiDestined, Sora, and I accompanied them. The same thing happened to them that Davis went through. Yolei was able to move the Digi-egg of Love and got her partner Hawkmon, and Cody was able to move the Digi-egg of Knowledge and get his partner Armadillomon. All three of them have the power to use the digi-eggs to Armor Digivolve when the other Digimon can’t. TK and Kari also found armored digi-eggs of their own with their crests on them. They were able to lift them, unlike Tai, Sora and I, and their digivices changed to the upgraded ones that Davis, Yolei, Cody and the- ah, Ken had. So now their Digimon, Gatomon and Patamon, are able to Armor Digivolve as well. As for the other crests that had belonged to the other three DigiDestined, Davis, Yolei and Cody found their corresponding digi-eggs, gaining a second Armored DigiVolution. Davis found the Digi-egg of Friendship, Yolei has the Digi-egg of Sincerity, and Cody got the Digi-egg of Reliability. And speaking of Armor Digivolving, Davis, I want you to try to use the Digi-egg of Courage to knock down this ice wall. We need Flamedramon’s fire-rocket attack to melt it.”

“Ready, Davish?” Veemon asked his partner. “Let’s show these guysh what Armor Digivolving ish about!”

Davis pulled out his D-3 and selected the right digi-egg on his D-Terminal – a small handheld messaging device that was getting popular in his world.

“Digi-Armor Energize!” He yelled, his digivice flashing in his hand and Veemon glowed golden yellow, as all Digimon should when digivolving.

“Veemon Armor Digivolve to…!”

The light flashed, dissipated, and revealed a taller Veemon with chest, thigh, foot, hand, and head armor with a spike sticking out of his forehead. The armor had a flame design on it like you’d see on hot-rods and motorcycles.
“Flamedramon!” he announced in a deeper voice without the lisp. “The Fire of Courage!”

“Whoa!” JP, Kazu and Guardromon gasped.

“Fire-rocket!” the evolved Veemon cried as he made a punching motion at the ice wall and fireballs shot from where his hands should have been.

It melted some of the ice, but there was plenty of wall left.

He growled, irked, and called out the same attack only this time he charged at the wall with a flame-enshrouded figure. The wall melted nicely over his enflamed body, causing the air to mist.

“Nice work, Flamedramon,” Davis grinned.

His Digimon gave a satisfied sigh and began to smooth out the hole in the icy wall so that the newly made entrance to the next chamber was large enough for everyone, especially Guardromon, to go through.

It was freezing inside and Davis’ goggles frosted over. The space was empty for the most part and was made entirely out of ice. They stepped tentatively inside looking for the friends they hoped were in here.

“Davis!” a voice with a southern twang echoed through the chamber.

“Armadillomon?” Davis called out. “Where are you?”

“Right here,” the armadillo Digimon cried as he suddenly popped out of the ground.

“He’s not alone!” another voice cried out and Gomamon appeared with Betamon and Marineangemon.

“If Gomamon, Armadillomon and Betamon are here, then so are Joe, Cody, and Michael, right?” Davis asked.

“If Marineangemon is here then so is Kenta,” Kazu cried and the tiny pink Digimon whirled around his head at the sound of his partner’s name.

JP kneeled down by the Digimon.

“Was there anyone else? A kid without a Digimon partner?” he asked.

The four Digimon looked at each other.

“There was a little boy like Cody,” Armadillomon said slowly. “He wore a big orange hat.”

“That’s Tommy!” JP exclaimed.

“He looked pretty young,” Gomamon commented.

“He just turned ten,” JP sighed. “Today was his birthday, or at least it was in our world before we came here.”

“Where are they?” Izzi asked, concerned.

The four Digimon looked at each other again.
“Frozen,” came the unison reply.

The Digimon led them to the ice chunk where their DigiDestined partners were frozen.

“I see,” Izzi mused. “The reason we only picked up four life form readings and five digivice signals was because the DigiDestined were encased in ice. Guardromon’s life forms scan looks for heat signatures.”

“Are they alright?” JP asked worriedly as he stood in front of the small boy Armadillomon had described.

“I think so,” Izzi said. “The Digital World isn’t like our own.”

“Flamedramon,” Davis said, “Melt the ice. Let’s get them out of there.”

“You want it quick or slow?” Flamedramon asked as his armored hands burst into flame.

“Slow,” Izzi said. “A major change in temperature could send them into shock.”

“Got it,” Flamedramon said as he put fist to ice.

It was a nerve rackingly slow process. Flamedramon worked from the top to the bottom and after twenty minutes Joe’s head was free. He took a few deep lungfuls of air before he thanked the Digimon.

“Thanks,” he sighed with relief. “You don’t know how weird it was to be trapped in ice, but not suffocate.”

Izzi caught his friend and the other four boys up to speed on their current situation after their heads were unfrozen as well.

“That makes sense I guess,” Joe sighed, his entire upper half now free.

The other boys were still up to their armpits in ice, but at least they were fine. As fine as being frozen in ice goes anyways. Flamedramon looked tired, but he kept on going with Davis cheering him on and the occasional encouragement from the boys still encased in the ice. When he finally did finish he immediately de-digivolved back into Veemon.

“Nice work buddy,” Davis said.

He picked up his collapsed Digimon and carried him over to the reunited group where introductions were being given once again.

~*~*~*~*~*~
Slowly but surely the gang is coming together! Who will they find next? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Izzi woke up and after introductions were made he informed Davis, Kazu, and JP about the more than possible existence of other worlds/realities and his digivice theory. He and Guardromon synced their systems and found strange life and digivice signals. They left to investigate and found out that normal digivolving doesn’t work, so Davis had to Armor Digivolve Veemon into Flamedramon in order to get to the room where the readings were located. They found Tommy, Joe, Michael, Cody and Kenta frozen in ice and thawed them out.

Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: The Forest Cavern

While Joe and the others were being unfrozen by Flamedramon, Mimi and Yolei were waking up in the middle of a small clearing in the middle of a forest.

“Mmm,” Mimi mumbled as she sat up. “Where are we?”

Yolei looked around at the dense foliage all around them, noting that instead of a sky, there was a cave ceiling.

“Definitely not the park,” she said, cleaning off the lenses of her large round glasses.

There was then a sudden rustling in the brush to their left so they jumped to their feet, readying themselves to run if they had to.

“Oh good,” a familiar voice said. “You’re awake. We were worried.”

“Palmon?!” Mimi gasped as her Digimon partner emerged from the forest.

She was a plant Digimon with a pink flower for hair and she was with a bird Digimon with white and reddish-brown feathers wearing a band on it’s head with a feather sticking up in the back.

“And Hawkmon!” Yolei cried as she ran to embrace her Digimon partner.

“Yes, it’s good to see you too, Yolei,” Hawkmon gasped, “but you’re crushing my wings! Besides, we need to get moving. Something else is in here with us!”
Mimi and Yolei immediately became serious and focused. They were in unknown territory and who knew what kinds of Digimon lurked within these woods. They moved quickly into the forest and followed Palmon who insisted that she had an idea of how to get out of the cavern.

“Kyaa!” a voice screamed. “ Somebody help me!”

“This way,” Mimi said as she took off in the direction of the call for help.

Yolei followed, but she had a sinking suspicion that they were walking into a trap. It was no use talking Mimi out of it though because if someone was in need, Mimi was that selfless person who’d go out of her way to help.

They ended up in another clearing that Mimi swore was where the voice had come from, but they could see no one there.

“Help!” the voice cried again, loud and clear. It was a girl’s voice. “ Up here!”

Mimi and Yolei looked up and gasped.

A blond girl wearing purple clothes was stuck in a large spider web high up off the ground.

“Please help me,” she begged, wriggling in the web, but getting nowhere.

Mimi and Yolei weren’t the only ones who had responded to the girl’s desperate call. There was a rustling on the opposite end of the clearing where Mimi and Yolei stood. A boy with a small girl in tow had come too.

“Hen-wee,” the little girl giggled. “ That lady stuck in tha air.”

“She needs help.”

Two Digimon emerged from behind them. Both looked like a cross between a dog and rabbit. One was a creamy color with one horn on his forehead, two green horizontal stripes on his long green tipped ears. It’s hands and feet also had green tips, and there was a green marking around his neck. The other one looked the same, but had different colors. It was light brown with pink markings and it had three horns on its forehead instead of one.

Yolei gasped, pointing at the cream and green colored one.

“They have a Terriermon!”

The boy reacted, noticing Yolei and Mimi for the first time.

“How do you know that’s what he’s called?” he asked.

“Because I’ve met one before,” Yolei answered. “Our friend Willace has one.”

“This is Lopmon!” the little girl squealed delightedly as she hugged the brown and pink one.

“Hello,” Mimi smiled. “I’m Mimi and this is Yolei, my partner Palmon, and Yolei’s partner, Hawkmon.”

The boy gave a curt bow.

“I’m Henry and this is my little sister, Suzie.”
“Heh-low!” the little girl beamed.

“And I’m Zoe! Now if all the introductions are over can someone please get me out of here!” the girl in the web cried out incredulously. After all, how could they just stand there chatting when she was in need of some serious help?

“Oh dear,” Mimi mumbled. “Just how are we going to do that?”

Zoe sighed. “I don’t care how. Just get me out!”

“She noisy,” Suzie complained to her brother.

Henry looked up to the cavern ceiling, praying the ground would just swallow him again. He knew Suzie was only five years old, but he wished she had just a little tact.

“How are you going to get her down?” a voice called out. “Well why don’t we start by getting you all up there first!”

Suddenly all eight of them were hoisted into the air by invisible threads. The four children were thrown into the web Zoe was in and the four Digimon were thrown into a separate net hanging from a nearby tree. A vicious cackling filled the air and a large spider with gaping jaws and pincers hovered above the webs.

“It’s a Dokugumon!” Mimi gasped.

The spider Digimon cackled again.

“Ah, what sweet specimens I now have to eat,” she sighed. “It will all be over soon. Just relax!”

She opened her gaping jaws and a gas flowed toward the helpless DigiDestined, its affects knocking them out one by one, but before Yolei lost consciousness she managed to dig out her D-Terminal and type an S.O.S. She only hoped someone was within range to receive her message.

**The Digital World: Location: The Ice Cavern**

Once completely free of the ice, Joe began inspecting Izzi’s condition. Davis had told him about what had happened in the computer chamber, so he insisted on making sure his friend was all right before they moved on to find the others. There was a reason he was going to medical school after all. After treating a few minor burns that Izzi had received when he’d been electrocuted, he was sure that his friend was in no danger. Joe then moved on and checked Cody, Kenta, and Tommy over just to make sure that they were fine after their little ice escapade.

It was relatively quiet until a sudden beeping sound echoed around the chamber. Izzi was confused at first because the sound wasn’t coming from his computer.

“Oh!” Davis exclaimed. “It’s me. I’m receiving a message.”

He pulled out his D-Terminal just as Cody’s, Joe’s and Izzi’s devices went off as well.

“It’s from Yolei,” Cody announced. “It looks like she’s in trouble. All it says is ‘S.O.S.’”

“Then we’d better hurry,” Izzi agreed. “Guardromon, can you run another life forms scan?”

The robot nodded and expanded the range of his search.
“Got it,” Izzi muttered as he focused on the area where Guardromon had picked up nine new life form readings. It was too far away to get a digivice reading, but Izzi was positive that that was where they’d find Yolei and whoever was with her. The D-Terminals could only send messages to each other over a certain distance without a boost to a Wi-Fi connection. He inputted the shortest route to the area and got directions quickly.

Veemon was too tired to Armor Digivolve again so soon, but luckily Cody also had a Digimon partner that could Armor Digivolve.

“Cody, we need Digmon,” Izzi announced as he led the group to the wall that would put them in the shortest tunnel that would lead them to Yolei’s location.

The boy nodded and pulled out his D-Terminal and D-3.

“Digi-Armor Energize!” he cried in his soft voice.

Armadillomon glowed like Veemon had when he Armor Digivolved.

“Armadillomon Armor Digivolve to…”

He was then replaced with a tall yellow beetle looking Digimon with a drill for a nose, and drills for pincers on each “hand”. The crest on Knowledge was scrawled on his back in purple with a bunch of other markings.

“Digmon! The Drill of Knowledge!”

Again, this form of Digivolving was impressive to the others.

“Wow,” Kenta muttered to Kazu. “That was just like the Digimon in the TV show!”

“Pretty cool, huh?” Kazu beamed back. “I’ve got Digmon’s Gold Rush modify card in my deck too.”

Michael, JP and Joe happened to be standing nearby during this exchange. They shot the two boys’ a questioning glance, but their attention soon went back to Izzi, who was now giving instructions to the Armored Digimon.

“Drill right here,” Izzi said, indicating a certain spot on the wall.

Digmon nodded. “Stand back! Rock Cracking!”

The Digimon dove nose first, with arms extended, and began to drill speedily through the icy wall. Once he was done drilling and everyone had made it through the hole he’d made, Izzi took the lead once more. When they got closer to the other cluster of signals on Guardromon’s life form readings, Izzi’s computer went off, indicating that there was one yellow, one orange, one red and two blue digivice readings. This encouraged the group to hurry up even more and soon they reached the end of the tunnel and entered an underground forest.

“Whoa,” Kenta gasped.

“You said it,” Kazu agreed.

“Only in Digi-World,” Joe sighed.

“Mimi!” a voice called out from somewhere inside the foliage.
“That was Palmon! This way!” Izzi cried.

They all rushed into a clearing where Izzi was getting the digivice readings, but no one was there.

“It’s Izzi, Michael and Joe!” Palmon’s voice cried from above.

“Davis and Cody too!” hooted another voice.

“Kazu and Kenta!” another two voices chorused.

Everyone looked up and were shocked to see the prone bodies of their friends hanging limp within a spider’s web. In a nearby tree Palmon, Hawkmon, Terriermon and Lopmon were hanging in a net made of the same kind of web.

“What happened here Palmon?” Joe asked.

Palmon and Hawkmon went into a rapid explanation, wasting no time.

“Hurry,” Palmon cried after their brief exchange. “You have to get us out of here before Dokugumon returns!”

The web was too high up for anyone to do anything for their friends just yet, but they were able to get the Digimon out of the net with a Swiss army pocketknife Michael happened to have on him. He’d been in Boy Scouts when he was little. Go figure.

“We have to wake them up,” Izzi sighed as he looked up at Mimi and Yolei. “If they were awake then it would be easier to facilitate a rescue. Unfortunately whatever method we use will alert Dokugumon and give us only minutes to get them down. We need a plan.”

“I have an idea if anyone wants to hear it,” Kenta said shyly. “Our Digimon can blast the web loose. If we wake your friends with a loud noise of some kind we can tell them to brace themselves just before we cut the web’s supports. Then in mid fall we could catch them.”

“Sounds simple enough Kenta,” Izzi agreed. “And simple is usually best in these types of situations”

Davis nodded.

“We can use the net that the Digimon were trapped in,” he added. “It’s the same material as the web, which seems to be holding up pretty well. I say we cut them out of one web only to catch them in another.”

“Sounds perfect.” Joe agreed. “But now how are we going to wake them up?”

“Yeah,” Gomamon agreed with his partner. “Kari’s not here and even if she was she doesn’t have her whistle anymore.”

“Whistle?” Tommy repeated blinking. “Oh!”

Everyone looked at the little boy.

“What is it Tommy?” JP asked.

Tommy reached down into his shirt and pulled out the whistle Takuya had given him for his birthday. He grinned.
“All right Tommy!” Kazu yipped. “Go for it man!”

Tommy nodded, took a deep breath, and blew as hard as he could into the whistle. The ringing sound rang throughout the entire forest and continued ringing in everyone’s ears long after Tommy had stopped. They waited with baited breath to see if Tommy’s efforts had been worth it. Finally they saw movement. Mimi moaned and Yolei grunted as she tried to stretch. Suzie had started crying when she realized that she couldn’t move and Henry tried to comfort her, but he couldn’t much move either. Zoe yawned and then started to squirm, but made as much progress as the others.

“Hey girls and Henry!” Kazu yelled up. “We’re going to cut you loose and catch you guys in this net! Brace yourselves.”

The captives barely had time to register the information Kazu had just supplied them before the attempts to cut the net began.

“Feather Strike!” Hawkmon cried as he threw his head-feather like a boomerang near Yolei and Mimi.

“Bunny Blast!” Terriermon spat energy spheres at the section of the net by Henry, Suzie and Zoe.

“Blazing Ice!” Lopmon cried before spitting fine ice crystals up at the web, making the final blow before the whole works came crashing down. The waiting DigiDestined below pulled out the net as far as it would go and caught their friends with relative ease. It was getting them unstuck that became the problem. It took agonizingly long minutes – minutes that brought Dokugumon closer.

“Aww, my hair!” Mimi, Yolei, and Zoe cried in unison once unstuck.

Suddenly there was a cackle and Dokugumon was back.

“I’ve had just about enough of her!” Yolei growled. “Hawkmon!”

“I’m ready Yolei!” her Digimon replied.

“Wait!” Izzi cried and grabbed Yolei’s arm. “Have him Armor Digivolve! Normal digivolving is impossible right now.”

Hearing this, Henry clutched his digivice, staring at Dokugumon with a frustrated glare. He’d tried to help Terriermon digivolve the moment Dokugumon had reappeared, but it hadn’t worked. Now he knew why.

‘Looks like I’ll just have to work with Terriermon as he is then,’ Henry thought, trading a glance with his partner.

He then tried swiping a modify card through his D-Power, but that didn’t work either. Henry ground his teeth in frustration as he noticed that Kenta and Kazu had also failed to activate their own modify cards. It appeared that only this other group’s Armor Digivolving technique worked in this maze. It reminded Henry of the TV show. It had been a while since he’d actually watched the Digimon series, but something about these other kids and their Digimon struck him as familiar…

Yolei, meanwhile, didn’t bother asking Izzi for an explanation about digivolving methods. She just wanted to take Dokugumon down. “Alright then. Hawkmon, Halsemon should do the trick.”

“Indeed,” the hawk Digimon nodded.
“Get in there and help him out, Digmon!” Cody told his partner.

“You too Veemon!” Davis said.

“Right!” both Rookie Digimon agreed.

Yolei and Davis looked at each other as they drew their digivices.

“Digi-Armor Energize!” they cried in unison.

Hawkmon and Veemon glowed bright gold before changing.

“Hawkmon Armor Digivolve to…!”

“Veemon Armor Digivolve to…!”

Hawkmon came down on four legs looking like a mutant bird fused with a four-legged beast. The upper half of his face and over the back of his neck was covered with a long helmet that had wings sprouting from the sides. The Crest of Love was etched into it on his forehead.

“Halsemon, the Wings of Love!”

Veemon was changing into his other Armor DigiVolution form. He came down on all fours as well and was covered in black-grey armor from the front shoulders down to his rear, leaving his blue tail exposed. He had a black-grey facemask that covered the top portion of his face with a lightening blot shaped horn coming out of his forehead. The Crest of Friendship was emblazed on his chest.

“Raidramon, the Storm of Friendship!”

The three Armored Digimon attacked together to fend off Dokugumon.

“Thunder Blast!” Raidramon growled, spitting out a bolt of blue lightening.

“Tempest Wing!” Halsemon cried as he spun so fast a tornado formed.

“Gold Rush!” Digmon cried before launching his drills like rockets.

The spider Digimon let out a shriek of pain and anger as she came crashing down onto the forest floor and disintegrated into tiny bits of data.

“Alright!” Davis, Cody and Yolei cheered.

Once everyone was reintroduced Izzi caught Yolei, Mimi, and Henry up on what was going on while Kenta kept little Suzie busy. Kazu was telling Guardromon to run another life forms scan to see if any more of their friends were nearby.

Zoe found herself sneaking off to the side to sit between JP and Tommy. She knew that the absence of a Digimon partner for the three of them had not gone unnoticed and she wanted to find out what had been said to explain that.

“Nothing has been explained,” JP muttered so that only Zoe and Tommy could hear. “Izzi tried to ask me when we met but then he got sidetracked by digivice readings.”
“Why don’t we just tell them?” Tommy suggested.

“Too many questions that are hard to explain,” Zoe said. “We should be focusing on finding our other friends anyways. I’m hoping we won’t have to answer any questions until we find Takuya, Koji and Koichi.”

JP nodded. “Those three have an even better understanding of our situation then we do. I say we just kick back and let Izzi track down our friends. Then we’ll talk.”

“What’s going on?” Tommy asked, noticing that everyone was starting to gather around Izzi again.

“Maybe they found more of our friends!” Zoe exclaimed.

“All right everyone!” Izzi was saying. “I want to know how many others we should be looking for. My group is missing six: Tai, Matt, TK, Kari, Ken, and Willace.”

“We’re missing six as well,” Henry stated for his group. “Takato, Rika, Ryo, Jeri, Ai and Mako.”

“We’re only missing three,” JP said, speaking up before Zoe could. “Takuya, Koji and Koichi.”

Izzi nodded as he typed the data into his computer.

“There is another chamber up ahead with massive amounts of heat readings,” Izzi explained. “Guardromon and I are unable to confirm whether any of these readings are human or not, but I am going on the assumption that some of them are. We can’t take the chance that they aren’t. When we get closer we’ll hopefully get a reading on any digivices in that area. Let’s go.”

Everyone sighed, but followed him once more. Many were tired and wanted to take a longer rest, but they knew that finding their missing friends was their number one priority. There was always the possibility that some Digimon worse then Dokugumon were out there. It had already been a close call with Mimi, Yolei, Zoe, Henry and Suzie.

After leaving the forest the air was hot like an oven. Suzie wouldn’t stop crying because her feet were hurting and she was all sweaty. Henry ended up giving her a piggyback ride. No one was in a talking mood after that. Many felt sorry for the little girl. She was only five after all. They felt even more sorry for Henry because it couldn’t have been easy taking care of someone so small and irrational in a strange world. They finally reached the chamber Izzi was leading them to and looked inside to see it’s sandy contents…

The Digital World: Location: The Desert Chamber

Sora had no idea what to do. She was alone with Biyomon in what could only be described as a sauna. She was dripping with sweat and hated how her clothes clung uncomfortably to her skin.

“Hello!” she called out. “Is anyone out there?”

“Sora,” Biyomon whined tiredly, dying in the heat under all her feathers. “Let’s get out of here. We have to find the others.”

Sora sighed. Biyomon was right. The two of them had been searching the chamber for what felt like forever and now they were reaching their limits in this underground desert.

“Hello!” she called out desperately one more time.
“He…llo!” a soft voice called out. “Is …someone there?”

Biyomon’s eyes widened.

Sora grinned and ran in the direction of the voice. “Yes! Hello?! Is anybody out there?”

“Please!” the voice cried. “I need help!”

This made Sora hurry even faster. Biyomon was pressed to keep up with her. They finally found another girl collapsed on the sandy ground with damp hair and a sweat soaked dress.

“Are you alright?” Sora asked softly as she helped the girl into a sitting position.

The girl smiled tiredly. “I am now. I thought no one would find me. It’s so hot…”

“Can you stand?” Sora asked. “We have to get out of here.”

She nodded weakly and allowed Sora to help her to her feet.

“I’m Jeri,” she said, smiling.

“Sora,” Sora smiled back. “And this is my Digimon partner Biyomon.”

The girl’s smile turned sad.

“I used to have a partner,” she mumbled. “But he died…”

Sora’s heart ached for Jeri. She couldn’t imagine loosing Biyomon.

“Don’t be too sad, Jeri,” Sora smiled, trying to cheer the girl up. “Digimon don’t ever really die, you know. Their data just gets reconfigured again.”

“Really?” Jeri asked, hope shining in her eyes.

“Yes,” Sora smiled. “The same thing happened to my friends TK and Ken. They have their partner’s back so I’m sure you’ll meet your partner again someday. Who knows? Maybe he’s looking for you right now.”

Jeri smiled and with renewed hope she began to walk with as little help from Sora as possible. They wandered for hours following the long walls until they came to the top of a hill. On the other side of that hill a cool breeze came to them from a tunnel that led out of their nightmare.

“We made it!” Jeri cried, tears streaming down her dusty face.

“Yeah,” Sora sighed. “We did.”

“Look!” Biyomon cried, pointing one feathered arm towards their exit.

Sora squinted. She could just make out a large group of people and Digimon.

“Hey!” she called out hoarsely. “Over here!”

Davis knew that there was no way that everybody was willing to go in. He was about to suggest that only a small search party go in when he heard a voice call out.
“Hey… over here!”

“Did ya hear that Raidramon?” Davis asked his still powered up Digimon, gaining everyone’s attention.

“Hear what?” Raidramon blinked down at his partner.

Davis looked out into the cavern, trying to figure out where the voice had come from.

“…Someone’s out there on that hill!” he cried after spotting the dark figures.

Izzi used the zoom function on his laptop’s camera to get a better view of the hill Davis was pointing at and gasped.

“It’s Sora, Biyomon and another girl!”

“That’s Jeri!” Kenta cried. “She looks awful! She could be hurt!”

“I’ll get them,” Davis cried, hopping onto Raidramon’s back.

“I’ll come with you,” Yolei stated, hopping astride Halsemon.

The two of them then took off across the desert-like plain. Davis was the first to reach the two girls and quickly helped Jeri from Sora’s side and up onto Halsemon’s back when Yolei arrived. Sora and Biyomon boarded Raidramon right behind Davis and held onto him as Raidramon took off back across the sands. Joe had water bottles waiting for them when they arrived. He looked the two girls over and treated them accordingly to the best of his abilities. Kenta and Kazu took over looking after Jeri while Sora was filled in on their current situation by Joe, who had heard Izzi’s explanation so many times that he felt as if he almost completely understood what was going on.

Izzi wasn’t picking up anymore digivice signals from the desert area before them so they turned the group around and headed for cooler tunnels. They were lucky to find a chamber with a few closed off hot springs so they all took the opportunity to take a quick pit stop. The girls gratefully took the opportunity to get clean. The boys also took a quick bath in the hot springs, and half an hour later they were all on the move again.

The ever-growing group moved onwards, mostly talking about their adventures in their own version of the Digital World. They were all beginning to realize just how plausible Izzi’s theory of alternate realities was becoming. No one knew where to look next, however, because there were no more digivice or life form readings in the immediate area. All they could do was wander through the tunnels hoping that they were headed in the right direction.

They traveled the tunnels for hours but still didn’t find any new readings. Finally the older DigiDestined – Izzi, Joe, Mimi, Sora, and Michael – decided that it was a good time to camp. All of the tunnels looked alike so one spot was just as good as another. Guardromon was given a break and entered sleep mode. Cody, Tommy and Suzie fell asleep instantly while older kids – mainly Izzi, Henry and Davis – arranged a guard watch schedule. It was decided that for each shift, one of the older DigiDestined would stand guard with some of the younger members of the group.

Mimi and Michael were in charge of the first watch with Zoe and Henry. Joe had the second shift with Jeri and Kenta. Izzi had the third watch with JP and Kazu. And Sora had the final shift with Yolei and Davis. The watches were only a precaution, but it turned out to be a good idea when halfway through the final shift Davis thought he heard something.

He looked around trying to pinpoint where the sound had come from. Everyone was fast asleep
aside from him and the rest of his guard group, but none of them seemed to have heard it. He strained his hearing, trying to pick up any sound that was out of place. Then he heard it. A small scream, almost too far away to hear, but the tunnels had decent acoustics.

“Sora,” Davis called out as softly as possible, but still ended up rousing a few of the others that were sleeping near his position.

The redhead looked up.

“What is it Davis?” she asked as she made her way over to him.

“Listen,” he whispered.

Sora listened hard for a few minutes until she finally heard what Davis had heard. Her eyes widened. Then she hurried over to the sleeping Guardromon and woke him.

“Yes?” the robot wheezed as his body rebooted.

“I need you to run a life forms scan,” Sora said quickly. “Hurry!”

The robot Digimon’s body whirred as it processed this new command and ran the scan.

“Detecting nine new life forms!” he chirped as Izzi’s laptop began to beep with the faint traces of a digivice reading.

Izzi was awake instantly, typing away to get a fix on the fresh readings.

“One yellow, two orange, one blue, and one red Digivice reading,” he said, answering Sora and Davis’ question before they could even ask it.

Yolei went around rousing everyone else awake while Izzi tried to find the best route to get to the newly found DigiDestined. It took a while, but soon they were on the move again and headed in the direction of the voice that Davis had heard.

“TK!” the voice called out as they got closer.

Davis’ heart jumped into his mouth. That was Kari’s voice and she sounded upset. Something was wrong. He had Veemon Armor Digivolve back into Raidramon, boarded his partner’s back and took off ahead of everyone else.

“Davis, come back!” Joe yelled after him.

“I’ll go with him,” Yolei said, Armor Digivolving Hawkmon into Halsemon and taking off after her goggles-wearing friend before anyone could stop her.

Everyone else picked up the pace and raced after Davis and Yolei because Davis had Raidramon flying down the tunnel. Yolei and Halsemon were barely on his heels, but they somehow managed to keep up.

The tunnel entered a wide cavern that made the two come up short, allowing their Digimon to rest briefly. It was amazingly bright inside, so bright it was almost blinding after the dim tunnel light.

“Koji!” a different girl’s voice called out. “Hang in there!”

“TK!” Kari’s voice echoed around the chamber. “TK! Please answer us!”
“TK!” Matt’s voice now came out clearly. “Come on, wake up!”

Yolei and Davis gave each other a concerned look. The others had caught up enough to them in time to hear Matt’s cry.

Davis braced himself before he charged Raidramon into the brightly lit room with Yolei and the others right behind them.

What’s happened to TK? What new dangers await our heroes? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Yay! Another chapter!
We get a mention of the Digimon TV show and card game from Kenta and Kazu. I kinda touched on it in the last chapter, but now we got real conversation between Kenta and Kazu to confirm it. I also added in that whole thing with Henry when he
tries to digivolve Terriermon and use a modify card while facing Dokugumon in round 2 (which wasn't in the original draft of this chapter when I first started posting on ff.net). I'd like to point out that not only is normal digivolving impossible in these strange caverns and tunnels, but the modify cards aren't working here either, hence why the Tamers don't get much action in these first chapters (or for the first part of this story in general as you'll soon see). I'm trying my best to involve them more, i.e. why I'm going back and revising this story as I upload it here on AO3. Hope you liked this chapter! Look forward to the next one!
Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

After freeing Joe, Cody, Tommy, Michael, and Kenta from the ice, Izzi and the gang tracked down Mimi, Yolei, Zoe, Henry and Suzie in a forest chamber where they were trapped in a Dokugumon’s web. After freeing the girls and Henry; Henry, Kenta, and Kazu tried to use their digi-modify cards, but they didn’t work. After Yolei, Davis and Cody defeated Dokugumon with their Armor Digimon, the gang moved on to a chamber where they found Sora and Jeri in a desert setting. After traveling in the tunnels for hours the group finally took a break to sleep. During the final shift, Davis heard what sounded like Kari crying out for TK to wake up. Davis and the others rushed off to find them.

Chapter Notes

You know the drill by now. I DON'T OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE, 02, TAMERS,FRONTIER OR ANY OF IT'S CHARACTERS!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: The Cylindrical Cavern

Kari remembered falling with TK when the ground beneath them at the park had opened up. Matt had grabbed onto TK’s arm as they fell, his protective older brother instincts kicking in. The three of them fell for a long time before crashing into a round brightly lit chamber, getting tangled in a bunch of crisscrossed wires. The space wasn’t too large, perhaps only eighty feet in diameter.

Below them, Kari saw Gatomon, Patamon, Gabumon and a tall yellow fox Digimon. They called out greetings to their Digimon partners below just as a girl with flaming red hair fell into a section of cables right beside Kari, but she wasn’t Sora. Only seconds later a boy wearing a green streaked blue bandana landed next to Matt.

“Well that was fun,” the girl said sarcastically.

The boy merely groaned as he carefully sat up.

“Rika!” the fox Digimon called up in a woman’s voice. “Are you alright?”

“Renamon?” the girl gasped and looked down. “It is you!”

“It’s good to see you again,” the fox smiled.

Suddenly the bright room was plunged into darkness as if the power had blown. The cables
groaned and lurched, swaying their occupants dangerously. Kari felt TK leave her side, and Matt and the boy were suddenly gone too. Matt fell into another section of cables right below Kari, but TK and the other boy fell a good ten feet more than Matt did. The boy managed to grab hold of a cable and hoisted himself up into a thick crisscrossed section, but TK hit his head on the nearby wall with a loud clang and fell unconscious into a thick grouping of cables just below him. Kari and Matt called out to him, but he didn’t respond.

It seemed like forever before some lights came back on an hour later. They were low voltage lights, like backup or sub lights that came on after a blackout in places that needed power. The room was now dimly lit, but it was enough to see by. TK was lying unconscious with a nasty looking head wound. The boy above him checked his balance and then – to his credit – managed to swing down to TK and land without sending both of them hurtling downwards again. He checked TK’s head wound and quickly applied some pressure, using TK’s own hat to stop the bleeding.

“How is he?” Matt called down.

The boy looked up. “I’m no doctor, but I think he’ll be alright.”

“Nice moves,” the redhead, Rika, commented.

The boy shrugged.

“So hot shot,” she said mockingly, “got a name?”

“Koji,” he nodded. “And you’re Rika, right? That’s what the she-fox called you anyways.”

“That’s right,” she said haughtily.

“I’m Kari,” Kari smiled, relieved that TK was all right in spite of his fall.

“And I’m Matt,” Matt nodded. “And that’s my little brother, TK.”

Koji made sure TK was in no danger of slipping out the cables again before he reclined to look up at the others above him. They were stuck there for what felt like hours. They had tried to figure out how to get down, but a solution eluded them. Matt and Rika’s Digimon didn’t have any forms that would have been able to help them get down, but even if they had, their digivices didn’t appear to be working. Kari tried to use Armor Digivolution to digivolve Gatomon into Nefertimon – a Digimon that could fly – but for some reason that form of digivolving wasn’t working either. They had no other option left to them but to converse with each other until someone else found them and helped them down.

It didn’t take them long to find out that they were from different Tokyo, Japans and had been to different Digital Worlds. They tried to describe their version of the Digital World to each other as best they could and swapped adventure stories, but Koji kept out the fact that he’d been a Digimon in half of the encounters he’d mentioned. Like Zoe and JP, he was determined to hide the fact that he was part Digimon in the Digital World until he was reunited with his brother and the others.

They all ended up dozing off after a while and woke when the lights suddenly turned back on fully again. After spending a few minutes feeling disoriented, there was a sudden snapping sound. A killer bee looking Digimon called Flymon was buzzing around and snapping cables. He made his way up the chamber and made quick work of the section Koji and TK were hanging from when it reached them. Koji tried to grab hold of the unconscious boy, but instinct got the better of him and he clung to one cable and hung precariously from its end. There were no more cable clusters crossed beneath him thanks to Flymon’s work. Now there was only the eighty-foot drop.
TK was somewhat luckier. He landed in a cluster of cables, but was unstably balanced. There were no more thick clusters of cables to act as a net around him either. All Flymon had to do was go anywhere near enough to move any of the cables TK was on, and TK would fall until he hit the ground below.

“Get Flymon, Renamon!” Rika cried.

The fox Digimon leaped a good ten feet into the air and angled herself into a position that was somewhere between Flymon and TK’s prone figure.

“Diamond Storm!” Renamon cried as diamond shards appeared and flew with deadly speed and force at the insect. Flymon didn’t stand a chance against an experienced fighter Digimon like Renamon.

“Good work as always,” Rika preened.

“TK!” Kari cried. She called his name desperately over and over again, but there was no response to her cries.

Matt was more rational and asked Koji, who was in the more precarious position at the moment, if he was all right.

“Never better,” Koji grunted as he tried climbing up the cable as if it was the rope in gym class. He slipped, however, and just barely managed to grab hold of it again before its length ran out.

Kari had screamed with horror as he fell, afraid that Koji was about to fall to his death. It was this scream that Davis had heard in the tunnels. Koji attempted to climb up the cable again, but this time he took even more care while climbing. There was a tiny ledge right above him and he knew that if he could just get up to it, he’d have no trouble hoisting himself into the cable cluster directly above him. If he got that far, he was going to attempt to get reach TK again. He knew it was insane, but after spending time with selfless people like Takuya and his twin brother, he’d developed a selfless streak of his own.

Rika, Kari and Matt encouraged him until Koji finally made it to the ledge. After catching his breath, he launched himself into the cable cluster. He swayed dangerously from them and the others waited, holding their breaths. When he finally got up into the cables he leaned back and let his heart and all of the adrenaline that had been coursing through him during the past ten minutes settle.

The three above him left out relieved sighs. He chuckled nervously, agreeing whole-heartedly with the sentiment. He gave himself three whole minutes before he attempted to reach TK. There was a single long cable that stretched from above his section of cables to above TK’s on the opposite side of the chamber. It was a long way to go on one cable, but Koji believed that he could do it. He had to for TK’s sake. If TK woke up, his first instinct would be to right himself and that could send him falling down to his death. After he got over there, the next step would be to move TK into a less precarious position. Then he could try to wake him up.

Koji sighed, took a few deep breaths and started the long journey across to the other side of the cylindrical chamber. The three spectators above and the four below silently prayed that Koji knew what he was doing. Koji reached the halfway mark when his arms started to get tired. The stunts he’d been doing within the last fifteen minutes had all involved upper body strength alone. He kept on going though; ignoring the numb feeling that was beginning to take hold of him.

‘C’mon,’ he thought. ‘Just a little further.’
He finally reached the point on the cable that positioned him above and to the left of TK when his cable suddenly snapped. With a gasp he fell and nearly landed on top of the very person he was trying to help. TK’s body slid backwards off the cables, but Koji somehow managed to grab hold of his shirt collar and heft him back up next to him and balance him. Koji’s own balance was thrown off after that and he was suddenly holding on by his arms. He tried to hoist himself up again, but his arms didn’t want to work this time. He’d maxed them out helping TK.

“Koji!” Rika called out above him. “Hang in there!”

“What does she think I’m doing?!” Koji thought exasperatedly.

“TK!” Kari cried. “TK! Please answer us!”

“TK!” Matt called out. “C’mon, wake up!”

In spite of their cries, TK remained unconscious.

“Kari!” A new voice suddenly called out.

“Davis?!” Kari called out, recognizing the voice instantly.

Davis appeared a minute later riding Raidramon. He took in the situation then faced Yolei who was coming up right behind him on Halsemon.

“Go get them,” he said pointing his thumb up at Kari, Matt and Rika, “while I get TK and that other guy.”

Yolei had Halsemon take off, not bothering to argue with Davis, but she did find it odd that he didn’t want to rescue Kari himself.

Davis had Raidramon pull up just under the spot where Koji was hanging and charged him at the opposite wall. They used it to spring off of with a bounding leap, grabbing Koji just as he began to lose his grip, and bounded off the nearest wall for a safe landing.

“Thanks,” Koji gasped as he sank gratefully onto the ground.

Davis gave him a tight smile before wheeling Raidramon around again for a second run in order to get TK who was quickly slipping off the cables again now that Koji wasn’t there to keep him balanced. They made the same pass, but Davis knew Raidramon had accidently overshot the trajectory the moment they left the first wall. Davis gritted his teeth, cursing inwardly for what he was about to do. He threw himself off Raidramon’s back as they sailed over TK’s cables. It was around this point that the other DigiDestined reached the chamber. There was a chorus of gasps as Davis landed swaying in the cables and TK began to fall. Davis’ hand shot out and grabbed TK’s, but he’d caught him awkwardly at a weird angle and felt his shoulder wrench, twist and then disconnect. In spite of this, Davis managed to keep a hold on TK’s hand through all the pain. It was his agonized scream that brought TK back to consciousness.

“Whoa!” he cried seeing the long drop below him. “Did I miss something?”

“I’d say,” Davis gasped through gritted teeth.

“Need a lift?” Yolei asked as she pulled Halsemon up underneath TK.

“Thanks, Yolei,” TK sighed as Davis let him go, dropping him neatly behind Yolei on Halsemon’s back.
Davis let his arm hang limp in the air as he waited for Yolei to return for him.

“That was very brave,” Yolei told him when she helped him gingerly in front of her on Halsemon’s back. “Kari was impressed.”

Davis smiled sadly, but this went unnoticed by Yolei.

Everyone was crowded around Koji and TK when Halsemon landed.

“Joe!” Yolei called out.

Joe turned and hurried over to Davis, his arm held up stiffly and at an odd angle by his side.

“I think his shoulder was dislocated when he saved TK,” Yolei explained.

Hearing this, everyone instantly moved in to check on Davis while Joe gently prodded Davis’ shoulder. Davis winced several times, but he didn’t yell or cry, even though he felt like it.

“Yup,” Joe sighed, making a pained face. “It’s dislocated all right.”

“Can you relocate it, Joe?” Sora asked nervously, holding onto Matt’s arm.

“Yes,” Joe nodded slowly. “I’ve done it once before at the clinic I’m interning at, but it’ll be painful. It’s twisted out of its socket so I’ll have to re-twist it and then pop it back in place.”

Davis closed his eyes. It hurt badly enough already. He felt a hand on his good shoulder and turned to see TK and Kari. The sight of them together still pained him, but he stifled the undeserved feelings. TK was a good guy, and was right for Kari. Davis knew that he’d been right to save him.

“Thank you, Davis,” TK said with meaning. “You saved my life.”

“Bandana boy was doing a pretty good job before I showed up,” Davis said.

“His name is Koji,” Kari said softly.

“Yeah, Koji” Davis nodded. How was he supposed to know the guy’s name? They hadn’t even been introduced yet.

Koji showed up just behind Kari as if his name had summoned him.

“Thanks for helping us out up there. I was in real trouble for a moment.”

“No problem,” Davis shrugged, which was a bad idea with his right shoulder dislocated.

“All right everyone,” Joe sighed. “Give us space. I’m going to reset his shoulder now.”

Everyone hurriedly moved back and turned away. Henry made sure Suzie had her ears covered and that she couldn’t see what was about to happen. Davis was mentally bracing himself. He didn’t know what Joe was going to do, but he was sure it was going to hurt. A lot. He wasn’t disappointed.

Joe steeled himself before twisting Davis’ arm back into the right position. Davis couldn’t hold back the scream as the shock traveled throughout his entire arm and across his chest. He coughed a few times as he caught his breath and was gasping at the end of it. No one could watch and many had covered their ears.
“All right, Davis,” Joe said soothingly, patting him gently on the back. “The worst is over. Now I’m going to pop your arm back into your shoulder socket. It’s going to hurt, but it shouldn’t be as painful as the twist. …Ready?”

Davis nodded, sweat dripping down his face. Joe grabbed his arm again and pushed up. There was a sickening snap, but after that there was no more pain. Or at least not as much pain. His entire arm was numb now yet it ached at the same time. He moaned slightly as his sore shoulder throbbed.

Joe was rummaging through his bag and pulled out an instant ice pack. He had thought they’d come in handy if someone sprained their ankle during their reunion. Now he was glad that he had thought to bring his entire medical kit in case of emergencies such as these.

“Thanks,” Davis sighed as Joe applied the ice pack and began making a sling for Davis to rest his arm in.

“Are you alright?” Kari asked.

“Yeah,” Davis smiled weakly. “Joe’s set me right again.”

The relief was evident on her face.

“Hey, Davis,” Matt said, patting his good shoulder. “Thanks for saving TK. I know you two aren’t on the best of terms with each other, but I really appreciate it.”

Davis smiled. “It was nothing Matt. I’m sure TK would have done the same if our roles had been switched.”

TK felt a pang in his chest. No he wouldn’t have. He would have gone for Kari without any second thought.

“Thanks, Davis,” TK said, trying to hide his discomfort.

Davis simply grinned at him, making him feel even guiltier. Everyone came to see how Davis was doing and introductions were made once again. After catching everyone up to speed, the group set off down the brightly lit chamber to another connecting chamber that Izzi said was there. When they reached the entrance, it was pitch black inside. According to the map on Izzi’s computer, the chamber was significantly larger then the one they were in now and it’s darkness seemed vast. The only light available was provided by Guardromon’s headlight and a bunch of tiny little specs of light that reminded them all of fireflies.

The Digital World: Location: The Dark Chamber

Davis was riding Raidramon again, and found himself falling asleep slumped against Raidramon’s neck. Kari and TK were walking next to him and didn’t bother trying to wake him. Raidramon didn’t either and kept a smooth gate, worrying that any sudden movement on his part might hurt Davis even more with his right shoulder out of commission. Joe even recommended that they carefully shift him into a more comfortable position so that he wouldn’t wake with a stiff neck.

The lack of light was making many others tired, but they trudged on, looking for more signs of their missing friends. Only nine were missing and that encouraged the large group to press on. They wandered in darkness for a long time before Izzi’s laptop and Guardromon’s sensors beeped, waking Davis.
“Five new digivice readings,” Izzi reported.

“Ten life form signatures,” Guardromon stated. “Not too far away either. I wonder why we are only just receiving these readings…”

“Does anyone else hear something?” Koji suddenly asked.

Everyone quieted down and listened hard. So far no one had been wrong about hearing something, and Koji wasn’t wrong this time either. There was a whimpering sound coming from their right. The group hurried in that direction and soon they could hear a soft voice pleading with the whimpering.

“C’mon kids,” the voice pleaded. “I’m right here! C’mon, snap outta it!”

“That sound’s like Impmon,” Renamon stated.

“That must be Ai and Mako,” Jeri cried as she hurried forward.

“Jeri, wait!” Sora and Rika called after her.

When they finally found Ai and Mako, the two were curled up in the fetal position next to each other surrounded by a dark aura. Their shared Digimon partner was a purple imp looking creature with long pointy ears, a barbed tail, slanted green eyes and tiny fangs. He had a mischievous smiley face on his tummy and wore a red bandana around his neck and matching gloves on his hands.

“He’s gone,” Ai hiccupped. “He ran away.”

“It’s all our fault,” Mako cried. “He left because we were too rough with him.”

Impmon grabbed a shoulder on each kid.

“But guys, I’m right here! I’m not going anywhere either.”

He turned helplessly to the large group of DigiDestined.

“They can’t hear me.” His voice trembled. “No matter what I say or do my words and touch don’t reach ‘em.”

“Hey Sora,” Matt asked his girlfriend, “Do you remember that tunnel Joe and I found you in when you came to get us before our fight with Piedmon?”

“Yes,” She agreed slowly.

“Remember how you were afraid that you’d let Tai and the others down if you couldn’t find us? You fell into a tunnel and the darkness that had tried to consume me earlier tried to consume you.”

“Oh!” Sora gasped.

“You think this might be that same darkness?” Joe asked, catching on to what his friend was getting at.

“I do,” Matt said grimly. “It’s horrible. You feel as if the things you know you couldn’t control were your fault anyway. Whatever dark feelings you hold onto only get darker until they feel like they’re about to consume you. Only someone really close to you can snap you out of it. I had Gabumon and Sora had Joe and I. If the kids won’t respond to their own Digimon then someone
close to them or someone who can connect with them should try.”

“I’ll do it. I’ve been babysitting them for a while so they know me pretty well. Maybe I can reach them. I lost my partner, so maybe they’ll listen to me,” Jeri said.

She knelt down next to them and spoke gently and softly to the two kids. Everyone watched her, hoping she’d be able to reach them.


The two kids sobbed silently for a moment and didn’t reply.

“Can you hear me, Ai and Mako?” Jeri tried again a little louder.

“…Yes, Miss Jeri,” they finally responded.

She looked up hopefully at the others. Rika even gave her an encouraging thumbs up.

“What’s wrong?” Jeri asked them. “Why are you crying?”

“Because it’s all our fault,” Mako whimpered. “Impmon left us because we didn’t take care of him right.”

“We always fought over him,” Ai added. “We hurt him, so he ran away.”

“But he’s right here,” Jeri said gently. “He came back, remember? He’s worried about you two. He wants to be with you.”

“Really?” Mako asked, the dark aura surrounding them beginning to lift. “He’s not mad?”

“No, he isn’t,” Jeri smiled. “Listen to him.”

“Of course I’m not mad!” Impmon sighed. “I’m your Digimon. I’m supposta look after yous guys. You’re the only family I have.”

Ai and Mako lifted their heads, saw that Impmon was really there and broke out into a fresh round of tears and hugged him between them. The dark aura vanished instantly.

“It was so scary!” Ai gasped. “This voice kept telling us we were horrible Tamers and that we couldn’t take good care of you.”

“Yeah,” Mako sobbed. “It said that you left us because you didn’t need us and that you were better off without us. That you left because we always fought.”

Impmon teared up and reassured them that he wasn’t going to leave them again and that they were the most important humans in his life.

Jeri was relieved. She’d been worrying about the two kids the entire time she’d been in this world. They had been left in her care and she felt responsible for keeping them safe. When Ai and Mako finally stopped crying, another voice could faintly be heard up ahead. Koji recognized it as his twin’s voice, and didn’t waste any time getting to him. The others followed in hot pursuit.

Koji froze when he reached the spot where he’d heard his brother’s voice come from. Unlike Ai and Mako who had merely been enveloped in a dark aura, Koichi was blanketed in one. There was a thick fog barrier surrounding him and the only way anyone could know that he was in there was the pained sound of his voice and the digivice reading that Izzi was receiving. But Koichi’s
digivice wasn’t the only one in there. The other three digivice signals in the area were coming from the fog bank as well.

Koji was about to rush into the barrier when JP stopped him.

“Let me go!” Koji snarled. “My brother’s in there!”

“Cool it, Koji!” JP said calmly. “You have to think first. We don’t know what’s in there with him. Let’s think about this first.”

“There doesn’t appear to be any other life form readings inside,” Izzi mused. “It should be alright to go in there, but I suggest that only a small group go in while everyone else waits here. If those who go in need help then we can send in back up. Whoever goes in can communicate with me through their digivice.”

“I’ll go in,” Matt volunteered. “I have experience with this darkness and have overcome it. I may be of some help in there.”

“Well I’m going too,” Rika said in a tone of voice that couldn’t be argued with.

“I’ll go too,” JP nodded. “You’re going to need a friend on this one Koji. I know I’m not Takuya, but I have a little experience in this area myself.”

Davis got off Raidramon’s back. TK and Kari tried to stop him, but he ignored them. Raidramon reverted back to Veemon and jogged alongside his partner.

“I’m going too,” Davis stated. “I have a feeling that Ken is in there too and I’m going in after him.”

“Davis, your still hurt from your shoulder being dislocated,” Joe reminded him gently.

“I don’t care,” Davis said stubbornly. “Who else here has a better chance then I do of snapping Ken out of whatever darkness he’s wrapped up with in there? You know I’m the only one who can! We’re best friends and I was the only one who accepted him right after he stopped being the Digimon Emperor. If he’s reliving that in there then I’m going to be the only one that’ll be able to get through to him and you know it!”

“He’s right about that,” Izzi sighed. “Davis is the only one we know of that has a good chance of getting Ken out of there.”

“But we don’t even know if he is in there!” Kari cried out of concern for Davis.

“Actually, we do,” Izzi disagreed. “There is one orange and one yellow digivice signal in there with the red and blue. Ken is the only one missing that would have an orange digivice signal. I’m betting Willace is the yellow one due to the fact that there has been a theme to the chambers and whom we find in them. The DigiDestined in this chamber have a connection with Darkness. If Gabumon weren’t a Digimon with a light attribute like Gatomon, Patamon, and Renamon, then Matt would have most likely ended up in this chamber due to his history with Darkness. Willace lost Kokomon to a virus years ago. I’d call that having a past connection with darkness. That is what makes me believe that he is in there as well. Tai’s too optimistic for this place anyways.”

“Then there’s no doubt that that’s Koichi in there,” Koji muttered.

“If we’re going on personality and history here,” Henry said, “Then there’s no way its Takato. The only one it can be is Ryo. We don’t know what happened to him that year he was trapped in the Digital World alone. I bet that’s why he’s here. Something bad must have happened to him during
that time. Something so bad that he’s forgotten all about it.”

“Well what are we waiting for?” Davis exclaimed. “Who cares why they’re here? The point is that they need our help to get out!”

“I’ll monitor you guys from out here,” Izzi said, clipping a headset onto his left ear, and lowered the microphone to his lips. “I’ll communicate with you through Matt’s digivice and you all can communicate with me through your own digivices as I guide you through. Just give me a second to get a readout on the fog…."

Everyone waited as the older kid clicked away at his computer before giving them the thumbs up.

Koji nodded and together he, Matt, Davis, Rika and JP entered the dense fog with their Digimon. It was pitch black inside and there were no tiny globes of light inside to light their way.

“Izzi to Matt,” Matt’s digivice buzzed. “Can you read me Matt?”

“Loud and clear,” Matt answered. “It’s pitch black in here Izzi. Where should we go?”

There was a pause and the fuzzy distorted sound of typing when Izzi finally answered.

“The nearest signal is to your left. Make sure you’re all there and head approximately ten steps in that direction.”

Matt slipped his digivice back into his pocket before making sure the others were still with him. They held hands and walked ten steps to their left. The fog abruptly ended here and in a small clearing in the fog bank Koichi sat on the ground holding his head. Like when they had found Ai and Mako, he had a dark aura surrounding him, only his was a lot thicker.

“Koichi!” Koji cried as he let go of whoever’s hand he’d been holding and rushed to his twin’s side. The others were right behind him.

“Koichi!” Koji called as he grabbed his brother’s shoulders and tried to get his twin to look at him.

“I never told him,” Koichi whispered. “I never got the chance to confront him. I never got to introduce myself to Koji.”

“But I’m right here, Koichi,” Koji cried. “You did! We met!”

“It’s the same as Ai and Mako,” Rika mused. “The person or Digimon involved in the dark illusion can’t reach the one trapped by it.”

“He can’t hear me,” Koji whispered as Rika’s words sank in.

JP put his hand on Koji’s shoulder and kneeled down next to him.

“Maybe not, but maybe I can. …Koichi? Can you hear me pal?”

Koichi remained silent.

“…att! …Matt!” buzzed Izzi’s voice.

Matt yanked out his digivice.

“What’s up, Izzi?”
“Get out of there! There’s a huge energy surge coming Koichi’s digivice! I think that he’s the source of this dark fog!”

The darkness that had enveloped Koichi now gathered and grew larger. JP grabbed Koji and yanked him away from Koichi. A dark figure was now forming behind the boy consumed in darkness. It looked like a man in a terrifying Halloween costume. He was wearing black and red armor with a skull and eyeball theme.

“Duskmon!” JP and Koji gasped.

“Who?!” the other three cried out.

There was more clicking on the other end of Izzi’s communication line.

“Duskmon,” Izzi’s voice mused. “Uh oh. He’s a champion level dark spirit Digimon that can transform other Digimon’s regrets into dark energy. He’s an expert swordsman with blades that extend from his forearms. The source of his power is sealed in his armor’s seven eyeballs. His attacks are Deadly Gaze and Lunar Plasma. You better be careful guys.”

Koji waited. Duskmon wasn’t even moving. Then the sinister looking Digimon began to talk in his low voice to Koichi.

“But you did, Koichi. Remember? I gave you the chance. It was the darkness in your heart that summoned me. Your so-called twin was living happily with your father and his new stepmother. He left you and your mother to suffer alone. Why should Koji live happily while your mother suffers?”

“No,” Koichi whimpered.

“You were going to confront him. Do you remember what happened next?

Images were beginning to form in the darkness. Koichi and Koji were far apart on the train. Koji was getting into the elevator and Takuya just barley made it in behind him. Koichi was in front of the closed elevator doors. Koichi was running down the stairs. Koichi was falling. Darkness.

Duskmon was starting to look more substantial. “You remember now, don’t you?”

“Yes,” Koichi cried. “But I also remember meeting Koji. We became close. Even after we returned from the Digital World. He met mother. I was going to meet father soon. He still doesn’t know about us.”

Duskmon chuckled.

“What a wonderful dream you’ve been having.”

“Dream?” Koichi gasped.

“Don’t listen to him, Koichi!” Koji cried out, still restrained by JP.

“You fell, remember? You were never physically in the Digital World. You died from your fall.”

“No…” Koichi chocked. “No, I woke up. Koji was there.”

“Wake up!” Duskmon shouted. “You’re living in a dream.”

“No!” Koichi cried, covering his ears.
“Stop lying to him, Duskmön!” Koji roared.

Suddenly Koji’s D-Tector lit up and the dark fog behind him took on a form as well. Like Duskmön, this Digimon had a human shape, but his armor was a dark steel-grey and had a lion theme. His chest, shoulder, and knee plates were lion heads. Even his facemask was a lion’s head with a full golden yellow mane of hair.


The new arrival ignored their outburst and made his way to the troubled youth before him.

“Be strong, Koichi,” he said in the same low voice as Duskmön, but he sounded gentler and strong. “You know Duskmön lies. The bond you share with your twin is even stronger. Don’t let him convince you otherwise.”

Koichi looked up at the Spirit Warrior.

“I know,” he smiled sadly.

“The Spirit of Darkness is a greater burden to bear then any of the other Legendary Warrior Spirits. There is a fine line to walk and many times that line is blurred. It is easy to forget and lose your way, but do not lose faith. Light, your brother and twin, is always there by your side to help you. Never forget that he is there and so am I. As your true spirit guardian, in your hands darkness does not have to be evil.”

The dark barrier around Koichi shrank, but did not disappear entirely.

Duskmön glowered at Löwemon.

“We are two sides of the same coin,” he growled. “Darkness and Light may be brothers, but we are twins. The same element, split in two aspects; two faces.”

“Be that as it may, Koichi is a chosen child and represents the pure darkness that is neither good nor evil. He shapes his own path,” Löwemon stated.

“The ideals of a hero,” Duskmön scoffed. “There is no such thing as a neutral. He will either become good or evil. Darkness is an evil element. There is no getting around that. Why do you think their resistors suffer until they give in? The darkness will consume this child and there is nothing you, Löwemon, can do to stop it. I will become his true spirit guardian once again.”

“Not if I can help it,” Koji retorted, standing beside his brother between him and Duskmön.

“You can’t be by his side forever, boy,” Duskmön guffawed. “He will be pushed to the edge and not even you will be able to save him when he falls.”

“Enough,” Koichi murmured in such a low voice it was almost a whisper. “To toy with me and mess with my head is tolerable, but never threaten Koji. That is something I won’t stand for.”

The boy stood by his twin and glared at Duskmön.

“Löwemon,” he called softly, the dark aura seeping into his person. “Lend me your strength once again.”

“With pride and pleasure,” the Warrior Digimon bowed and dissipated into dark particles that entered Koichi’s black pulsing D-Tector.
“I’m sorry I made you worry, Koji,” Koichi smiled. “I’m back.”

Koji’s returning smile was relieved.

“Now leave this nightmare to me,” Koichi said, returning his attention to Duskmon.

“If he destroys the illusion, the fog should dissipate,” Izzi’s voice said over Matt’s digivice. “It should end whatever nightmares the other DigiDestined trapped in there are having as well.”

“You two got all that?” Matt called over to the twins as he had JP, Davis, and Rika moved over towards him. “Go Gabumon.”

“Give them a hand Veemon,” Davis said.

“You too Renamon,” Rika ordered.

“Right!” the three Digimon cheered, but when they moved forward to fight, they suddenly slumped in a heap.

“I feel weird,” Gabumon moaned.

“I’m pooped,” Veemon sighed.

“I can’t move,” Renamon grunted. “Something has zapped our strength.”

JP pulled out his D-Tector and glanced at it. He realized that he and Koji didn’t have the luxury to sit back and let the other kids handle this. Not with their Digimon unable to move. Looks like their secret was about to get out.

“Hey Koji! Do you and Koichi think you can handle it on your own or could you use my help?”

Before Koji could answer, Koichi took a step further.

“That’s not necessary, but thank you, JP,” he said. “I can handle my own demons. Leave this to me. Please join the others, Koji.”

Koji was about to argue, but got a grip on himself. He had to realize that Koichi was strong enough without him and that helping him would only hinder his growth. Duskmon had been right about one thing. There would come a time when he couldn’t be by his twin’s side. This was something that Koichi had to do on his own.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Can Koichi handle it? Or will Duskmon prove to be too much for the DigiDestined of Darkness? Find out on the next time on Digimon Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

In the original version of this chapter I never mentioned why the Digimon didn't try to digivolve to reach their partners. Well most readers never noticed this little blip because I'd already stated over and over in the previous chapters that the digimon couldn't digivolve by normal means. But that never excused why Kari never had
Gatomon Armor Digivolve into Nefirtimon who could fly and get them all down safely and save Davis the trouble and pain of a dislocated shoulder. Well...yeah, that was (admittedly) an oversight on my part in the original draft and I didn't think up a reason for this glitch until I revised this chapter for reposting. I still can't believe that no one called me on this obvious hole in my story! XD

Ok, moving on, the first thing I did to remedy this was mention that Kari does have Gatomon attempt to Armor Digivolve, but she fails all the same and unfortunately I didn't have Izzi or Ken around to explain this new development. But here it is! FUN/SAD FACT: Gatomon couldn't armor digivolve in the beginning of this chapter because of the same power interference that was messing with Guardromon's sensors. True, she could have tried again after the power was turned off and then turned back on, but seriously people! Who's going to try something they're sure isn't going to work? ...I know that's a flimsy excuse for why she didn't/couldn't armor digivolve, but it's all I could come up with and I'm sticking to it, damn it all! But hey! If the power levels in Davis, Izzi, Kazu and JP's chamber were high enough to short out the Digivices even when powered down, then why shouldn't it be able to disrupt the energy/power flow needed to execute an armored evolution?

...wow... all that explanation to explain 2 inserted sentences. XD

Ok, one more thing. This is a little nit-picky of me, but I did finally realize that Patamon could have flown up to help TK, but seriously people! (This is just me defending myself from myself and the inner hard ass critics that I imagine are critiquing my work)

1) He couldn't digivolve even if TK were conscious

2) Seriously, what help would Patamon have been up there anyway? He could hardly pick up and fly TK anywhere when the boy was 8! I don't think he would have been much help to a grown 14 year old TK. :P

I justify Patamon's lack of action with the fact that Kari, TK, Matt, Rika and Koji were just too high up the chamber at the chapter's beginning, so it just didn't make sense to have the little guy fly up and tire himself out for nothing.
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Matt, Kari, TK, Rika and Koji were all hanging out in a cylindrical chamber full of light, suspended in clusters of cables. After the power goes out (due to Izzi’s meddling in chapter 3) chaos ensues and TK is knocked unconscious when he and Koji fall and bangs his head on the wall. When the power comes back on, a Stingmon makes everything worse by cutting the cables supporting TK and Koji. Koji manages to save TK from falling, but falls into a precarious situation of his own. Just as he’s about to fall, Davis and Yolei arrive on the scene and saves him the others, but Davis dislocates his shoulder in a improvised attempt to save TK from falling again. Joe resets the shoulder and the mostly re-united group head into the next chamber to find the rest of their missing friends. They find Ai and Mako and a fog bank that has others inside trapped by illusions. Koichi is the center of the fog - a manifestation of his element - while he faces his demons at the hands of Duskmon. Koji, JP, Matt, Rika and Davis go into the fog bank and shake Koichi out of his illusion. Koichi then readies himself to fight Duskmon after reclaiming Löwemon as his true spirit partner.

Chapter Notes

I DON'T OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE, 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF IT'S CHARACTERS!!!

The Digital World: Location: The Dark Chamber

“Go for it,” Koji told his twin before joining JP and the other three.

“How’s he going to fight Duskmon without a Digimon partner?” Rika asked.

“That’s the thing about us,” JP said, looking sidelong at Koji, making sure that they were in agreement about letting the others know. On the other end of Matt’s digivice connection, the others were paying strict attention.

“We don’t need a Digimon partner,” Koji said. “We are our own partners.”

Koichi held out his black D-Tector in his right hand. He raised it above his head and then, as if in a trance, he closed his eyes and moved his D-Tector hand down to his side while simultaneously moving his left hand up. When his left palm was stretched out above his head, he opened his eyes and looked up at his raised hand as a glowing ring of data appeared. Closing his eyes in trance again, he switched the orientation of his hands, only to suddenly open his eyes and bring both hands in front of him. He clashed his D-Tector with the swirling data ring, creating sparks between the two.
“Execute! Spirit Evolution!” Koichi cried as he ripped the D-Tector away, dragging the data ring out in a long ribbon stream that stretched and circled above his head. He was enveloped in a white light as his body’s outline glowed and shadows began to swirl around him. The data ring that had circled above his head cocooned around his body and when he emerged he was Löwemon wielding a spear and shield.

“Go get him,” Koji and JP muttered under their breaths, but loud enough to be heard.

As if responding to his friend’s and his brother’s wish, the newly evolved Koichi spun his spear above his head, having it gain momentum.

“Let’s end this!” he said firmly.

“If you wish,” Duskmon answered ominously.

“Shadow Lance!” Löwemon cried, dashing forward and brought his spear down in a forward thrust.

“Lunar Plasma,” Duskmon rasped, raising his swords and then lowered them as he rushed, slicing, at Löwemon.

The two attacks sent up a large cloud of dust that could be seen by the others waiting outside the fog bank. When the dust finally settled the two were clashing swords, shield and spear. Neither seemed to be gaining the upper hand. They split apart and then called out their next attack.

“Deadly Gaze!”

“Shadow Meteor!”

Powerful red and purple blasts of energy flew in all directions, shredding the fog and reveling the other missing DigiDestined who had been hidden in its folds. Ryo, Willace, Ken and their Digimon were looking around confused as if they had just been abruptly awoken from a confusing dream. While Davis, Matt, and Rika rushed to see to their confused friends, JP and Koji rejoined the group that had been waiting outside the fog barrier.

Now that all of the DigiDestined were together minus Tai, Takato, and Takuya, they looked on and watched the ongoing battle between the two dark Digimon.

“Who are they?” Willace asked.

“The creepy one is Duskmon,” Zoe answered grimly. “He’s bad news.”

“The other is my brother,” Koji explained. “JP, Tommy, Zoe, Takuya, Koichi and I all possess one of the Ten Legendary Warrior Spirits from our version of the Digital World. Each spirit represents one of ten elements. As you can see, my twin is the holder of the Warrior Spirits of Darkness.”

A few of the others’ expressions darkened.

“So is he your evil twin?” TK asked grimly.

“Doubt it,” Davis grimaced. “You didn’t see him in action.”

“No, he’s not evil,” Tommy giggled then paused to think over what he’d said. “Well… at least not any more. He was evil when we first met him.”

“But he was misguided and being controlled by an evil Digimon back then,” Zoe said in Koichi’s
defense. “When he used to be possessed by the warped and tainted Spirit of Darkness he was Duskmon. Takuya and Koji defeated him eventually and then he became a good guy. He even sacrificed himself to save us in our final battle in the Digital World.”

“Is that what Duskmon meant when he said Koichi died?” Davis asked Koji.

“No,” Koji sighed, watching as his twin and Duskmon started trading blows in close range with their weapons again. “Koichi didn’t come to the Digital World the same way the rest of us did. We rode a Trailmon there. He …fell down the stairs that led to the basement level of Shibuya train station. He’d missed the elevator that he’d tried to follow me on. In the real world, he went into a coma, but his consciousness somehow crossed over to the Digital plain. A warped and evil Digimon known as Cherubimon twisted the darkness within Koichi’s sadness and despair, and turned those emotions against him before erasing his memory. He gave Koichi the tainted versions of the spirits of Darkness that turned him into Duskmon. Takuya and I battled him and together we managed to defeat him. With Lady Ophanimon’s help his memories were restored. Like Zoe said, he became himself again and fought alongside us all as we took on the next evil Digimon, Lucemon, and his cronies. In the final battle, Koichi sacrificed himself to save us. …I thought he had died since it was his spirit and not his body that had come to the Digital World. After that battle on our way home, the spirit of Löwemon told me that Koichi was still alive. We rushed to the hospital, but he was unresponsive and his heart had stopped beating…”

Koji had to stop for a moment. Even the memory was horrible enough to make his stomach drop and his gut churn.

“You have no idea how horrible I felt,” he choked. “To suddenly find out that I had a brother. A twin! Only to lose him once in the Digital world, receive hope that he was still alive in our world, but lose him again anyway. To never know who he was. But that was when our D-Tectors came to life. Koichi woke up and the D-Tectors reverted back into the cell phones that they had been before we came to the Digital World. Koichi and I got a second chance.”

“You didn’t know each other?” Matt asked.

“Koji and Kochi’s parents divorced soon after they were born,” JP explained. “They didn’t even know that they had a twin living with the other parent.”

“My dad got remarried,” Koji said. “Dad told me that Mom was dead. I rebelled and used to be rude to my stepmother. In reality Mom was just really frail and sick. She raised Kochi by herself and he worked very hard to keep her healthy. When his – our – grandmother died she told Koichi about me. He did exactly what I would have done. He found me and wanted to meet me.”

“Then one day we all got messages on our cell phones to go to the Shibuya train station to seek out our destinies,” Zoe said, staring at her D-Tector.

“I’ve been wondering that,” JP mused. “When did our cell phones turn back into D-Tectors?”

“Probably when we arrived here,” Zoe shrugged. “We need our D-Tectors more than our cell phones here, JP.”

“I suppose so,” JP chuckled.

Matt was thinking back to when he’d met Koji. They hadn’t introduced themselves yet, but Koji had risked his own life to save TK many times in that cylindrical chamber. Was it because he knew what it felt like to lose a brother?
“Koichi!” Koji cried, bringing everyone’s attention back to the fight raging before them.

Löwemon had just gotten slammed into a wall next to them, but not before sending Duskmon flying in the opposite direction.

Koichi realized that if the battle went on any longer, he’d lose whatever equal ground he held against Duskmon. He had to gain the upper hand and there was only one way to do that.

“Slide Evolution!” he cried, surrounded by the cocoon of data again and emerged as a black mechanical lion with guns embedded in his shoulders, legs and back.

“Alright! He’s slid into his Beast Spirit form, JägerLöwemon,” Koji grinned.

“Beast Spirit form?” Ken asked.

“All of our warrior spirits have two forms: a human form and a beast form. Löwemon is the warrior spirit’s human form. JägerLöwemon is his beast form.”

Koichi readied his guns and took aim.

“Dark Master!” he called out as his cannon launched dark energy bursts at Duskmon before he could get up. When the dust settled, Duskmon was nowhere to be seen. Guardromon’s scan no longer showed his life signature, so he was presumably destroyed by JägerLöwemon’s strongest attack.

Koichi immediately reverted back to his human self, and slumped against the chamber’s wall.

“Koichi!” Koji cried, rushing to his brother’s side.

The others followed with Joe prepared to give any medical assistance if it was necessary.

“I’m alright,” Koichi sighed with a hint of a smile. “Just worn out.”

Koji let out a relieved sigh of his own, making his twin chuckle.

“Relax, Koji. Next time, feel free to jump in.”

“That was amazing!” Davis cried. “I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“None of us have,” Izzi corrected him. “None of us from our world, that is.”

“We have. It was pretty similar to what happens to Ryo, Takato, Rika, and Henry when they Bio-Merge,” Kenta spoke up.

“Yeah, only without the partner Digimon,” Kazu butted in.

“Bio-Merge?” Izzi asked, looking interested. “What’s that?”

While Kenta and Kazu tried to explain to Izzi what Bio-Merging was, Ryo approached the group surrounding Koichi.

“Those were some pretty fancy moves there,” Ryo grinned. “Cyberdramon was just itching to join in.”

“Who?” many of the other DigiDestined asked in unison.
“My Digimon partner,” Ryo elaborated, grinning and jabbed his thumb over his shoulder at the Ultimate level dragon type Digimon behind him with black armor and a metal facemask. He had red bat like wings, fierce spikes on his forearms, fangs and claws.

Ken stared at Ryo, noticing him for the first time.

“Ryo?” Ken gasped. “Ryo Akiyama?”

Ryo turned to face Ken and paused. The other boy looked familiar, but he couldn’t put a finger on it. He thought hard. Faint images floated just out of reach, but seeing this boy was dragging a long forgotten memory to the surface. If the guy were a lot younger and had shorter hair…

“Ken?!” Ryo gasped, finally recognizing him. “Ken Ichijoji?!”

“Whoa! You guys already know each other?!” Davis and Rika cried.

Ryo laughed. “Man! You’ve grown up! Weren’t you just a little squirt a year ago? How is this possible?”

“A year?” Ken laughed. “Ryo, it’s been over six for me.”

“Wow,” Ryo sighed. “Six years, huh?”

“Yup!” Ken grinned. “You didn’t have a partner the last time I saw you.”


“You guess?” Ken asked, frowning slightly.

“The truth is I don’t really remember much, Ken,” Ryo smiled sadly. “I remember you, but that’s about it.”

“Ryo’s lost a part of his memory,” Rika explained. “He doesn’t remember anything before meeting Cyberdramon in the Digital World or before we rescued him. He’d been missing in our world for a little over a year.”

“No wonder no one could find him,” Kazu grinned. “It looks like he wasn’t even in the same dimension.”

“I guess I can’t blame him for forgetting, Ken,” Wormmon said, coming into view for the first time. This was Ken’s partner, a caterpillar type Digimon with purple pincers and markings.

“What do you mean?” Ryo asked. “What happened?”

Ken looked at Wormmon. He wasn’t too clear on that memory either due to the effects of the dark spore inside of him.

“When Ken first came to the Digital World we met you while wandering the desert. You had some Digimon with you, Ryo, that you said had joined you on your journey but that not one of them was your partner like I was to Ken. You didn’t have a Digivice back then either. Then Millenniummon attacked us.”

“Millenniummon?” Ryo and Ken repeated.

“Yes. He was particularly bent on fighting you, Ryo. He was going on about destiny and how you and he were linked in a great thread that would decide the fate of all worlds. He ignored Ken and I
for the most part but I found him to be really rude to Ken when he did take notice. The battle was a
gruesome one and many of your allies fell, Ryo. In the end Millenniummon was defeated, and the
three of us were the only ones left standing. But before he disappeared, he released one final attack
on you Ryo, but Ken knocked you out of the way and took the blow himself.”

Ken’s neck pricked and his hand instinctively reached up to touch the sensitive spot.

“The dark spore,” Ken muttered grimly. “So that’s how it got inside of me…”

Wormmon nodded. “It took three full weeks before you recovered and after Ryo helped return you
to your world… You vanished after that, Ryo.”

Ryo’s mind whirled as parts of missing memories began to come back, filling in some of the
blanks.

“I remember,” he gasped. “I’d been summoned to the Digital World to fight Millenniummon in the
first place. I had raised a resistance force to fight him. I’d defeated him once before, but he had
opened a rift that spat us out somewhere in the desert. That was when I met Ken. You joined us
and together we defeated him once again, but after he returned to his world, I was pulled back into
the rift. I met Monodramon in the next place I ended up. He became my partner and I finally got
my own digivice. Together we ended up fighting in a tournament that turned out to be rigged to
help us come out on top so we that could defeat Millenniummon, but after we fought-!”

Ryo’s eyes widened, suddenly spinning around to look at Cyberdramon.

“Millenniummon said that he was my true partner, but Monodramon fought back, saying that he
was my partner now. They somehow became fused together…”

Cyberdramon nodded.

“I am the result of their struggle.”

“Is that why you used to be so out of control?” Ryo frowned. “You constantly wanted to battle.
Being your Tamer was a great challenge in the beginning. What made you change?”

“When we came to your world I was reverted back into Monodramon. The warring interests of
Millenniummon and Monodramon were settled and became fused. I am a fusion of them in both
body and now in mind as well,” Cyberdramon explained.

“Well this is all fascinating and I’m glad that Ryo has his memory back and all,” Rika interrupted.
“But we still have three missing persons right?”

“Oh, I wouldn’t say they’re missing,” Davis grinned.

“And why’s that?” Izzi frowned.

“Because they found us!” Davis laughed, pointing to three approaching figures in the gloom that
were holding blazing torches that lit up the space. The light shimmered off Takato and Takuya’s
goggles.

“Hey!” Tai waved as they approached, Agumon right behind him.

Takuya and Takato simply grinned.

The DigiDestined who didn’t know Takato gasped at the giant dinosaur Digimon that was his
partner. A fusion of a T-rex and a raptor, Guilmon had a red hide, white underbelly, golden yellow eyes, batwing shaped ears and black markings on his face, arms, chest and feet. The one on his chest looked like a hazard-warning sign. He loomed next to Takato, matching his Tamer in height.

“Hey, Tai!” Davis called back, rushing to meet up with the other “Goggle Heads” as Rika called them.

“What happened to your arm Davis?” Tai asked as he eyed the younger boy’s sling and the ice pack strapped onto his shoulder.

“Ah, well,” Davis spluttered, “I kinda dislocated my shoulder. But don’t worry! Joe fixed me up.”

Tai frowned, but it was a concerned frown. “Are you alright?”

“Sure he is!” Veemon cried, taking his place at Davis’ side. “He’s got me!”

Tai laughed. “He sure does.”

The eldest leader looked around, seeing the damage to the walls from Koichi’s battle with Duskmon and the large group of DigiDestined before him.

“Whoa Izzi. What’d I miss?”

It took a while to reintroduce, re-explain and retell the events of everything that had happened before everyone was on the same page and of the same understanding.

“Well one of the first things we should do,” Davis complained, tired of hearing the same stories retold for the um-teenth time, “is focus on getting out of here.”

Tai laughed at his impatience.

“I agree,” Takato nodded. “But how do we go about doing that?”

“Well, Izzi was able to find you all with his computer and Guardromon’s life scan readings,” Tai stated. “He should be able to use his computer to find a way out of here as well.”

“I’m glad you have such confidence in my abilities, Tai,” Izzi grimaced, “but I’m afraid that it isn’t as easy as it sounds. This place is enormous. There are so many passageways and caverns that it will take days to get out. When I zoom out of our current position there is even more to this place. It’s more than a maze, it’s a labyrinth!”

“So what do we do?” Sora asked.

“I’m not completely sure,” he admitted. “But in this situation we should head in one single direction. If there is no exit to the outside then Digmon could simply dig us out.”

“Sounds like a plan. Which way should we go?” Davis grinned.

“I think we should just continue in this direction,” Izzi stated. “We’ve come so far that it’s likely that we’ve already made plenty of progress to any exit in this portion of the labyrinth.”

Everyone nodded in agreement.

“Then lets get moving,” Rika sighed impatiently.

Everyone wandered for hours following Izzi’s directions. There didn’t seem to be any end to the
maze as the map on his laptop continued off the screen.

“Takato,” Guilmon said for the hundredth time in the last hour, “I’m hungry.”

“We’re all hungry, Guilmon,” Henry sighed.

“Takato, if he says that one more time, I’m having Renamon skin his hide for new shoes!” Rika said through gritted teeth.

“He is getting rather annoying,” JP sighed.

“Hey, guys!” both Izzi and Tai yelled in unison.

“What is it?” almost everyone cried.

“Is it food?” Guilmon asked. His comment went ignored.

“We’ve finally reached an edge of the labyrinth!” Tai yelled excitedly.

“There’s no sign of an exit, but Digmon can handle that,” Izzi added.

“Absolutely!” Armadillomon smiled.

With more determination than before, the DigiDestined hurried in the direction of their possible exit. When they reached the final chamber they stopped short. It was just a smooth wall. Not many had hoped for an obvious exit like a door, but the sight of the solid blank and opposing wall was depressing all the same.

“Well, Armadillomon,” Cody sighed. “Looks like we need Digmon after all.”

“Gotcha,” the Digimon said, stretching.

“Digi-Armor Energize!” Cody cried, holding out his D3.

The Digivice flashed, but nothing happened.


Again, nothing happened.

Davis and Yolei tried having their Digimon Armor Digivolve, but nothing happened. TK and Kari had no luck either.

Henry ran a card through his D-Power to see if he could at least activate the Modify Card: Digmon’s Drill, but his D-power’s card swipe function still wasn’t working. None of the other Tamers got theirs to work either.

“What now?” Yolei sighed. “It appears that none of our Digimon can digivolve now.”

“I think I have an idea.” Takuya grinned.

“What?” Koji asked.

“I’m gonna need Tommy and JP on this one,” Takuya continued, ignoring his friend’s question.

“What for?” Tommy asked as he and JP joined him.
“What would happen if we were to alternately heat and cool a section of that wall rapidly?” Takuya asked.

“The rock would become fragile!” Izzi exclaimed, catching on fast. “But how are you going to do it? Veemon can’t Armor Digivolve into Flamedramon and Betamon can’t digivolve to become Seadramon.”

“Well, yeah. Your Digimon can’t digivolve or Armor Digivolve, but we haven’t tried Spirit Evolving. Koichi isn’t the only one with a Digimon spirit evolution.”

Takuya, Tommy, and JP pulled out their D-Tectors and the same data ring that had appeared on Koichi’s hand earlier formed around their free hands. They clashed their D-Tectors into the rings and yelled out in unison.

“Execute! Spirit Evolution!”

Data cocoons spun around their glowing forms and in their place three Digimon emerged.

Takuya had transformed into a humanoid Digimon with red and orange flame-themed chest, shoulder, forearm, thigh, shin, and foot armor over black clothing. He had silver gauntlets on his wrists with three holes in each. His facemask had three horns sticking out of the top, holding back the thick mane of golden hair he now had. On his belt there was a strange symbol that Koji told the others was the Legendary Warrior’s symbol for fire.

“Ahh!” Takuya’s new form cried. “Agunimon!”

Tommy looked like a tiny white bear that could stand upright with a streak of orange war paint on each cheek. He wore a green head guard with a yellow bear’s head on the headband, metal shoulder guards with an orange arm guard on his right. He wore a green vest with the Legendary Warrior’s symbol for ‘ice’ etched into a hexagon on the connecting chest piece and green and orange snow boots.

“Whoa!” he cried, sliding just a bit. “Kumamon!”

JP emerged in a spark of electric energy. His armor was a dark bluish-purple and yellow and had a similar appearance to Agunimon’s only with a beetle theme to it. His helmet had a beetle’s horn on the forehead band and his warrior’s symbol for ‘thunder’ was marked on his thigh armor plates.

“Yah!” he cried slamming his fists together. “Beetlemon!”

“Whoa!” Everyone cried out as the three newly changed humans charged at the wall that blocked them from the outside.

“Pyro Punch!” Agunimon cried, thrusting out his fists rapidly, heating the wall until it was glowing red.

“Blizzard Blaster!” Kumamon yelled as he pulled out the missal launcher that he carried on his back and shot out rapid bursts of snowballs over the heated spot.

The two of them did this over and over again, heating and cooling in rapid succession, never giving the rock time to completely adjust. It began to crack in places.

“Now JP!” Agunimon commanded when he judged the wall to be brittle enough.

“Thunder Fist!” Beetlemon cried, electric energy crackling around his fist as he thrust it into the
center of the section of wall that Agunimon and Kumamon had been working on. The cracks widened and gave way a little.

“Thunder Fist!” he cried again and again until the wall crumbled underneath and let in a true shaft of light from the outside. Together the three Digimon warriors widened the hole until it was large enough so that everyone could get out.

“They did it!” Tai yelled out.

“Cool,” Takato awed.

“Let’s get out of here already!” Rika huffed exasperatedly.

The group rushed towards the crude hole and scrambled out into the bright sunlight. Many sighed with relief.

“Wow,” someone gasped, looking around at everyone after Takuya, JP, and Tommy de-digivolved. “How many of us are there?”

Izzi glanced around and counted off each person. “There are thirty humans, and twenty-four Digimon.”

“Wow,” Matt sighed. “That’s a lot of us to keep track of.”

Everyone was now looking around at their large group, but one. Takuya was off to the side slightly clutching the front of his shirt. His chest was hurting and he was having a little trouble breathing.

‘Did I overdo it?’ he wondered.

“Takuya? Are you alright?” Tommy asked, realizing how hard his friend was breathing.

“What?” he grinned, trying his best to hide his pain as everyone’s attention turned to him. “I’m fine. I must have gone a little overboard, that’s all. Why? Even though you had a blaster, aren’t you a little tired from all that work?”

“Oh. I guess I am a little,” Tommy admitted.

“Hey, I’m a little worn out too,” JP sighed dramatically, teasing Tommy. “Takuya wasn’t the only one physically hammering at that wall. You had it easy with that blaster of yours.”

Tommy and Takuya rolled their eyes and put their hands on their hips, but in doing so Takuya elbowed his bag and felt the folder his doctor had given him. He remembered that the test results for his cancer were still in there. He had planed on putting off telling his friends about his condition, but now that they were in the Digital World and they had no idea what the flow of time was here in comparison to their own world, he realized that he might not have that luxury.

“Actually guys,” Takuya sighed, rubbing the back of his head. “I have something to tell you that you should probably know.”

Koji eyed him suspiciously. His friend was unusually serious and that was never a good sign for Takuya.

“Well, what a large bunch you all make,” a woman’s voice commented before Takuya could speak again. “Those senile old fools find the master so threatening that they simply brought everyone, didn’t they?”
Everyone looked up and saw a woman with silver hair in a red hat, dress and boots, wearing dark sunglasses.

“Arukenimon!” Ken gasped.

“Hello again,” the woman sneered. “And how is our dear sweet Emperor?”

Ken ground his teeth, his hands balling up into fists.

The woman allowed herself an amused laugh.

“Is this it?” another voice asked, sounding bored. “I was expecting a greater challenge.”

This wasn’t a Digimon any group was familiar with. He looked like a slim black suit of armor with red eyes glowing behind his face guard. He possessed a nasty looking double bladed sword sheathed in its scabbard underneath a broad shield.

“Calm yourself, Crusademon,” Arukenimon smiled. “It does no good to underestimate these vermin. They have proved to be very resourceful in the past. You’re sister Crusadermon learned that the hard way, didn’t she?”

“She was weak,” the dark knight Digimon said emotionlessly. “The one with true power in that world was Lord Lucemon. I was deeply hurt when he sent me here and not to help destroy those pesky Legendary Warriors. However, in spite of her weakness, Crusadermon was still my sweet baby sister who I shall honor with my vengeance against the one who caused her downfall.”

He looked disdainfully down at Koji who had defeated her as MagnaGarurumon.

“Yet he is not our target,” Arukenimon reminded him gently. “No, the master has something much more enjoyably painful for these unfortunate brats. Now enough chitchat. Let’s get on with it.”

“If you insist,” the knight shrugged, unsheathing his broadsword.

“I do,” the woman purred, plucking a silver hair from her head.

No one liked the way the two evil Digimon prattled on as if they weren’t there. Then all hell broke loose.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Who is this new master of Arukenimon’s? Will Koji survive Crusademon’s plan for vengeance? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!
Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Koichi face off against Duskmon as Löwemon while Koji and company explained their past to the other DigiDestined. Koichi defeated Duskmon and soon after, Tai, Takato and Takuya showed up and the groups are now all reunited. They traveled to an edge in the maze of tunnels and use Agunimon, Kumamon, and Beetlemon to break down the wall since Armor Digivolving wasn’t possible in the chamber they were in. They make it outside and just as Takuya starts to tell them all about his cancer, Arukenimon and Crusademon appear.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is mostly told from and focuses on Koji and Koichi’s point of view. I got tired of describing the Digimon so if you don't know the name of one, google image it. As stated in previous chapters I'm using the English names for the Digimon and their DigiDestined. I hope you enjoy this latest chapter of the Ultimate Gathering of the DigiDestined.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The Digital World: Location: Outside the Labyrinth

“Get him,” Arukenimon purred. “Get the one the master wants.”

Crusademon didn’t waste any time beginning his attack. In response to the immediate threat, digivices glowed. Now that they were out of the mysterious cave with it’s bizarre tunnels and unnatural properties, the partner Digimon were able to finally Digivolve and fight back. Willace’s Digimon Digivolved into Gargomon and Wendigomon but remained by his side as a line of defense alongside Michael’s newly evolved Seadramon and Kenta’s Marineangemon who was already a mega level Digimon to begin with.

Birdramon, Greymon and Garurumon attacked first, backed up by Ikkakumon, Angemon, Kabuterimon, and Togemon who attacked from a distance. Gatomon Armor Digivolved into Nefertimon and attacked head on along with ExVeemon, Aquilamon, Stingmon, and Ankylomon, followed up by the Tamer’s Digimon: Growlmon, Gargomon (Henry’s Terriermon), Kyubimon, Cyberdramon, and Guardromon. For some reason Suzie’s Lopmon and Ai and Mako’s Impmon couldn’t Digivolve. Not that it appeared to matter. There were plenty of Digimon on the offensive as it was.

However, in spite their large numbers, Crusademon fought off all of the attacking Digimon easily.
He then made a beeline for Koji, but swerved at the last second to take a swing at Takuya. Caught off guard by the unexpected attack, Takuya lost his footing and stumbled backwards. That was when Arukenimon made her move.

The woman Digimon solidified a plucked strand of hair into a needle and threw it as if it were a dart at the falling Takuya. It struck him squarely between the shoulder blades and the shock immobilized his body completely. His bag slipped off his shoulder and landed right beside him in a deflated heap since it’s only real possession was the folder that contained his medical documents.

“Takuya!” Koji yelled out in alarm and rage, pulling out his D-Tector and spirit evolved into the Legendary Warrior of Light: Lobomon. He looked like a human wearing Garurumon themed armor, wielding a white lightsaber. The Warrior Symbol of Light shone brightly on his shoulders. Zoe was right behind him, transforming into Kazemon, the fairy looking Warrior of Wind, her warrior’s symbol located on her gloves. Koichi evolved into Löwemon again and even though Tommy and JP were still a little tired from making their exit from the cave they transformed again to help Takuya. But they were all too late.

Crusademon charged at Takuya and knocked him out roughly even though he was already immobilized. He hefted the unconscious boy onto his shoulder and dealt a wide arching blow with his blade to intercept the would-be rescuers. Arukenimon gave a delighted laugh and reverted to her spider form, bursting out of her dress.

“Spider Thread!” she cried, depositing a rather sticky net of web on top of the Warrior DigiDestined and the partner Digimon, halting any possible pursuit.

“We have him,” she grinned. “Now lets go. The master doesn’t like to be kept waiting.”

Crusademon didn’t give any comment and merely followed her out of the DigiDestined’s sight.

“Takuya!” Koji cried out in vain as he struggled with the sticky threads.

It took everyone’s effort to free the captive Digimon and the Legendary Warriors, but by the time everyone was finally free Arukenimon and Crusademon were long gone.

“Damn it!” Koji choked out, slamming a fist into the ground after he reverted back to his human form. Koichi placed a comforting hand on his shoulder, but couldn’t find the right words to complete the act. Tommy and JP stared numbly in the direction that their friend and leader had vanished while Zoe, in a daze, retrieved the bag that Takuya had dropped, but in her inattention she had accidently picked it up from its bottom, spilling its contents onto the ground.

She wordlessly picked up the personal articles without much interest. There wasn’t much in the bag to begin with; making it obvious to her that Takuya had cleared most of the contents out to make room for Tommy’s present. There were a few old comic books and collectors’ cards, some empty candy wrappers, and stray pieces of paper from school, some with doodles in the margins. What really caught her attention though was the official looking folder. It was hardly something she would have expected Takuya to be carrying around.

“What’s that?” JP asked, staring over her shoulder.

Zoe jumped.

“D-don’t know,” she stuttered, holding a hand over her heart. “Don’t scare me like that!”

“Jeez, Z, chill,” he chuckled.
Zoe returned her attention to the folder and opened it. Its contents confused her since she couldn’t comprehend what was inside. The only thing she was certain of was that it came from the local clinic in Shibuya prefecture.

“It appears to be a medical record of some kind,” she stated, answering JP’s question.

“Maybe Joe could look at it,” Tommy suggested, coming up behind her.

“Good idea,” Zoe agreed. “Hey, Joe?”

The eldest boy looked over at them. He had been attending to minor injuries that some of the Digimon had obtained during their brief confrontation with Crusademon.

“What is it?” he asked, joining them. Most of the others had followed him over. Koji had recovered his composure and from the shock of seeing his best friend kidnapped right in front of him. Now he joined his friends with Koichi remaining faithfully at his side. Zoe handed over the folder and Joe thumbed through it, his frown growing more pronounced the longer he looked. Everyone was waiting for him to speak.

“Do you have any idea what these papers are?” he asked Takuya’s friends.

They shook their heads.

“I see,” he mused, thumbing to a particular page in the folder. “What day was it when you came here?”

“August first,” Tommy answered. “I know because it was my birthday. Why?”

“Just spit it out, Joe!” Tai sighed impatiently. “What are those papers?”

“These are medical test results,” Joe answered grimly. “I’ve had the privilege of sorting through documented records like these in the clinic I’m interning at. I’m not one hundred percent sure of the contents, but I know enough to know that these are the results of tests that were for run to confirm a case of lung cancer. …I’m afraid they’re positive. These were sent to the clinic on July thirtieth.”

Everyone was frozen with surprise and shock.

“That was two days ago,” Zoe gasped.

“He must have gotten these before my birthday party,” Tommy teared up. “That’s the real reason why he was late. He was at the hospital.”

“I guess we now know what he needed to tell us before Arukenimon and Crusademon appeared,” JP murmured.

Koji felt numb, unable to ask what other information was contained in that folder. As usual, Koichi was somehow able to read his mind.

“Is there anything else, Joe?” he asked softly.

Everyone looked at their appointed medical advisor, waiting for his response. Joe went back over the record again until he finally laid his hands on what he had been looking for. It was an x-ray of Takuya’s chest cavity. Everyone watched him raise the film sheet to the sky with nervous curiosity, afraid of what those x-rays would reveal. Joe’s eyes widened a fraction after looking, and suddenly
began going through the record again, afraid that he was right about his own unprofessional diagnosis of the film. He was.

“Joe, you’re kinda freaking us out over here,” Mimi squeaked. “What’s wrong?”

He sighed miserably. He hated giving bad news.

“I was hoping I was wrong, but unfortunately I’m not. According to these papers, Takuya has an advanced case of lung cancer. He’s scheduled for chemotherapy in a week according to the release date, but I’m afraid that with a case this advanced… there isn’t much hope even with the chemo.”

Joe pulled out the x-ray again and pointed at a shadowy mass in the upper left rib cage.

“See how large and spread out it is? It must be incredibly painful for him just to climb a set of stairs or run for even a couple minutes. I wonder…”

Koji closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose, blocking Joe out and tried remembering the last few times he’d seen Takuya. Since they all went to different schools (even if his and Takuya’s were relatively close by) they only got to meet up with each other as a whole group a couple times a month.

Koji remembered that Takuya had been acting weird during Tommy’s birthday party. He had shown up slightly winded and hadn’t been nearly as aggressive playing soccer that day as he usually was. At the time Koji had figured that Takuya had been out of breath because he’d ran all the way from the train station. He’d also assumed that Takuya had been holding back in the soccer game on purpose to make it easier for the kids at the party to enjoy the game more. He had noticed that the athlete had grimaced a couple of times and Koji had been suspicious, but Takuya would just start smiling and goofing off as if nothing was wrong, so he’d dismissed it as a reaction to a stubbed toe or any number of possible small injuries that could be sustained during a soccer game.

Thinking back more, before Tommy’s birthday, Koji realized that there had been other signs. A couple of months ago Takuya had started having a regular cough that he’d tried to hide until Koji called him out on it. He claimed that it was his allergies acting up. It was a very common answer so everyone had simply accepted it. But Koji had always had a feeling that it was much more than that. He cursed himself for never noticing his best friend’s pain. He knew that he shouldn’t blame himself. Cancer wasn’t just something that you could simply get out of the blue like a cold. It happened gradually. The signs had been there, just unnoticeable at the time. Takuya had been able to cover it all up so well with a few of his smiles that he had managed to fool everyone. If he always smiled, how was anyone supposed to know he was hurting?

These days Koji was no longer able to hide his real feelings from his new friends and twin brother, let alone his surprisingly observant best friend. It wasn’t fair that Takuya had kept him in the dark for so long when he always seemed to know what Koji was feeling. Sure, Takuya hadn’t known that he had cancer during that time, but couldn’t he have let his best friend know that he was hurting? That he felt that there was something wrong with him? Or had he been just as clueless about his own condition as everyone else that he hadn’t known either?

“Koji?”

He started. Koichi was staring at him with concern.

“I’m sorry, what?” Koji asked weakly, shaking himself out of his thoughts. He hated how they were all now staring at him with sympathy. They didn’t know him or Takuya and he wasn’t sure he wanted them to. They were all strangers and he had never been good with other people. …That
was more of Takuya’s area.

“We’re going to move out now,” Tai said, placing what was supposed to be a comforting hand on Koji’s free shoulder. “We’re too exposed out here and there’s no way we can go back into those caves. If Crusademon and Arukenimon were to come back and chase us in there we’d get lost and separated all over again. We wouldn’t be of any help to your friend then. Izzi believes that he’s found a good spot north of here to make camp according to his laptop and Guardromon’s readings. We can figure out what to do from there.”

Koji simply nodded. It was better than doing nothing, but he wasn’t sure he wanted to be taking orders from the older boy. It felt like Tai had automatically taken charge of the large group the moment he had joined up with them and everyone seemed to simply follow him without question. Even that hotheaded Rika girl was listening to him.

While they all headed for the “good spot” that Izzi had found, Koji watched Tai keenly. He hated to admit it, but Tai did make a good leader. He listened to other people’s opinions, tried to keep conversation light, but never to the extent that made him appear uncaring or oblivious to the situation. It turned out that in the short time Tai had been with the large group he’d already learned everyone’s name and had a way of making them feel as if they’d been friends for years instead of acquaintances who’d really only known each other for roughly half a day.

Tai soon became the least of Koji’s worries and musings. Takuya’s ‘kidnapping’ (for lack of a better word for the situation) had also shifted to the back of his mind as an even more irritating and currently more pressing matter was brought to his attention. Tai was nice to everyone and his sister Kari seemed to share that same trait… except towards his twin. It wasn’t just her either. The boy he’d saved – TK – and the little boy from their group called Cody ignored Koichi as if he wasn’t there. Whenever they did acknowledge him it would be with a glare or cold stare. The others in their group seemed cautious of Koichi as well, but they at least attempted to be civil. As for the DigiDestined group that called themselves Tamers (they seemed to prefer being called that over DigiDestined), didn’t know what was going on, but seemed to go with the majority and acted cautious around Koichi as well. It didn’t take Koji long to figure out why either. It was pretty obvious.

It was because Koichi was the Legendary Warrior of Darkness. This made Koji angry. His twin was by far the kindest person he’d ever known and had better people skills than he, the Warrior of Light, had. He wasn’t the only one who had noticed either. Loyal friends till the end, JP, Zoe, and Tommy distracted Koichi from the barely veiled animosity of the other DigiDestined. Koichi was glad to have friends like them to help his brother when he was incapable of doing much himself. He wasn’t good at comforting others, not even his own brother. This bothered him to no end. All he could do was get angry and talk back when Koichi couldn’t or – in this case – wouldn’t.

The place that Izzi had brought them to was a small clearing in the middle of a dense forest. It was reasoned that if they were attacked, they could seek refuge in the woods. Not many were able to move about so freely with so much vegetation and foliage. Tai assured Koji that they’d come up with a solution to find and save Takuya, but for the moment they were in unknown territory, knew nothing about their enemies, had no idea where to even start looking and therefore had no real way to help the Warrior of Fire at the present time. What Tai thought was necessary at the moment, though, was to get everyone to relax and get to know each other. Who knew how long they’d be staying in this Digital World? They might as well try to get along.

They got a couple fires going, food scavenged, and everything became soothingly peaceful. Soon after bellies were full, everyone was too tired and happy to remember that Koichi represented Darkness. This was easily forgotten partially due to Koichi’s own shy smiles and polite way of
speaking. Koji was able to relax and enjoy himself as well, finding that he had been right about Tai assuming leadership. This time it didn’t bother him.

Tai was obviously experienced in this sort of role, and had already gained the respect of everyone around him in such little time. Koji found that he got along well with the charismatic leader. Davis was another person that Koji found that he could get along with and it wasn’t because the goggle-head had saved him from falling in the cylindrical light cavern. The boy was almost like another Tai, but it didn’t take him long to realize the real reason why he got along so well with the two of them. Both boys reminded him painfully of Takuya. His friend’s absence had an even greater effect on Koji then he’d initially realized.

After dinner and a lot of chatting, it came time to make sleeping arrangements and arrange a watch guard. It was agreed that they would have four man shifts switching off every three hours. Tai, Davis, Takato, and Koichi were assigned to the first group; Matt, Kari, Henry, and Koji had the second; Joe, TK, Rika, and Zoe had the third; ending with Izzi, Yolei, Ryo, and JP to take the final watch of the night. The first watch had gone smoothly until the time came for the first guard switch.

Koji hadn’t been able to sleep at all and looked too tired to take his watch shift. He’d been worrying about Takuya again and what those evil Digimon could be doing to him. Still, he headed for the outskirts of the camp under a tree where his twin was positioned for watch duty. When Koichi saw the state of his brother, he volunteered to take a double shift and cover for him so that Koji could sleep more, but Koji immediately refused.

“I can’t let you do that,” Koji sighed with a suppressed yawn.

“Yes, you can,” Koichi chuckled softly. “Besides, I’m not even tired yet. Honest. It’ll be all right Koji. I don’t mind being out here in the dark.”

“I bet,” Kari muttered darkly as she passed them to switch guard duties with Davis. She had risen from the nearest group of sleepers that happened to be made up of all the girls.

Koji glared at her.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” he asked.

“Why should he mind the dark?” Kari shrugged. “It’s only his element. The darkness of the night must be a real comfort to him.”

Koichi noted the angry posture of his twin, but Kari didn’t seem too.

“It is rather calming,” Koichi smiled, trying to dispel the increasingly hostile and awkward tension in the air. “Especially out here where-”

“I knew it,” Kari scoffed. “You’re actually enjoying our situation, aren’t you?”

“I beg your pardon?” Koichi inquired politely, utterly confused by the turn in direction of the conversation.

Others sleeping nearby had woken upon hearing Kari’s raising voice. It had attracted the attention of the others changing watch shifts as well.

“Only an agent of darkness would find this place soothing. Especially at night,” Kari spat, too tired to really consider what she was saying.
Koji’s hands balled into fists.

“What’s going on here?” Tai asked, coming over with Davis and Matt.

“I’m not quite sure,” Koichi blinked, glancing between his increasingly enraged twin and the accusing Kari.

“Don’t play that game,” Kari growled.

“I honestly don’t—!” Koichi spluttered.

WHAP!

Koichi remained frozen where he stood, shocked. His cheek slowly turning pink from the forming a welt caused by the hard slap that Kari had just given him.

“Don’t play dumb,” she cried. “I won’t let you make me out to be a fool.”

“You seem to be doing that yourself,” Koji told her softly.

She didn’t hear the dark warning undertone in his voice, but Matt had.

“I think that’s enough, Kari,” Matt said, placing a hand on her shoulder. “You’re tired. You’re saying things you don’t really mean. Why don’t you switch shifts with Yolei? You can have her later shift so that you can get some more sleep.”

“I’m fine,” Kari insisted. “He’s the problem. I don’t trust him. Who could trust anyone with darkness as their attribute?”

Koichi finally understood the reason for Kari’s hostilities and just in time to stop Koji who had just about snapped after hearing Kari’s last comment. Koichi grabbed his twin’s arm. Koji glared at him, but relaxed his fist. Kari saw the glare and the raised fist but with her sleep-fogged mind she mistook it’s meaning.

“Humph,” she sighed. “Not even your twin trusts you.”

That did it.

Koji raised the fist again, not caring in the slightest that he was about to hit a girl, when—

WHAP!

Kari’s eyes flew wide open as she recoiled from the slap. Everyone was stunned. They had expected Koji to hit her or even possibly Zoe who had come over from her nearby sleeping space with the other girls to do just that, but no one had expected Tai. His hand was still raised and his arm was tense as if shocked by the action it had just committed, but his face was a mask of disappointment and sorrow. He hadn’t enjoyed hitting his sister, but he wasn’t about to let someone else do it even if she deserved it.

“Tai?” she gasped, hurt.

“That’s enough, Kari,” he said softly. “Do as Matt suggested and switch watches with Yolei.”


“I’m taking no one’s side,” he answered simply. “You went too far Kari. I’d usually demand that
you give an apology, but I can see that you won’t at the moment. Now go get Yolei… On second
thought, wake Sora. She can have your shift instead. Yolei can keep hers. I want you to sleep and
think about what you’ve said tonight.”

He walked up to her and kissed her on the cheek that he’d slapped.

“I know you’ll do the right thing in the end,” he whispered in her ear. “You always do. Now go to
sleep and clear your head.”

She stared numbly at him, the disbelief evident in her eyes.

Tai turned away from his sister, their conversation over, and looked at the twins before him.

“So who’s taking the shift?” He asked.

“I am, like I said I would,” Koji stated, before Koichi could talk him out of it again. He was wide-
awake now.

Tai nodded. “All right then. Koichi, do you know where you’re sleeping?”

Koichi was thrown for a moment. He hadn’t really thought about it. He’d assumed that he could
talk Koji into letting him take his shift and simply join his brother after that, but now that that Koji
was going to take his scheduled shift, he didn’t know. He was almost afraid after his unexpected
confrontation with Kari.

Tai saw the boy’s indecision and smiled softly.

“Why don’t you join Davis and I? Our spot’s a little far from the fires, but we’ve got Agumon to
keep us warm. He’s practically a walking space heater with that Pepper Breath of his.”

Koji shot the older boy a grateful smile. That was twice Tai had helpfully intervened that night for
his brother’s sake.

“Yeah!” Davis grinned the moment Tai suggested it. “You can have the spot next to me and Ken.
We’ll even save a spot for you, Koji, so you can join us after your shift!”

Koji nodded his thanks at Davis.

“All right…” Koichi smiled, but glanced hesitantly at Koji, who squeezed his hand comfortingly
and gave a small imperceptible nod of approval.

“Great!” Matt said, clapping his hands together. “Now that that’s settled, Koji, you and I have a
watch shift to start. See the rest of you in the morning!”

“Yeah,” Tai yawned. “Let’s hit the hay guys.”

Davis, however, chatted animatedly with Koichi all the way over to their sleeping spot. Tai had
gone off to make sure that Kari had woken Sora and went to sleep herself before he rejoined them,
tired, but just as open and warm to Koichi as Davis. Ken was equally welcoming to the outcast boy
and moved over some so that there would be room for Koji when he joined them later.

“So tell me, Koichi,” Tai sighed, resting his head on his crossed arms. “What set Kari off? I’ve
never seen her act like that before.”

Koichi looked away from him, as well as Davis and Ken who were waiting curiously for his
answer.
“Koji looked tired when he came to start his shift so I had volunteered to do it for him,” Koichi explained from the beginning. “I told him that I wasn’t tired or anything like he was and that I didn’t mind the dark. Kari had overheard that last bit. I told her that the dark was rather calming and she … I don’t know, she just got mad.”

“Hmm,” Tai mused. “Why do you think it’s calming?”

“Well it isn’t all the time, like when we were in those tunnels. I just found it calming tonight, especially out here where we can see the stars,” he said looking towards the heavens. “You can’t see the stars like this where I live with my mom.”

Tai smiled. It was rather nice out in spite of all that they had gone through since they’d arrived in this world.

“She didn’t give me a chance to explain,” Koichi sighed. “Then things just got worse from there.”

Davis laughed. “Well Kari can be pretty stubborn in her own way.”

Tai chuckled darkly. “Yeah, but you should know that she isn’t always like that. She just doesn’t have any good experiences with the forces of darkness, Koichi. None of us have, really. It’s always been the main attribute of our enemies – not that we think you’re an enemy!”

Koichi laughed softly. “I know. I’m used to reactions like hers anyways.”

They all smiled sympathetically.

“You know,” Davis mused, “Your brother told us what happened to you.”

Koichi looked over at him.

“Really?” he asked.

“Yup! And I feel for ya, man,” Davis smiled. “Ken here has had a similar experience.”

“Really?” Koichi asked, looking over at the other raven-haired boy.

Ken nodded sadly. “I was once under the influence of dark forces through the effects it had on the dark spore that’s embedded in my neck. I ended up hurting a lot of people, including those who became my friends. I realized my mistakes though, and with everyone’s help, especially Wormmon’s and Davis’, I was later able to forgive myself, move on and make the friends I have today.”

Tai nodded. “Unfortunately its experiences like that that tends to make us see things in black and white with no real grey areas. And you are definitely a grey area, Koichi. We’ve never met anyone who’s used the powers of darkness for good, so it’s new for us to meet someone as nice as you who does have control over that power. I know you’re good and most of the others know that too, but some, like Kari, are just unsure of what to make of you yet. Give it time and she and everyone else will come around. She is Light after all. Darkness simply frightens her.”

“But Koji is the Warrior of Light,” Davis pointed out. “How come he isn’t… you know?”

Tai shrugged. “Well they are brothers, Davis. Twins even. It’s kind of hard to hate someone you share such a strong bond with.”

Koichi smiled.
“I had asked him that myself once after we had met.”

“What did he say?” Ken asked curiously.

“He said that despite the fact that we are identical twins, we are complete opposites, but it is because we are opposites that we can better appreciate each other for who we are. We balance each other out. Takuya had once explained to us that we are like the yin and yang symbol. We had always wondered why he was Light and I was Dark since he has the darker, moodier personality, while I’m a more go-with-the-flow kind of person and prefer to avoid any confrontation if I can help it. Takuya said that while its true Koji has the darker personality, he is really passionate and surprisingly idealistic on the inside, while I tend to think pessimistically and have some rather depressing thoughts. We are exactly like the symbol. Koji’s exterior is dark and mine bright, but our inner cores or selves are the exact opposite.”

Tai nodded. He too had noticed that their attributes didn’t seem to fit their personalities, but when it was explained like that, it made perfect sense. Koji was the stronger of the two, so he got the stronger, brighter, element while Koichi was weaker, humbler, and therefore more susceptible to the influences of the darker element.

“Well, I don’t think you’ll be having much trouble with Kari from now on,” Davis yawned.

“Oh?” Koichi blinked. “Why’s that?”

“Because Ken and I’ll be hanging with ya. Like Tai said, she’ll come around. Especially once she sees what good friends you, Ken, Tai, Koji and I’ll become. TK and Cody will come around too eventually.”

“That’s right, Davis,” Tai said in a sarcastic tone. “It’ll be all because you’re with him.”

“Well it worked with Ken!” Davis huffed indignantly. “Why not Koichi?”

Ken chuckled and shook his head. “He has a point Tai. I might not be here if Davis hadn’t stuck up for me back when no one else would and persistently backed me up until I joined you all and got the others to accept me after the whole ‘Digimon Emperor’ fiasco.”

Tai shrugged. “Fair enough. I’m just saying it’s going to take more than Davis’ sparkling personality. But he’s right Koichi. They’ll come around eventually.”

“Thank you,” Koichi smiled.

“No prob!” Davis grinned. “You’re a DigiDestined too, whether they like it or not! We all have to stick together.”

“He’s right,” Ken nodded. “I’ll stick by you too.”

“Yup,” Tai smirked. “You tragic types gotta stick up for one another after all.”

Ken playfully punched the older boy in the shoulder, getting a noogie in return. Davis got in there as well, wrestling with Tai only to end up in a headlock with Ken until they both quietly cried ‘uncle.’ It was in this state that Koji found them in after switching shifts with Zoe.

“Do you guys even know the meaning of sleep?” he scolded, hands on his hips.

“Whoa, is it late already?” Tai chuckled, releasing his captives from his grasp.
Koichi laughed softly. Koji eyed his twin curiously, but didn’t comment. It was obvious that Koichi now felt comfortable around these boys and Koji wasn’t about to make things awkward for him. They all settled down and dropped off instantly to sleep for the rest of the night.

~*~*~*~*~*~

But what of Takuya? I doubt he is resting peacefully. To find out his fate tune in next time for Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

What really got to me in this chapter was the writing the scene with the confrontation between Koji, Koichi and Kari. It took me a long time to perfect it because I wanted to remain as true to her character as possible and this is the ending result. I was gonna do some bitch slapping, but i thought that Kari getting hit by Tai would have a greater effect then a slap from Zoe. It carried more weight in my opinion and that's why it happened the way it did. In my defense for this argument, Kari does have a violent streak (she's related to Tai after all) so it wasn't too out of bounds for me to have her slap Koichi and hold an argument with him. Anyways, I hope you enjoyed this chapter and I promise that there is more action to come in later chapters.
Mind Control

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Crusademon and Arukenimon attacked and took Takuya with them. In the aftermath, Zoe found Takuya’s medical file and the truth about his cancer comes to light. The DigiDestined moved on to regroup and camp out for the evening. Koichi ran into some trouble due to his association with darkness and has a confrontation with Kari that night during the watch shift change. Koichi spends the night with Tai, Davis and Ken who welcome and try to reassure him that the others will warm up to him eventually.

Chapter Notes

This story just kinda writes itself. I have now introduced one of the villain's evil toadies, Aiyokumon, and mentioned another. There are seven total and they all have some relation to one of the 7 deadly sins. I will admit that the inspiration of the idea originated from the series Fullmetal Alchemist. Like I said, this story has kinda been writing itself so not even I know how it's going to end. I do have an idea of the means to it's end though. It will be tragic, but it will also be happy. I can't stand non-happy endings. Enjoy and please review!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Unknown

While everyone else was comfortably falling asleep in the clearing, Takuya was waking up. His entire body ached and his vision was blurred. Not that it mattered. There wasn’t much to see anyways. He was in a dimly lit cavern, his hands chained high above his head, and his legs were chained to the wall, limiting his movements.

“Ah,” a woman’s voice mused softly. “He is awake.”

Takuya had been expecting Arukenimon, but instead a beautiful young woman in her late teens or early twenties stepped out of the shadows. She had long golden hair hanging over her left shoulder, large dark green eyes, and the most beautifully perfect face and body that any model would have been envious of. In fact she was so beautiful that it was obvious that she wasn’t human.

“Who are you?” Takuya choked.

“Who am I?” she repeated with an enchanting smile. “I am Aiyokumon.”
“Aiyokumon?” Takuya repeated. “Aiyoku as in ‘lust’ in Japanese?”

“You got it,” she grinned. “I am the result of all the desires of the Digimon in this world, your digital world, and the other DigiDestined’s digital worlds. And right now I desire something of yours.”

She approached Takuya and laid a hand over his heart. Suddenly his chest was ablaze with pain. He cried out in agony, his heart throbbing painfully under her touch and the tumor in his left lung seemed to pulse inside his chest, making it hard for him to breathe. She smiled sweetly before removing her hand, taking the pain away with it. Takuya panted heavily with sweat trailing down his face. What had she done to him?

“Aww,” she cooed. “Poor baby.”

She ran a long delicately slim finger down the side of his face, stopping under his chin. Tilting his face up to her own she examined him.

“You’ll do quite nicely, my new pet,” she mused. “That Arukenimon has her uses after all. What the master could possibly want with her I’ll never know. Especially when he has me and the other six Zaigou Digimon and Crusademon, who has his own practical uses at least. Anyway, DigiDestined Takuya Kanbara, human host to the Flame Warrior’s spirit, I have something delicious planed for you and your little friends. I have been ordered to keep my eye on you, but I’m allowed a little fun as well.”

Takuya didn’t like the sound of that. She’d nearly made his chest explode for amusement. What could she possibly do to him that would be ‘fun?’ He got his answer.

“Oh! I know!” she squealed delightedly like a little girl who had been given free reign of a toy store and has finally decided what she’s going to do first. “I’m going to turn you into my next playmate! Netamashiimon won’t approve of it, but he won’t be able to help himself if I let him have a turn with you. He is the essence of ‘envy’ after all.”

Then she smiled sinisterly, tapped Takuya in the center of his forehead, and all went black again…

Aiyokumon stepped back and stared at her new “boy-toy.” He was rather good looking for a human. His body was well toned from playing sports, well kept, and completed with an angelic face, looking even more angelic in sleep. It was faces like this that really got her blood boiling once they were contorted with pain. She’d have her fun with this one for sure. It was simply a bonus for her that he was the possessor of the Warrior of Flame’s spirit. She unchained the boy from the wall and had her minions – little gray rabbit looking Digimon called Gazimon – carry him to her inner chambers.

She had them set him down on the low table where she worked. She stared at his face while she decided how she was going to proceed with making him her puppet. There were so many ways to do a possession: potions, spells, charms, forceful possession… Oh, she hadn’t done a forceful possession in a while. It was so crude to have to do it that way, but was oh so fun. Potions were boringly simple and by far the easiest since spells and charms took time and endless patience. While her mind was fiddling with the idea of doing a forceful possession, on a whim she lowered her face to Takuya’s and was about to kiss him when a shield of flame erupted around him.

“Interesting,” she grinned gleefully. “It appears that the warrior’s spirit is in control when the human soul has shut down. This is going to be fun.”
She finally knew how to proceed. She was going to be forceful in her possession and have her fun with the boy, but first she needed to break down that barrier and as a result subdue the warrior’s spirit. She grabbed a couple of her long blond strands of hair, made sure they were relatively equal in length, and knotted them into an elegantly braided ball. Then she skipped over to her potions cupboards and carefully selected a blue vile. She dropped the hairball into the solution, watching it fizz. It turned purple, then sparked into a flaming red, perfect for the Warrior of Flame. Being very careful not to spill her concoction, she tilted the boy’s face upwards again, ignored the flame barrier that activated when she pried his mouth open and drizzled the solution down his throat, so as not to drown the host body. The flame barrier around Takuya weakened when more of the potion entered his system and soon it fizzled out completely.

“Nighty night guardian spirit,” Aiyokumon squealed delightedly. “I’ll make sure to take real good care of your host’s body.”

She snapped her unburnt fingers and the Gazimon lifted the boy off the table and brought him into her inner sanctum, laying him on the carpeted floor. While they were placing Takuya in her room, Aiyokumon healed her burned hand and changed her attire. Instead of her usual flowing black dress, she opted for her black tightly fitted leather pants and black tube top. She pulled her long tresses back in a tight braid and wound it around her head like a crown, pinning it firmly in place. It wouldn’t do if the boy was somehow able to move after drinking the potion and put up enough of a struggle to yank her hair out. Her hair was her life in a way. Next she fingered through her collection of torture devices, selecting an old favorite, her fang encrusted snake whip.

“Time for our guest to wake up,” she smiled to herself as she cracked the whip experimentally. She loved the way it hissed through the air just before she twisted her wrist to make the loud cracking sound that echoed through the chambers like lightning.

She paused for a moment, looking at the serenely blissful expression on Takuya’s face. Soon it would be contorted in sweet agony. She couldn’t wait anymore. She knelt over him, prodding him in the same spot she had used to knock him out. Takuya moaned slightly, slowly opening his eyes. He did not like the position he now found himself in. Takuya was helpless, unable to move effectively due to the potion’s side effects. It was meant to knock out the fire spirit within him, but it had also drained most of his body’s energy in order to do so. It took a lot to knock out Agunimon’s spirit, so there was little energy left inside of Takuya himself since he was only a simple human boy.

Aiyokumon stroked his cheek absently, wondering where to begin. She decided that she liked how uncomfortable her proximity made him, so she leaned in closer, her rather large bosom pressing against his chest, and ran her fingers through his hair, down his neck and then his spine. Takuya shivered involuntarily. She liked that. Wondering what other sort of reactions she could get out of him, Aiyokumon began to toy even further with the adolescent youth. He didn’t like it when she played with the collar and buttons of his red shirt so she decided to take it off, only to be confronted with the yellow one underneath, but she found it no fun to toy with this shirt because it didn’t get any reaction out of Takuya so she let it be. He had quickly realized she only did something if she thought it’d get a reaction out of him. By staying calm while she toyed with his remaining shirt, he had avoided loosing it with his red one.

She ran her tongue along his neck, lightly nipping him every now and then. He tensed and shivered once again in spite of trying to repress the internal tremors. She ran her lips along his jaw line but halted at the chin. Takuya had reflexively pursed his lips. She had found her entry point. Tilting his head up to hers, she ran her lips over his tightly closed ones. He would not open them no matter what she did, so she decided that the intimate stage was over. It was time to get rough.
She jabbed her knee into his side and he let out an involuntary gasp for air, allowing her access. She latched on to his mouth before he could close it again and ran her tongue over his, but unlike a human tongue, hers was more like a snake, slithering down his throat. He couldn’t breathe as she exhaled, releasing a noxious gas inside of him. Takuya thrashed about underneath, trying to throw her off, but she held fast like a predator that had found it’s prey, caught it, and was about to consume it. One moment she was effortlessly pinning him to the floor and then the next moment she was gone.

Takuya choked and spluttered now that he was free from her grasp. He actually threw up after the realization of what had just happened registered in his thought process. That woman had kissed him! It had been his first kiss too!


Takuya jerked up, looking around the room to find the source of her voice. She had just disappeared into thin air and was nowhere to be seen.

Aiyokumon’s voice giggled, the sound resounding inside his head. His head…

“Ah, so you’ve noticed,” she purred.

Takuya slumped rigidly against the nearest wall. She was inside of him!

She giggled again, delighted by his horror.

“Now come join me.”

Takuya felt a shocking jolt rake through his body and his vision of the room around him began to fade. He was still awake, still conscious, but not in any real sense. His body was slumped against the wall where the Gazimon were retrieving it and cleaning up his vomit. He could still feel, smell and hear them, but those sensations quickly faded until he was left with nothing. One by one his senses left him until there was nothing left to feel but his emotions.

Suddenly Takuya could see again, but it wasn’t the room he had been in. It was a pitch-black space, yet he could see himself clearly, his body aglow in a light orange color. He wasn’t alone there either. Somehow Agunimon was there too, but he didn’t look right. He was standing erect, frozen, eyes closed, and his skin and armor were glowing a pale ice blue instead of a fiery orange like Takuya’s.

“Welcome to the inner sanctum of your mind,” Aiyokumon’s voice spoke. “This is the place where you house Agunimon’s spirit inside of you. You only visit here within the deepest of dreams or when you transform into the Digimon Warrior of Flame himself. But from now on you will remain here for the rest of your stay in this digital world or the rest of your short life. Depends on which ends first,” she cackled. “But don’t worry. I won’t leave you without some sort of entertainment. I’ll chat with you regularly. Isn’t that nice of me?”

She became visible to him, glowing a pale green, making her look even more snake-like than she had had before when she was “kissing” him. Her attire looked even more sinister than it had before as well, especially now that she was wielding the whip. With a flick of her wrist and a loud crack she had Takuya by the throat. Because this was all inside his mind he had no need to breath, but the crack of the whip and the accompanying burn against his “skin” still hurt. He cried out as she whirled him around and planted a spiked heel in the center of his back.

She had knocked the Fire Spirit into submission with a quick and easy potion, so now she wanted
to take her time dominating the true possessor of the body. Hearing his cries of agony was bliss to her. This is what she had wanted from him; the sounds of his pain, his agony, his suffering. He had a strong mind though so he didn’t go down easy, which was just the way Aiyokumon preferred them. It thrilled her. She let loose with the whip and lashed out at him with the fanged butt of the pommel, cutting him. He may have had the “home field advantage” as it were, but he had never fought a mental battle before so she had experience on her side, wearing him down little by little until finally his glowing aura was so faded he looked like a ghost. His mental form was just barely there. He lay crumpled on the floor of his mind waiting for her to end it.

“I’m not going to kill you,” she laughed, reading his mind. “If I kill you, my master would be very put out. That and I wouldn’t be able to use your body for my little games. I can’t animate the dead you know.”

With a wave of her hand, wispy silver chains snaked around his body, dragging him into a standing position and left him hanging limply as if he were a pathetic scarecrow.

“Good-bye for now, Takuya,” Aiyokumon smiled. “It’s been real fun.”

Aiyokumon was rummaging around in her potions cupboards again. Now that she had forced Takuya’s mind into submission she needed a particular brew to keep him that way. A potion that was too strong would kill him and one that was too weak could allow him to recover enough to break free of the spell she was preparing to cast on his body. Finally she found what she required. She didn’t want Takuya to be under completely. No, she wanted him to be conscious enough to see what she was going to make him do to his friends. For this she would need another potion that she’d have to be give the boy regularly, but she had plenty of it on hand already.

The pain of vulnerability was one of her favorite types of pain. When she had been inside Takuya’s mind, she knew that she could get him to experience that pain easily. He cared for his friends too much for his own good. She would exploit that weakness, but first she needed to make him hers. She skipped back to the unconscious body that once again looked peacefully angelic now that it was no longer suffering. She unstopped the tiny bottle she held and poured its contents down Takuya’s throat. She knew she had to wait at least five minutes before its full power would take effect so she left to go terrorize the Gazimon for a little while.

Takuya couldn’t believe it. He was chained in the confines on his own mind. Agunimon had remained unresponsive to his calls and it was then that he realized that he was truly alone. No one could reach him here. He’d never felt so helpless before in his life. His “body” felt weak and he couldn’t even begin to imagine how he would find a way out of his situation. This wasn’t the physical world. This wasn’t a problem that had even occurred to him before.

If it was possible he felt himself getting even weaker. Aiyokumon had no doubt forced another potion into his body. He had read her thoughts when she had been battling him inside this weird dimension that was his mind and knew what she had done to him and what she was planning to do in the future. She was going to gain control over his body and set him loose on his friends, but leave him with enough consciousness to feel everything. This thought made him despair. He’d feel everything that she would make him do. He’d feel the blows he’d soon trade with his friends, hear their voices call out to him but would be unable to respond, and see their looks of betrayal when he attacked them.
This was quite possibly the lowest moment in Takuya’s life.

Aiyokumon was delighted. The boy was now under her complete control. Her combination of spells and potions had worked perfectly as always. She had her new puppet dancing around the room with her. With just one thought in her mind, Takuya’s body instantly responded to her whim, while deep inside the recesses of his mind Takuya’s true consciousness was forced to watch and felt deeply annoyed. She could speak to him directly with her mind due to some kind of synchronization potion she had forced him to drink.

She had made him do simple little tasks at first like getting her a glass of water to test out her control over the body. Then she’d wanted to test his battle capabilities. Takuya was frustrated by how easily his body responded to her demands without any resistance at all. He had even Spirit Evolved without being in control much to his despair and Aiyokumon’s delight. It was only a matter of time before she would set him loose on his friends. When that happened, Takuya sincerely hoped that his lung cancer would come into play and that it wasn’t already part of Aiyokumon’s calculated plans. He couldn’t attack anyone if his body couldn’t function. But she must have given him a strengthening potion of some kind because if he had been in control, his body wouldn’t have been able to handle all of the dancing she was now making him do. He could only hope a battle with his friends would quickly tax his body’s energy and prevent him from seriously hurting anyone.

**The Digital World: Location: Clearing in the Woods**

Zoe awoke with a yawn. She hadn’t slept well and thoroughly blamed Kari. It was Kari who had woken her up and it was Kari’s one-sided argument with Koichi last night that had prevented her from going to sleep until after her shift change with JP. She was sorely tempted to kick the brunet awake now, but decided against it. Others were waking all around her and she’d get caught for sure.

Instead, she rose from her spot next to Rika and Mimi and stretched. She noticed JP leaning against the tree where they had taken their watch position and joined him.

“Morning, Zo,” he grinned tiredly.

“Morning,” she mumbled.

“Some night,” he sighed, running a hand through his tousled brown hair.

She nodded. They both knew what he meant.

“How was he?” she asked.

JP and Tommy had been sleeping in a spot close to where Koichi had slept with Tai and some of the other boys. She’d forgotten to ask JP this when they had changed shifts four hours earlier.

“He appeared fine,” JP shrugged. “They were pretty nice to him from what I could see. Tommy swears they were laughing about something.”

Zoe smiled. She hoped that was the case. Koichi wasn’t one to make a fuss and rarely spoke out loud. He kept too many things bottled up inside so it was nice to think that he had begun to open up a little.
“How’d you sleep?” JP asked.

Zoe made a face.

“That bad huh?” he chuckled then sighed. “Me neither. Barely slept a wink.”

Zoe looked at him, realizing how beat he looked.

“Why don’t you get some rest now?” she suggested. “I don’t think we’ll be moving out any time soon.”

JP shrugged, but made no move to lie down.

“I don’t think I can, Zo,” he said softly. “I keep seeing Takuya. Every time I close my eyes I see his shocked face. The light just leaves his eyes and they close.”

Zoe knelt next to him and closed her eyes. She could picture it too, the last haunting image of her friend before he was spirited away by Arukenimon and Crusademon.

JP sighed and ran his hand through his hair again.

“Don’t you two look like the waking dead,” they heard Koji’s voice chuckle.

They looked up. Koji was standing before them with Koichi and Tommy, none of them looking much better. Koji had seen JP and Zoe in the distance and decided to grab Tommy on his way over with Koichi. He figured it was time for a group meeting.

“You’re one to talk,” JP yawned, resting his arms behind his head.

The corner of Koji’s mouth twitched into a smile, but it never reached his eyes. No one had slept well, not even Tommy who’d had a full night’s sleep with no watch responsibilities.

“We all know why we need to talk,” Koji started. “One of us is missing. I doubt anyone had any pleasant dreams last night.”

Tommy sniffled and Koichi – being the nearest to him – rested a hand on his shoulder. Zoe looked at the ground allowing her hair to fall forward forming a curtain, hiding her face. JP stared up at the tree’s branches and a sky that couldn’t be seen. Koji sighed, stuffing his hands into his pockets.

“We need to get him back somehow,” Tommy whimpered. “Who knows what that creepy lady and that bully are doing to him.”

“I’m sure he’s fine, Tommy,” Koichi assured him. “This is Takuya we’re talking about. He’s the strongest in our group aside from Koji. I’m sure he’s all right. He wouldn’t go down without a fight.”

“He’s right,” Koji agreed. “He’s even stronger then me sometimes. If any of us were in trouble, it’d be Takuya who’d get us out of it.”

“But who’s going to get him out of trouble?” Zoe wondered.

JP looked like he was thinking along those same lines.

“Don’t worry,” Koji assured Tommy once more. “We’ll get him back.”

“Hell yes we will!” a voice said behind him.
They were all startled to see Davis with Ken hanging back a few feet.

“Sorry to butt in,” Davis grinned, “but I couldn’t help overhearing. It’s a bad habit, I know, but I just wanted you guys to know that Tai is organizing everyone to get ready to leave in five minutes.”

“Thanks, Davis,” Koichi smiled back.

“No prob!” the goggle-head nodded. “And don’t worry about your friend. We’ll find him for sure! We’ll make it our number one priority. We need to stick together if we’re all going to make it through this. And I mean all of us.”

He cast a meaningful look at Koichi, grinned, and set off with Ken to let others who were just waking up know what was going on.

“Quite the optimist,” JP grumbled.

“Someone has to be,” Zoe smiled sadly.

“Could you imagine him getting along with Takuya?” Koichi chuckled.

“Oh God,” Zoe laughed. “This world wouldn’t stand a chance. We’d end up maiming one of them just to get them to shut up.”

They all laughed at the thought, but it ended too quickly.

They helped others pack up the camp, which didn’t take long since no one had any real supplies. Food was scarce that morning as well so breakfast was really short lived, most of it was given to the younger ones and Guilmon who couldn’t do without. While most were eating, Tai and Izzi were sitting off to the side determining what to do and where to go next. They tried getting in touch with Gennai, their guide from their Digital world, but they couldn’t get a connection. They then went through the possibilities of looking for a more populated area where they could get some adequate supplies. Luckily Izzi’s laptop detected what appeared to be a nearby city area that was half a day’s walk east of their current position. When Tai announced this idea many instantly agreed, but Koji and his group really wanted to go looking for Takuya.

“I know that this is rough on you guys,” Tai told them, “but we need to be practical. At least in this city we may be able to find a lead. Maybe someone there knows something about Crusademon or Arukenimon’s location or who they’re working for. Besides, Joe needs more medical supplies. If Takuya is hurt, Joe will need the right equipment to help him. I know that you’d love nothing more than to go off and find him, but we’re going to need to stick together on this. You saw how easily Crusademon held us off. Separated we can’t do anything, but together we stand a chance. “There’s strength in numbers” as the saying goes.”

They agreed, but only because what Tai said made sense. None of them had any medical knowledge and Joe had proven himself to be useful so far. How they had survived their adventures in their Digital World without serious injury was a miracle now that they thought about it.

As the whole group moved out, Tai once again took the lead with Izzi and this time Matt joined them. Koji thought about joining them at the front to find out more about what their plans were once they reached the city, but he was more concerned about Koichi. Kari had been avoiding them that morning but now she was approaching them. Koichi hadn’t noticed this yet because he was engaged in a conversation with Ken while Davis simply walked beside them. Koji tense as she drew nearer, but that was it. She didn’t look like she was going to hit his twin again. In fact, she
looked rather embarrassed.

“Uh… Koichi?” she muttered.

Koichi started and turned to face her. Davis looked curiously over at Kari, but his eyes betrayed how worried he really was. He didn’t want another fight to break out between her and his new friend. Ken’s face remained neutral, which was probably best since he didn’t really know how to feel either. Tai was looked over at them out of the corner of his eye up ahead with Matt, but didn’t look as if he was going to intervene this time around. …At least not yet. Others in the group were watching the exchange with wary expressions as well.

“Yes?” Koichi replied, smiling politely and disengaging from his conversation with Ken and Davis.

“Ah-,” she blinked, not expecting the polite smile after what she had said to the boy last night. She certainly didn’t deserve it. “I-I… I’m sorry. I said some rather rash things last night that I shouldn’t have said. I made a bigger deal out of it than it really was.”

“That’s all right,” Koichi said, his smile widening. “I’m not really surprised either. You’re not the first to react this way.”

Kari’s face fell.

“Really?”

Koichi shook his head with a weary edge to his smile now.

“I get it a lot. Though I have to say you’re probably the first one to hit me for it,” he said, laughing to lighten the mood.

“But it’s not your fault,” Kari muttered. “We can’t help what crest or spirit chooses us. Last night I certainly didn’t deserve the Crest of Light.”

Koichi chuckled. “I don’t think it really matters what crest or spirit we have. It’s how we use them that makes us who we are.”

Kari nodded, now feeling horrible for the way she had treated Koichi. She didn’t know why she had lashed out that night. It had just… happened. She usually didn’t judge a person until after she had gotten to know them. Ken had been an exception to that rule. She had known him as the Digimon Emperor before she had gotten to know the real Ken, so in a way she had already judged him. But Koichi was someone she had never met before. She’d felt sorry for him in the cave, but last night she didn’t know what had gotten into her. She’d gone so far overboard that Tai, her own brother, had hit her in order to knock some sense into her. It seemed to have worked. The next morning she had felt terrible for what she had said and done.

“I’m sorry,” she repeated.

Koichi just smiled and held out his hand in reply. Kari shook it gratefully. She then caught Tai’s eye. He winked at her, smiled, and returned his attention to the path ahead of them. Koji let out a quiet sigh of relief and relaxed his posture. Koichi had noticed of course and chuckled a little at him, making his face feel hot. In order to avoid further embarrassment, he moved forward to catch up with Tai and the other older DigiDestined. It was time he found out what was going to happen once they got to the city.
What is Tai's plan? Will Koji go along with it? (Probably.) What of Takuya? Will he be able to overcome Aiyokumon's mind control? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

I couldn't allow myself to make Kari out as the bad guy for long, so I felt that this had to be resolved. I mean she is Light after all. It didn't feel right. So Koichi has won over Kari, but TK and Cody will prove to be much harder nuts to crack. I also added in a Zoe and JP scene for those Izupei fans out there.

For those of you wondering, when writing this chapter i hadn't known about the Digimon Demon Lords, so... yeah. I decided to make up my own seven-deadly-sin-themed villains for the story. XD
Sekizou City

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Aiyokumon possessed Takuya after knocking the spirit of Agunimon out of commission with a potion and gets Takuya completely under her control while also allowing him to be mentally conscious so that he can feel and witness what she has in store for him and his friends. Elsewhere the DigiDestined break camp and make their way towards a city Izzi’s computer has detected. Kari takes the opportunity to apologize to Koichi for her actions the previous night.

Chapter Notes

Most of this chapter is in no one’s particular POV. The middle part of it dose switch between Takato and Rika however. Just a little fun fact: the beginning conversation in this chapter was inspired from when i was chatting with some of my friends about what cartoons we used to watch in comparison to today’s shows. I found it funny so I just had to work it into the story. Enjoy!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, AND FRONTIER OR THEIR CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Outside the Great City

The large group of DigiDestined looked down at the city that Izzi’s laptop had located in a valley nestled in the mountainside. It was amazing. Everything appeared to be made out of some sort of stone; the buildings, the roads, the bridges, even their modes of transportation seemed to be made of stone.


“Only with Digimon,” Matt agreed with a chuckle.

“Actually, in spite of its primitive appearance the city is actually quite advanced,” Izzi noted, looking at the readings that he was getting from Guardromon’s sensors.

“Wow, Izzi,” Matt playfully scoffed. “Way to ruin the moment.”

“Yeah,” Tai sighed. “I was reliving childhood memories over here... Flintstones! Meet the Flintstones. They’re the modern Stone Age family~!”

Matt also picked up the familiar children’s jingle.

“From the town of Bedrock, they’re a page right out of history~!”
The two best friends cracked up, unable to continue.

“Real mature you two,” Izzi stated, clicking away at his laptop.

“Aww, c’mon Izzi!” Mimi grinned, coming forward from her position behind them. “Didn’t you ever watch the Flintstones?”

“Not really,” Izzi shrugged. “I was more into The Jetsons.”

“Me too,” Kenta nodded.

“Figures,” Tai snickered.

“What about you, Joe?” Mimi asked.

“Neither. My parents didn’t approve of watching too much TV,” the older boy stated with a sigh.

“Lame!” Rika laughed in unison with Matt and Sora.

“Well what about you, Sora?” Tai asked.

“I was more into Bugs Bunny and Tom and Jerry,” she grinned.

“Yeah!” Mimi gushed. “The Looney Toons were the best.”

“Definitely,” Michael and Willace nodded, a little surprised their Japanese friends even knew what these American cartoons were.

“I wove (love) Bugs Bunny,” little Suzie squealed happily, hugging Lopmon.

“I liked those too,” Kari laughed. “Very little dubbing required.”

TK, Davis, Ken, and Henry nodded.

“Those were really good,” Koichi agreed. “They were the only cartoons that came in on my mom’s old TV. They weren’t dubbed or anything, but they had subtitles.”

“I was into Pokémon,” Cody muttered.

“That show’s gone nuts!” Joe sighed. “I couldn’t keep track of them anymore halfway through the season with Haruka (May) and Masato (Max), so I gave up.”

“I agree,” Takato laughed. “That’s why I stopped watching ages ago.”

“I thought you didn’t watch TV, Joe,” Sora grinned.

“I didn’t,” Joe shrugged. “I collected the cards.”

“I collected the cards too.” JP nodded.

“Me too!” Davis and Tai whooped.

Matt spotted Koji, the only one not participating in the conversation, standing off to his left looking down at the city. The boy had been out of it all morning.

“Hey, Koji!” Matt called out to him.
The boy turned, cocking one eyebrow in a silent question. Matt almost laughed. He remembered when he was Koji’s age, trying to be the cool one.

“Did you watch the Flintstones or do they not have that show in your world?”

Koji rolled his eyes then shrugged.

“We have it,” he said. “I just didn’t watch that many cartoons growing up.”

“So you’re a stick in the mud like Joe,” Mimi stated serenely.

“Hey!” Joe frowned.

“Just kidding, Joe,” Mimi laughed. “Gosh, don’t take things so literally.”

“Well I watched Power Rangers!” Tommy stated, wanting to join in on the conversation as well.

“Me too,” Zoe squealed. “I always wanted to be the pink one.”

“I wanted to be pink too!” Ai said raising her hand.


“And just what is that supposed to mean, JP?” Zoe fumed.

“Nothing,” he smiled sheepishly. “Any girl who watched that show wanted to be the pink one.”

“Not true,” Sora shook her head. “I wanted to be the yellow one.”

“Me too,” Rika nodded, elbowing Ryo and Kazu in the side when they laughed at her.

“That’s because yellow suits you two better,” Mimi stated matter-of-factly.

Jeri simply smiled, deciding not to point out that fashion sense had nothing to do with choosing which Power Ranger a person liked more. Koji smiled slightly as well.

“Well I wanted to be Red!” Mako stated proudly.

“I bet you would have made a great Red Ranger,” Tai grinned, tousling the boy’s hair.

The boy beamed at the complement, already idolizing the older boy.

The Digimon had been watching their humans talk animatedly about things beyond their comprehension for a while now. Finally it was Tentomon who decided to get them back on track.

“While it is wonderful watching all of you getting along after last night’s argument, might we start proceeding towards the city?” he buzzed.

“My thoughts exactly,” Izzi nodded, turning to Tai.

“All right everyone!” Tai called out to stop all the chatter. “Lets get a move on!”

Soon after, they all walked down into the valley towards the city and by the time they had finally arrived it was well into the afternoon. The city was even more incredible up close. The buildings were indeed built of stones and minerals, but they were rigged with well-camouflaged cables that supplied power to neon and florescent lights giving the city a high-tech edge that was invisible from a distance.
“Prodigious!” Izzi exclaimed. “This is amazing! I’ve never seen anything like this. I wonder how they get the cables to meld so well into the stone and where the city’s power source is…”

“Ok, Izzi,” Tai sighed. “We get it. It’s impressive, but we’re here on business. We came here for supplies and possible leads to help us find Takuya.”

“Right,” the computer wiz nodded, focusing again. He found a computer terminal inside a nearby phone booth and accessed a map of the city.

“Whoa,” he exclaimed. “This city is huge. What we’re seeing up here above ground is nothing! There are numerous underground levels that are even larger then what we can see up here.”

“But of course!” a voice chirped.

They all jumped, turning to see who had spoken. It was a Floramon – a plant Digimon with lily hands and facemask. She was looking inquisitively at the DigiDestined, her slim and delicate arms full of what looked like bags of groceries.

“You’re new here?” she inquired.

“Yes,” Zoe smiled, taking charge. She had become good friends with a group of Floramon in her DigiDestined team’s Digital World.

“In that case, welcome!” the flower Digimon beamed. “Welcome to the great earth city of Sekizou!”

“Thank you,” they all replied.

“What brings you here to our marvelous city?” Floramon asked.

“We need supplies,” Zoe answered. “We’re going to be doing a lot of traveling.”

“Oh,” the flower Digimon nodded. “In that case why don’t you come with me? My boss owns a store. I’m sure he can get you what you need.”

“Thanks so much!” Zoe cried. “We’d really appreciate that.”

And so they followed the flower Digimon deep into the heart of the earthen city below ground. This part of the city was even more impressive then the one above. It’s lighting was supplied by luminescent flowers and florescent rocks with a small touch of the more familiar electrical circuitry that lit up neon lights. The buildings were more advanced, cleaner, and more streamline than those in the city above. They entered a large storefront made of granite with glowing green flower and stone lighting. The Floramon brought them to the back of the store and introduced them to her boss Digitamamon – an egg shaped Digimon.

“And who are they?” he asked in an irritated tone.

Tai suddenly became apprehensive. His group hadn’t exactly had good experiences with this particular type of Digimon. Especially Joe and Gomamon, who had been slaving away for a Digitamamon to pay off a meal when they couldn’t pay for the bill. Matt wasn’t feeling too good about the egg Digimon either.

“New comers to our fair city, boss,” Floramon trilled. “They require supplies for traveling.”

“Traveling supplies, eh?” the Digimon repeated, eyeing them. “Well they’re certainly in the right
store. Who’s in charge of you lot?”

No one argued when Tai stepped forward. Digitamamon was rather intimidating.

“Do you have any money to pay for these supplies that you need?” the egg Digimon asked suspiciously.

“No,” Tai admitted shaking his head.

“Then are you prepared to work for them?” Digitamamon demanded.

Tai glanced over his shoulder, getting many nods in return.

“Yes.”

“I can’t believe this!” Rika was complaining as she grabbed the mop Takato offered her.

Takato sighed.

Why Rika? Of all the DigiDestined he could have gotten stuck with he ended up with Rika. Digitamamon had taken all of the DigiDestined and split them up into groups to perform certain tasks in his store. Tai, Izzi, Joe, Matt and Henry had been assigned to help out with the delivery service; Davis, Ken, Koji, and Koichi were in charge of taking inventory in the back; Yolei, Kenta, Kazu, Ryo and JP had to organize and restock the store’s shelves; TK, Tommy, Cody, Michael and Willace were in charge of cleaning and arranging the displays; and Sora, Mimi, Kari, Jeri, Zoe, Suzie, Ai and Mako were outside handing out fliers for the store and trying to attract customers. All of the Digimon were sent to the back warehouse to work with the incoming and outgoing shipments the store fronted. Meanwhile, Takato was stuck cleaning the bathrooms with Rika.

‘Just my luck,’ Takato thought. ‘She’s in a bad mood again too.’

“It’s disgusting!” Rika exclaimed again.

“Someone’s gotta do it, Rika,” Takato pointed out. “Besides, we get a free lunch later and the restrooms here are relatively small compared to some of the larger public –”

“I don’t care, Takato!” she shrieked. “I’m just saying why should I have to do this? Why couldn’t one of the other boys do it?”

“Because we need a girl to clean the girl’s room,” Takato grumbled.

“Well then why not one of the other girls?” Rika complained.

“Look, just think of this as a rebellion towards your mother if you want,” Takato suggested. “Wouldn’t she freak if she heard that you cleaned a public toilet?”

Rika shivered, but smiled grimly.

“That would certainly flip her lid, but that doesn’t make me want to do it any more than I did before.”

She didn’t want to openly admit that she was getting along with her mother a lot better these days since the Tamers had defeated the D-Reaper. They still clashed in most respects but they were giving each other an honest effort to get along and understand each other better.
“No one wants to do this job, Rika,” he pointed out, interrupting her thoughts, “but someone has to. Now stop you’re complaining and lets just get this over with.”

“Don’t order me around, goggle head!” she snapped at his back as he disappeared through the men’s restroom door.

Takato plopped the water bucket on the floor and got to work.

‘Quiet at last,’ he thought as he set mop to floor.

The restroom had three stalls, three urinals and four sinks, cracked tile floors, plain walls and what looked like a newly plastered mud ceiling. Of course it reeked, but no more than any other men’s room. Takato was used to having to do this sort of work while his parents ran their bakery. He worked diligently, but quickly. There were three floors to this store and each one had a bathroom that needed cleaning. Once he was done cleaning the first men’s room it smelled of pine disinfectant.

Rika was having a harder time. She’d never had to clean a bathroom before. Because her mother was a highly paid model, this was usually the hired help’s job. The mop felt awkward and clumsy in her hands.

‘Great, just great!’ she thought, mopping in swiveling swirls like she’d seen someone do on TV. ‘Of course I had to be the one stuck with this stupid job. I don’t even know if I’m doing it right.’

She grew even more apprehensive when it came time to wipe down the toilet bowls. Rika groaned. She could just see that egg-headed Digimon come inspect her work and telling her to do it over again. That thought made her do the floors over again just in case and wipe every surface down like she was OCD. When she finished and went up to the second floor, Takato was coming out of the men’s room for that floor, already done.

“How are you fairing?” he smiled, trying to be friendly.

“Humph,” Rika huffed; storming into the girl’s room, but then regretted not asking his advice for holding the mop. She knew she let her pride get in her way, but she just couldn’t swallow it and ask for help. How could she tell him that she’d never cleaned a bathroom before? It was a common enough chore for a child to have at her age in a family household, but she didn’t have a normal family. Her dad had left when she was little and her mother was a model and single mom. Sometimes she envied Takato and Henry’s normal family lives.

It took her an hour to clean the second and third floor bathrooms. As far as she was concerned, she’d strangle the next person to suggest that she clean a bathroom. She was tired and smelled of disinfectant so she was in no mood for Takato’s cheerful act when she ran into him outside the storage room to put away the cleaning supplies.

“Hey, Rika,” he grinned. “I see you survived.”

“Shut up, goggle head,” she glowered, shoving past him and plunking her cleaning supplies onto their respective shelves.

She was irritated to come back and find him still there.

“What?” she snapped.
Takato was taken aback. He hadn’t expected Rika to still be in such a bad mood.

“Uh… here,” he stuttered, holding out the lunch he had gotten for Rika while she had finished cleaning the third floor girl’s room.

Rika froze. She hadn’t meant to snap at him. Now she felt really bad, especially since he went to the trouble of getting her lunch.

“Thanks,” she muttered, snatching the bag from his grasp.

“No problem,” he smiled shakily, following her to the store’s employee lounge.

Tai, Izzi, Joe, Matt and Henry were already there, eating their lunches.

“Hey guys!” Henry smiled when he noticed them enter.

Rika ignored the greeting and sat herself in a chair at a table situated on the far side of the room. Takato eyed her warily.

“What’s with her?” Matt asked Takato as he took his seat with the others.

“She had a hard time,” Takato muttered.

“Ah,” Henry smiled knowingly. “You guys had to clean the bathrooms right?”

“Yeah,” Takato grimaced. “It’s not so bad, but I bet Rika has never-”

“Don’t talk about me as if I’m not here,” Rika barked. “I have ears you know.”

Takato and Henry shrank in their seats while Tai and Matt just grinned at each other. Izzi and Joe remained neutral, ignoring the potential fight and continued to eat their lunch. Rika also returned to her lunch, not feeling up to fighting with her friends at the moment. The others began to trickle in as their tasks were finished until everyone was gathered and fed. After an hour of waiting, Digitamamon entered with Floramon and three Gatsumon.

“You lot don’t do that bad of a job,” he praised, then addressed Tai. “As promised I have those supplies you wanted.”

One Gatsumon stepped forward with a bag.

“In there you’ll find the medical supplies your friend requested. They were hard to come by, but I got them for you,” he said, handing it to Tai, who handed it to Joe who promptly sifted through it’s contents, nodding with satisfaction when he found everything in order.

The other two Gatsumon dragged forward a cart full of backpacks.

“These are the travel packs. They’re the best ones we have in stock. They come with a bedroll, canteen, and rainwear including tarps. We’ve already rationed out the food in the individual packs. There should be enough for a week’s worth of traveling if you ration it correctly. Your Digimon partners will have to forage for themselves though.”

Tai gaped at Digitamamon.

“But that’s way too much!” he exclaimed.

The Digimon glared at him.
“It is not! You all did good work that would have taken my hired help a week to do. Besides, I know who you all are. Do you take me for an idiot? You’re the foretold chosen children who will save us from the evils that plague our land. Lord Byakkomon told me that you would come requesting my help and that I was to give it to you.”

“You mean you would have given us what we wanted even if we had refused the work? We worked for nothing?” Rika growled in the background, but luckily Digitamamon didn’t hear her, or if he did he was choosing to ignore the comment.

“Who is Lord Byakkomon?” Tai asked.

“The ruler of these mountains and creator of this great city,” Digitamamon said in a voice nearing awe. “It is said that he is the mortal form of Baihumon himself!”

“Baihumon?” Tai repeated.

“Oh!” Ryo gasped. “He was one of the Digimon Sovereign!”

Digitamamon nodded. “In this world, Baihumon is the youngest of the four Celestial Digimon. His is the godly Digimon we honor after the leaves have begun to turn their shade.”

“You mean the start of the autumn season?” Yolei inquired.

“Precisely,” Digitamamon bobbed.

“This sounds just like the guardian gods depicted in Kyoto,” Yolei exclaimed. “I met Joe’s brother Jim during a school trip to Kyoto and he told me about the four Chinese constellations of the guardians and the four Kyoto gates that they represent. The Black Tortoise, Genbu, guards the North and represents the element of water and the winter season. The Vermillion Bird, Suzaku, guards the South and represents the fire element and summer season. The Azure Dragon, Seiryuu, guards the East and represents the wood element and spring season. And finally there’s the White Tiger of the West, Byakko, who represents the element of metal and the autumn season.”

“Wow, Yolei,” Sora cried. “I can’t believe you remember all of that.”

“I have a good memory,” Yolei grinned.

“Well anyways, Lord Byakkomon just happens to have the same name as our constellation for the West. Does that mean we’re in the far west portion of this country or world or whatever you call it?” Tai asked, turning back to Digitamamon.

“Indeed,” the egg bobbed again. “On the other side of this city’s mountain range is the ocean. That is as far west as you can go… unless you’re a fish.”

“You wouldn’t happen to have a map, would you?” Izzi asked.

One of the Gatsumon pulled a map from one of the backpacks and handed it to him. Digitamamon made his way over to the table to help them get their bearings. The map itself was a practical one, with landmarks and main roads well displayed on the continent that was shaped ironically like Tai’s digivice model.

“See the green square by the mountains?” Digitamamon asked, “That is the city we’re in, Sekizou. On the far, east side, deep in the forest on top of the eastern mountain range, that yellow star represents the city of Shinrin. Up north near the top center of the map, that blue triangle is Himizu City. And finally the red oval in the south is the desert city, Netsusa. These are the four cities with
a ruler that is believed to represent one of the celestial Digimon.”

“What about this circle in the center?” Izzi asked, pointing to the grey center of the map.

Digitamamon shivered in his shell.

“That is where he resides.”

“Who?” Tai asked.

“The evil lord that has taken over this land… no one has seen him, but we have all heard his voice. He is death itself, they say. Just hearing his voice is enough to set my shell on edge. We have heard from our neighboring villages and the mines that he has overtaken the entire mountain range in the center of our continent. They call him the Seifukushya… the conqueror. He likes that title so much that he has even begun to call himself that. He is Kushyamon.”

He shivered again. “He’s bad news alright. No one dares to challenge him. Not with the Seven Zaigou doing his bidding and running amuck.”

“The Seven Zaigou?” Takato, Davis and Tai repeated in unison.

“The Seven Zaigou,” Digitamamon breathed. “One for every deadly sin. The one keeping this city in line is Aiyokumon. Now she’s a piece of work, but better her than some of the other Zaigou. She has no interest in our humble ways of living beneath the mountain and leaves us relatively alone. But she has taken over the mountain and the volcano south of here.”

“What is Lord Byakkomon doing about this?” Tai asked, confused. “If he’s the ruler of these mountains and this city why hasn’t he done anything to prevent this?”

“He’s done plenty,” Digitamamon glared. “He’s not all powerful you know. It is he who has guaranteed our relatively peaceful lives under Aiyokumon’s reign. He frightens her lesser minions and followers so no one other than the lady herself ever really bothers us. It’s because of him that we can sleep at night and live as normally as possible in comparison to the other cities that are invaded by the Zaigou. It’s that damn Crusademon that makes a right mess of us.”

Koji stiffened at the offending name.

“Crusademon we’ve met,” Tai said grimly, noticing Koji’s stiffened posture. “What can you tell us about him?”

Digitamamon’s eyes narrowed into slits.

“He isn’t as powerful as the Zaigou, but he’s bad enough. He’s usually seen leaving the mountain alone and only coming back whenever he’s got something for Aiyokumon. Why just yesterday I heard he had come back with that Arukenimon woman, who works for another of the Zaigou, if not for Kushyamon himself. It stirred up trouble above ground apparently. They say the two brought back another unfortunate creature to Aiyokumon. Another poor devil.”

“Why?” Tai asked. “What does she do to those Crusademon brings her?”

The sad look Digitamamon gave him made everyone’s stomach churn.

“She—”

“Kyaa!” came a scream from Floramon.
Everyone’s attention was now on the flower Digimon as she gasped in horror, looking outside the room.

“I-i-it’s her!” she shrieked.

Digitamamon rushed to the door and found that Floramon was only partially right. Outside, through the shop’s front windows, a large flat screen was filled with the lovely Zaigou Digimon’s visage.

“Oh DigiDestined~!” her silky voice chimed into the store through unseen speakers. “I know you’re down there somewhere. I am personally inviting you to my humble abode. I have a friend of yours visiting with me and he is just dying to see you again. Hurry now! It’s not nice to keep your friend and a lady waiting!”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Will they go meet Aiyokumon? What will happen to them if they go? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters.

Chapter End Notes

So what’d you think? Not my best, I know, but not every chapter can have action in it. I’ll try to keep up adding in some POVs's from the Tamers. Sometimes I forget to represent them with the other two season casts. I don't deny that season 3 is my least favorite of the 4 and that is why they have played such a small role so far. I also tend to forget about Michael and Willace. :P I promise to do better! :D

OK, so apparently the first time I wrote this chapter before these revisions I had to reinsert this chapter because I'd forgotten to add Kari's name in to the list of where each DigiDestined was working in the shop. Whoops. :P

Again nothing major was changed in this chapter although now that I've revised it and looked through it again I realized that even though these three teams supposedly come from 3 different worlds they all ended up growing up with the same cartoons, meaning that they all come from very similar worlds who only differentiate in their Digital World (no real surprise there though since all 4 seasons obviously take place on earth in modern day Japan). I so wanted Izzi to comment on this fact but I just couldn't find a way to fit it into the conversation. Bummer. Also, I would like to point out that all of the shows mentioned could once be seen in Japan on their version of cartoon network. I lived in Japan when I was younger and watched all the shows on Japanese TV back in the 90s. The Loony Toons were especially popular since most of them were more physical comedy that needed little to no subtitles/dub work.
Chapter 10: A Friend Worth Fighting For

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The DigiDestined have found themselves in Sekizou City, the earthen city in the west and are shown to a supply store by a Floramon they meet upon entering the city where they meet the owner, a Digitamon, who puts them to work to pay for the supplies they require. After receiving their supplies Digitamon tells them about the Digital World they are now in, including information about the world’s Digimon Lords and the evil Kushyamon and his Zaigou minions. They also hear of Aiyokumon and Crusademon’s reign over the city, but before they can find out what Aiyokumon does to those Crusademon brings to her, the Zaigou herself messages the city at large and invites the DigiDestined to her lair.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is in Henry’s POV for the first 1/3, then Takato takes over in a flashback. Just a special note, The DigiDestined groups refer to each other by a group name - the Tamers, Warriors, and Adventurers. I’m not sure I made that clear in previous chapters. Tai’s and Davis’s groups are known as the Adventurers because they have had more adventures in their Digital World than any of the other groups. I hope the flashback isn't too confusing and that you enjoy it.

DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

The Digital World: Location: Digitamamon’s Store

It had been an hour since they had heard Aiyokumon’s request, but there were mixed feelings about what to do. The Warriors, of course, wanted to go immediately. The Adventurers agreed with the Warriors, reasoning that they would have to face her eventually, but wanted to hold back for a little while so that they could have a plan ready before going. The Tamers were even less gun-ho, wanting to hold off on any confrontation for as long as possible, but agreed that they’d have to face Aiyokumon eventually.

Henry couldn’t help but glance in Koji’s direction. He felt that the boy was a little unstable when it came to this Takuya person. If Koji’s actions were not kept in check, he was likely to act rashly and put them all in jeopardy. With Suzie to look after, as well as Ai and Mako, Henry was not willing to let that happen. At the moment, the boy was arguing with Tai about what to do next.

“What is there to plan?” Koji growled.

Tai was surprisingly calm, considering the situation.
“We don’t know what we’re up against,” was his reasonable reply.

“Yes we do!” Koji retorted. “She’s the Zaigou of Lust, one of the seven tyrants helping Kushyamon take over this world. She has control over the Western Mountains, has Crusademon to order around as her lackey, and is known to be incredibly strong.”

“We don’t know how to take her on,” Tai pointed out. “We don’t know what she’s capable of.”

“Have any of us known the enemy before taking them on in battle?” Koji pointed out rather reasonably, considering his temper. “I’d love to hear a case where one of us has gone against someone for the first time with more information than we have right now. Has anyone here ever faced an opponent fully knowledgeable of their abilities?”

“He does have a point, Tai,” Izzi admitted lightly.

Koji looked triumphant, his friends determined, and Tai looked partially convinced, but the doubt was still there.

“All he means is that we should be cautious,” Henry interjected, feeling like he had to say something. “No one’s saying we shouldn’t go, Koji, but think about the possible consequences. If we go in there rashly someone is going to get hurt. This doesn’t solely involve you Warrior DigiDestined. All of us are involved in this whether we like it or not. We range from the ages of eighteen to four! We have responsibilities to help the younger DigiDestined as well as ourselves. Sorry that we Tamers have to have the younger ones, but we do, and I for one won’t let you – or anyone else for that matter – have us all rush in there unprepared without some sort of defensive strategy.”

Koji and Henry held each other’s gaze for a while.

“Then what do you have in mind?” Koji finally asked coolly. “What sort of “defense” can we give ourselves before marching in there?”

“We can dig,” was Henry’s simple reply. “We find out as much as we can about her. Then we can use that knowledge to our advantage and prepare ourselves for the worst.”

Koji frowned. Hadn’t Henry been listening?

Henry held up a hand to stop the oncoming tirade.

“It doesn’t hurt to be prepared,” he said. “The more we know about her, the better chance we have against her.”

Izzi nodded.

“Knowledge is power,” he quoted. “With Guardromon’s help, I may be able to provide us with the layout of the mountain passages and chambers. That way we can be knowledgeable of the surroundings and have ways out if we should need to make a quick escape.”

“See?” Henry said pointedly. “Even a little information can mean the difference between making it out in one piece or in pieces.”

Koji nodded stiffly, acknowledging the reasonable point.

Tai looked relieved.
While Izzi had Ken, Kazu, Kenta and Guardromon help him set to work on trying to figure out which were the best scans to run for getting the mountain’s readouts, everyone else went through their newly acquired packs and tried to mentally prepare themselves for what they might face when they met Aiyokumon. Koji and his friends were huddled together chatting with Davis, Matt and Tai about possible battle strategies. Henry was sitting with Rika, Ryo and Takato nearby.

“Isn’t he a mess?” Ryo murmured, watching Koji’s tense form. “The guy can’t wait to get out of here and save his friend.”

Rika shook her head.

“He feels guilty. Isn’t it obvious? He was the one standing closest to Takuya when he got snatched. The guy’s got some sort of hero complex. He doesn’t give up until whoever he’s saving is safe. If he weren’t like that though, that TK kid wouldn’t be here. Remind you of anyone?”

“Who?” Takato asked.

“Henry, you idiot!” Rika sighed.

“What?” Henry growled. He hadn’t been paying attention to the conversation and didn’t appreciate being called an idiot.

“No, not you, Takato” Rika snapped. “And I was saying that you and Koji are similar, Henry.”

“No, we’re not,” Henry frowned, disliking the idea. “He’s impulsive, rash, and doesn’t consider what could happen to others who are involved.”

“In other words, just like you minus the last one,” Ryo chuckled. “You tend to worry too much. Admit it.”

Henry fumed silently.

“Look,” Takato said, trying to soothe his best friend. “Are you saying you wouldn’t act the way Koji is right now if it were me instead of Takuya?”

Henry shook his head. “I wouldn’t think twice about going to save you Takato and there is no way I’d give up on rescuing you, but I have Suzie to think of. Koji’s got a brother. Shouldn’t he consider what could happen to Koichi if he makes a mistake?”

“I’m sure he does,” Takato said gently, “But his brother is a lot more capable of handling himself than Suzie is.”

“Exactly!” Rika nodded.

Henry huffed, frustrated.

“But that doesn’t mean he shouldn’t be thinking about the others.”

“He hasn’t exactly had to look out for little ones before now,” Ryo pointed out.

“What about Tommy?” Henry retorted.

“The kid is young, yes, but still more capable than Ai, Mako or Suzie,” Rika sighed.

“What, are you all on his side?” Henry snarled.
“No,” Takato smiled, shaking his head sadly. “But we can sympathize. Remember what it was like before Suzie became a Tamer? It was a lot – ok, maybe not a lot – but it was simpler than it is now. We didn’t have to worry about little kids getting hurt. We just worried about our Digimon and ourselves. We aren’t nearly as helpless as the little kids are without our Digimon.”

Rika and Ryo nodded in agreement.

“I’m sure Koji finds Takuya a friend worth fighting for,” Ryo commented.

“He sure as hell better be if we’re risking our lives this early in the game for him,” Rika growled. Henry couldn’t agree more.

“He is,” Takato nodded. “I’m sure Tai thinks so as well.”

“Why makes you say that?” Henry asked.

“Because we got to know him pretty well,” Takato explained.

“That’s right,” Ryo nodded, remembering. “You and Tai were with him before meeting up with the rest of us. You three were the last ones to join the party.”

“Some party,” Rika grumbled.

“Yeah,” Takato sighed. “I wouldn’t be here right now if it wasn’t for Takuya.”

Henry looked up at his best friend. Takato seemed to admire Takuya. What sort of person could he be and what had he done to make Takato think he wouldn’t be here without him? Others had been listening to their conversation for a while now, especially Tai and Koji. Now all of the DigiDestined were listened intently as Takato revealed what had happened to him when he, Tai and Takuya first arrived in this Digital World. Some even moved closer to hear better.

Noticing the size of his audience, Takato spoke up and began to tell his story that went back roughly three days…

**Flashback – Location: A Tunnel in the Labyrinth Caves**

Takato had woken up feeling sore. He tried to remember what had happened after the portal to the Digital World had lit up. He remembered how he’d thought he’d heard Guilmon’s voice calling his name and that he had run toward it and into the light. He knew that the others must have followed him, because he had heard them all scream when the ground suddenly gave way beneath his feet.

“You awake now, Takato?” he heard Guilmon’s voice ask him.

Guilmon!

Takato bolted up into a sitting position a little too fast, his head aching.

“Yay! Takato is up! Is it breakfast time yet?” the red dinosaur Digimon asked happily.

Takato had to laugh. Only his Digimon partner would ask him about breakfast instead of his well being first.

“No, Guilmon,” he chuckled. “But I do have something for you.”
“Really?” Guilmon asked, sniffing his bag. “I smell bread!”

Takato laughed again, pulling out the Guilmon bread his parents had made in the likeness of his Digimon friend’s head.

“Here you are,” he smiled, watching his partner chow down. “Say Guilmon, do you know where we are?”

His Digimon shook his head.

“No,” he said through a mouthful of bread. “I was just sleeping when Terriermon woke me up. The core was all lit up and I got hit by one of its beams. I ended up here alone and then you fell out of the sky. You slept for so long I was getting worried. Then you woke up and now I’m eating bread.”

After Guilmon was finished eating, the two of them set off down the tunnel to try to find the others. They didn’t have much luck. Then their tunnel abruptly ended and Takato found himself balancing precariously at the edge of a cliff. Guilmon tried to help his Tamer, but he only made matters worse by accidentally knocking Takato over the edge with his tail. Takato felt his heart jump into his mouth as he plummeted downward. But just as sudden as the fall had begun, his descent was halted when his arm was caught in someone’s grasp. For a moment Takato thought that Guilmon had managed to save him, but the hand was human, not his Digimon’s clawed one.

Takato looked up at his rescuer finding him to be a strange boy with square goggles over a hat turned backwards. To distract himself from the fall, Takato kept his eyes locked on the boy. He looked to be around his age, perhaps a year older. He was lying on his stomach, hanging from a wide ledge, his face contorted in a strained but focused expression as he clung onto Takato’s hand.

They could now hear Guilmon scrambling down the cliff side muttering, “I’m coming Takato,” repeatedly. Meanwhile, the unknown boy was doing everything he could to maintain his hold on Takato’s hand, but his grip was starting to slip.

“Hang on,” the boy grunted. “Try grabbing on with your other hand.”

Takato did as he was told so that he held onto the boy’s hand with both of his. Guilmon finally reached the boy’s ledge and grabbed the unknown boy around the middle, lifting both boys easily. They lay gasping on the ledge, their backs against the stone wall.

“Thanks,” Takato breathed.

“No problem,” the other replied, one hand clutching his chest.

“Are you ok, Takato?” Guilmon whimpered, afraid that Takato was mad at him for knocking him off the cliff’s edge even though it had been an accident.


“There wouldn’t have been a Takato to save if the boy hadn’t saved you first,” Guilmon said miserably.

“It’s no big deal, buddy,” the strange boy grinned. “It was you who saved us in the end. I’m Takuya by the way.”

Takuya held out his hand to Takato.

“Takato,” he nodded, taking his hand. “And this is Guilmon, my Digimon partner.”
He froze after his last statement, unsure if it was wise to have said that. Rika would have scolded him for saying what he had just said without thinking. Did Takuya even know what a Digimon was? Was he afraid of Guilmon? He didn’t look like he was, the way he conversed with his partner. In fact, Takuya didn’t seem alarmed at all to meet a talking five-foot tall dinosaur.

“Ah,” the boy smiled instead. “I thought he was a Digimon. We don’t see too many talking dinosaurs in our world now do we? I was starting to think that I’d been taken on a journey to the center of the earth until I saw him. So does that make this some part of the Digital World?”

“Not sure,” Takato admitted, relieved that the boy already knew about Digimon. “I woke up in a tunnel up there. Guilmon was with me and we were looking for our friends.”

Takuya nodded.

“Same here, but I woke up down there,” he said, pointed to the tunnel entrance below them. They were roughly halfway up the cliff side on their nice perch. “I decided to climb up here to see if I could find anyone. I was taking a break when you fell from the cliff above. Are you a DigiDestined too?”

“Ah…” Takato paused. “Yes, but my friends and I call ourselves Digimon Tamers.”

“I see,” Takuya grinned. “Well my friends and I were called the DigiDestined by Lady Ophanimon when we first arrived in the Digital world, although I think I’m the only one who remembers that.”

“Don’t you have a Digimon partner then?” Takato asked.

“No,” Takuya said, continuing to smile. “Not like Guilmon anyway. I have a Legendary Digimon Warrior’s spirit for a partner. With it I can transform into the Legendary Warrior of Flame, Agunimon. My friends and I were mostly known around the Digital World as the Legendary Warriors reborn.”

Takato didn’t know whether the boy was serious or not, not with the way he kept on smiling as if he was enjoying his own personal joke.

“So what now, Takato?” Guilmon asked his Tamer. “Do we go back up or do we continue going down?”

“Down,” both Takato and Takuya gasped with a laugh.

Neither boy was willing to climb up the cliff at the moment when a fall could mean certain death the next time around. Being extremely careful, they made slow progress down the cliff side. Once at the bottom, Takuya took the lead down the tunnel he’d come from. It hadn’t occurred to them how it was possible for them to see anything in the cave without a light source until there was virtually no light in the next adjoining tunnel. Takuya had shrugged it off, saying that the rocks must have had some special properties that produced it’s own light. They used Takuya’s cell phone as a light in this new dark tunnel, but it’s battery soon died. Takato had no idea how many times Takuya had kept him from falling on his face when he stumbled over the uneven ground in the dark, but he was grateful for the boy’s company.

“Let’s take a break,” Takuya finally said, stopping, and helped Takato into a sitting position. They were all worn out and at the time, Takato hadn’t noticed Takuya’s well-controlled labored breathing in the dark. Looking back on it now it was obvious that there had been something wrong with him. Takato just hadn’t seen it then.

“Some place,” Takato sighed.
He couldn’t see, but Takuya nodded, unable to control his voice yet.

“I wonder where the others are,” Takato continued. “We’ve been traveling for some time. It feels like a whole day.”

“Takato?” Guilmon whined. “I’m hungry. Do you have anymore bread to eat?”

Both boys chuckled. The Digimon had been asking that question for the past hour.

“Is someone there?” an voice suddenly called out.

The three of them jumped and then huddled together when a light appeared at the end of a curve in the tunnel wall. Soon an older boy with an Agumon appeared, holding a flaming torch.

“Who are you guys?” he asked bewildered. They apparently weren’t the ones the boy had been expecting to find.

“I’m Takuya,” Takuya grinned, standing up to greet the newcomer.

Takato had to admire Takuya for welcoming the strangers so readily, taking the other boy’s appearance in stride. He slowly rose to his feet as well.

“Tai,” the older boy replied, taking Takuya’s outstretched hand with a smile. “And this is Agumon.”

“I’m Takato and this is Guilmon,” Takato said shyly, shaking Tai’s hand.

The two Digimon exchanged pleasantries as well.

After introductions, the small group of boys settled down for the “night.” They swapped stories about their families, their friends, their respective DigiDestined groups and what they did, especially their adventures in the Digital World. It didn’t take a genius like Ken or Izzi to realize that they had come from different worlds, or at least different Digital Worlds.

The next “day” they debated on what to do next. Tai had already come from a dead-end medieval chamber at the end of the tunnel, where he’d gotten the torch and many others like it, so it was decided that they backtrack down the tunnel and climb up that cliff. Takato and Takuya weren’t looking forward to it, but when Tai showed them the other supplies he’d salvaged from the medieval chamber they felt a little better about it. Tai had grabbed ropes, spare torches, a lantern with an extra oil sack, and a couple of crude swords.

Tai offered one of the swords to Takuya, but the boy waved it aside, saying that Takato should have it. Takato knew how to use one after his experiences biomerged with Guilmon as Gallantmon, but he wasn’t sure if it was wise for Takuya to do so. Takato had Guilmon to protect him and Tai had Agumon, but Takuya had no Digimon partner. How could he protect himself? Tai looked like he was worried about the same thing, but didn’t push the sword on him and gave it to Takato as Takuya suggested. Neither Tai nor Takato could believe that Takuya had a Digimon Warrior’s spirit as his partner even after all he had told them about his adventures. It seemed too amazing, even for the Digital World.

When they reached the cliff side again, Tai pulled out a long coil of rope and tied the three of them together, knowing that Agumon and Guilmon, in spite of their appearance, were actually quite nimble and could scale the wall a lot better then they could. Agumon took the lead followed by Tai, Takuya and Takato, with Guilmon bringing up the rear in case anyone fell again. It was a long climb and they took frequent breaks at Takuya’s suggestion. He reasoned that it was best to keep...
themselves refreshed in case any enemy decided to attack while they were exhausted from the climb. Neither Digimon nor their partners found anything wrong with this idea at the time and hadn’t thought that Takuya had ulterior motives for the frequent rest breaks. It proved to be a wise decision though when they were attacked two-thirds of the way up the cliff by a Snimon, a praying mantis Digimon with blades for hands.

“Uh oh!” Agumon cried from his perch above them. “What now, Tai?”

“Digivolve!” Tai cried out automatically, pulling out his Digivice.

In a panic Takato did the same, but (thankfully) neither Digimon digivolved. They only realized that it was a blessing in disguise later when they realized that neither of their Digimon would have been any use up on those cliffs if they had digivolved due to their large digivolved forms. Growlmon and Greymon would have brought the whole cliff down and killed them all.

“You’ve gotta be kidding me!” Takato cried, ducking as Snimon made a pass at him, causing him to drop his sword and almost dislodge him from the wall. Only the rope that was tied around his waist kept him from falling with the blade. Guilmon and Agumon spat fireballs at Snimon, but as a Champion level Digimon the lower Rookie leveled attacks just weren’t cutting it. Takuya grabbed Takato’s hand and pulled him up to where he and Tai were. Then he seized Tai’s blade and cut himself free of the rope tied around his waist, but in a way that kept Takato and Tai still tethered to each other.

“What are you doing?” Tai demanded. “Are you crazy?”

“Well someone’s gotta save our skins,” Takuya grinned, handing back the short sword and pulled out his D-Tector. He edged away from them a good five feet before calling out, “Execute! Spirit Evolution!”

This was the first time Tai and Takato had seen this sort of DigiVolution, so they hadn’t been as surprised as the others when Takuya evolved again with JP and Tommy to create a way out of the maze of cave tunnels many hours later.

“Just keep climbing and don’t stop until you reach the top!” Agunimon ordered.

Without another word, the newly evolved Takuya nimbly flitted from one cliff-side ledge to another, distracting Snimon, and allowing the others to continue their climb. It was when they had nearly reached the top that Snimon finally realized that Agunimon was the distraction. He screeched with anger and headed straight for Takato and Guilmon who were just about to crawl over the top ledge. Agunimon followed in hot pursuit, but was not in time for Snimon’s next attack.

“Twin Sickles!” it cried, slashing at the handhold Takato was reaching for.

“Takato!” Guilmon yelled, trying to catch his Tamer, but his outstretched claw didn’t reach him. Instead he lashed out with his tail and caught Takato by the ankle.

“Pyro Darts!” Agunimon cried, firing the projectiles at Snimon to chase him away.

Tai had Agumon hold the rope while he descended down the wall past Guilmon to Takato. He grabbed the younger boy and had Guilmon and Agumon hoist them up. Meanwhile, now that the others were relatively out of harms way, Agunimon let loose with his Pyro Tornado attack, blasting Snimon out of the sky in flames. The power of the attack brought sections of the cliff wall and some of the ceiling’s stalactites crashing down. It was because he had known that this would happen when he used this attack that Takuya had been holding back. He made his way back to his
companions, reverted back into his human form, and collapsed, completely exhausted and breathing rather heavily. This worried Tai and Takato, but Takuya had lied, telling them he had simply over done that last attack. Tai and Takato knew better now though. It was because Takuya had prolonged the battle in order to allow them to get to safety.

“That’s the second time you’ve saved me. Thank you,” Takato smiled, helping Takuya into a sitting position.

“No prob,” Takuya panted, but was still grinning. “Let’s not try for a third time though, ok?”

“Deal,” Takato laughed. “Would you like to ride Guilmon for a while?”

“It would be faster wouldn’t it?” Tai mused, looking down the tunnel they were to precede through next. “We should keep moving. It’s never wise to remain so close to the scene of an attack. It’s bound to attract other enemies. We don’t know if Snimon was alone, after all.”

Takuya nodded, accepting the older boy’s help into a standing position and boarded Guilmon’s back.

“You alright with this, Guilmon?” Takuya asked once he was aboard.

“It’s no problem,” the red dinosaur Digimon grinned toothily. “You’re lighter than you look.”

Takato noticed how Takuya’s smiled dropped a few degrees, but soon it was at full volume once again.

“Glad someone thinks so,” he laughed. “I’m always told I’m rather heavy for an athlete because I like to eat.”

After that, Tai engaged Takuya in a conversation about soccer. Takato wasn’t as athletic as the other two boys, but Takuya had made sure he was never left out of the conversation, even changing the subject if it was required. A half-hour later, Takuya was back on his own two feet. Takato had to admire how the boy never let anything really bother him and kept on moving forward. The three had really bonded over those next few hours as they continued down the never-ending tunnels until they finally entered the dark chamber where they met up with the rest of their friends as the last of the DigiDestined to join together. Takato had never forgotten the kindness and friendship Takuya had shone him in the tunnels. Takuya had saved his life twice at the cliffs. Now it was Takuya’s life in danger and Takato knew that it was time to repay the favor.

End of Flashback…

~*~*~*~*~*~

So that’s how the goggle heads met (minus Davis). Takuya seems to be quite the hero in Takato’s eyes. How will this effect how they take on Aiyokumon though? Will it help or hinder their objectives? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!
So what'd ya think? I kinda stumbled with this flashback, but I felt it was important to establish that the Tamers have a stake in this as well. It's not just the Adventurers and the Warriors getting along. The Tamers are there as well, and that's why I chose Takato to play host to the POV of the flashback. Did it work? I'm not too sure. Besides, some of you wanted to know what the goggle heads were doing while everyone else was gathering. Well, now you know! I just didn't know how to work it in at the time.
Aiyokumon's Tea Party

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The DigiDestined settled on a plan to gather intel about Aiyokumon and the mountain tunnels before leaving to rescue Takuya. While Izzi works with Ken, Kazu and Guardromon’s scans to determine how to get there, Takato explains to his friends how he met Takuya and Tai back in the tunnel labyrinth.

Chapter Notes

I hope you enjoy this next chapter of The Ultimate Gathering of the DigiDestined and are prepared for a lot of the dark stuff that is to come and gives this story it’s T rating.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Digitamamon’s Store

The time had come to set out and everyone was as ready as they were ever going to be. Izzi had completed gathering a detailed layout of the mountain’s tunnel network and Tai was getting one last word of thanks in to Digitamamon.

“Thank you so much,” Tai said meaningfully. “We won’t forget your generosity.”

“If you defeat the Seven Zaigou and Kushyamon you will have done more than enough to repay me,” Digitamamon said gruffly. “Oh! There is something you should know about Aiyokumon before you go. I didn’t get to say it before Floramon lost her head and Aiyokumon gave her message.”

Everyone was paying strict attention.

“You say you think it was your friend who was taken by Crusademon?” Digitamamon asked.

Tai nodded.

“Then you better give up on the idea of saving him right now,” the egg Digimon sighed. “No one has escaped her grasp alive. She’s a spell caster. A witch. She specializes in various possessions. Every lost soul that has been brought to her becomes bewitched and follows her every command. What’s worse is that the person she has possessed is bound to her. Any pain or damage inflicted upon her is transferred to the possessed. If you wish to take her down you must forsake your friend. No one has ever broken through her control.”

Everyone stared at Tai numbly. What were they going to do? Follow Digitamamon’s advice and
forget about rescuing Takuya? Or face Aiyokumon anyways and risk loosing him? There was no win-win situation.

“Well?” Digitamamon asked, wondering what their leader was thinking. “What will you do?”

Tai sighed, reaching into his pack and pulled out a pair of goggles that he’d requested. They weren’t quite like the ones he used to wear and had given to Davis. They were similar in design, but more narrow and oval shaped so that they fit over his eyes better. He stared into their lenses for a moment before firmly snapping the band over a navy blue headband he was now wearing, his expression determined.

“We will go,” he said softly, but firmly. “We have to at least try to save him. Takuya needs our help and the longer we leave him with Aiyokumon, the smaller the chance we have of even hoping to save him. It’s now or never.”

He stared around the room, daring them to challenge his decision, but his gaze met no opposition. There was only a grim but unanimous agreement with his statement. Even the little kids, Mako, Ai, and Suzie, looked determined to go.

“Good luck to you then,” Digitamamon sighed. “Safe travels. I hope you find your friend and survive the encounter.”

“Oh we’ll find him,” Tai said grimly. “It’s his state of mind, or lack there of, that I’m worried about.”

**The Digital World: Location: Aiyokumon’s Chambers**

Aiyokumon was tired of waiting. It had been three hours since she had sent her message to the DigiDestined. Crusademon was there as well, standing in the corner of the room within the shadows. Takuya was sitting at Aiyokumon’s feet as she ran her long well manicured fingernails through his hair. His face was void of any expression as it had been since the possession. He had been there when Aiyokumon sent out her invitation to the other DigiDestined so he knew that it was only a matter of time before he was forced to do battle with his friends, but he was strangely at peace for the moment.

During his time imprisoned within his own mind, Takuya had come to realize that he might not be as helpless as he had originally thought. Aiyokumon was so focused on controlling his body that she had neglected to take his mind into full account. It may have been a grave error on her part to leave Takuya’s consciousness conscious. Of course she was still drugging him with potions to prevent him from being able to gain control his own body. She also continued casting spells to maintain the binding chains that kept him trapped within his mind. So how had Takuya come to believe that he wasn’t completely helpless?

It had come to him while Aiyokumon had him prancing around the room doing that idiotic dance. He had found that if he wanted to remember something, the scene would play out before him in the open space of his mind. It was as if he were watching a movie or plays based off his life. He had begun to replay and relive his mental battle with Aiyokumon over and over again several times before he found her mistakenly pondered thought.

‘The boy is strong,’ she had thought. ‘Too bad for him that he has no experience fighting with his mind. If he had I might actually be in trouble.’
It was soon after that Takuya began to experiment. If he was going to be trapped within his own mind, he might as well know how to use it to his advantage. He took the time to actually try meditating, forcing himself to relax and give in to the unwanted potion’s side effects. It was in this near non-existent state that he was able to muster some sort of inner strength that the Zaigou Witch of Lust’s potions hadn’t been able to take from him. It wasn’t much, but when he experimented with ways to use this new mental capability, he realized that he could interfere with the way his body followed Aiyokumon’s instructions.

He only attempted to do little things so that there wouldn’t be any suspicion of a flaw in Aiyokumon’s control over him. He tried things like halting a bow just millimeters higher then what she had commanded or twirling the opposite way in her crazy dance whenever she wasn’t looking. He still didn’t have any long lasting control over his body, but he had enough for him to be able to divert a fatal blow against his friends when the time came. The effort he exerted in performing these small defiances were incredibly draining however. He would have to be mindful in the fight to come of when he should pull a punch and when not to. It was this that could mean the fragile difference between seriously injuring a friend and killing them.

“They come, my lady,” Crusademon suddenly said, emerging from the shadows.

“Oh goody!” Aiyokumon squealed. “Where are they?”

“In the eastern tunnels,” he replied.

“Wonderful!” she laughed, clapping her hands together. “Now go greet them for me. And remember, you are only to greet them. No unnecessary confrontations, Crusademon. This is not your fight. You will be a gentlemon and bring them to the southern arena.”

“As you wish,” Crusademon bowed.

**The Digital World: Location: Aiyokumon’s Eastern Tunnels**

Zoe was a bundle of nerves. What Digitamamon had told them about Aiyokumon had made her even more worried about Takuya. She had always felt concern for the goggle head, but it was much more than that. She wouldn’t admit it to herself, but she had a crush on the strong-willed boy. He may have gotten on her nerves on more than one occasion, especially when they had first met, but he always thought about the well being of his companions. He had earned not only their respect as a leader, but also as a friend who they’d do anything for.

Takato’s story about how he had met Takuya had only strengthened their resolve to save him and no one was going to talk them out of it. But what Zoe wanted more than anything at the moment was to see his smiling face with that goofy lopsided grin of his, laughing and saying, “Sorry guys! My bad.”

“Are you alright Z?” JP asked softly so that only she could hear.

She started, but managed to make the movement seem intentional so that she could flip her blond hair over her shoulder.

“I’m fine,” she muttered, glancing at Koji and Koichi to distract herself.

“Liar,” her friend said grimly. “None of us are. We were just told to give up on saving Taki. Not exactly the thing we wanted to hear before launching this insane rescue mission.”
“Are you saying we should?” she asked incredulously.

“No!” he exclaimed in a hushed panicky whisper. “There is no way he’d give up if it were one of us, so we shouldn’t give up on him. I’m just saying we may have to face the fact that he may already be beyond our reach. …Beyond our saving.”

Zoe stared dumbstruck at him. How could he think that? They’d know it if Takuya were really gone… wouldn’t they? Surely some sixth sense that came with being a DigiDestined would tell them that he was already…

“It’s Crusademon,” Tommy muttered darkly from JP’s side.

Sure enough the black knight Digimon was leaning casually against the archway of the joining tunnel up ahead.

“Welcome DigiDestined,” he said in his monotone voice. “Lady Aiyokumon has sent me to escort you to the meeting place for your visit. Follow me.”

Without another word, he walked through the archway.

“What should we do?” Zoe heard Koji ask Tai.

“We follow him,” Tai shrugged. “What choice do we have? We don’t know what will happen if we choose not to. He’ll lead us to Aiyokumon and hopefully to Takuya.”

Everyone warily followed the evil Digimon knight. Zoe vaguely wondered if it was possible that the mistress he served had possessed him too. Her mind began to wander and came up with some rather gruesome images of what might have happened to Takuya while becoming possessed, but they were also vague because she didn’t know what Aiyokumon looked like since she hadn’t been able to actually see the Zaigou when the message had aired. To stop her imagination from running wild she forced herself to listen in on the nearest conversation.

“I thought he was going to attack us when I first saw him,” she heard Davis mutter to TK who seemed to agree.

“Well we should be on our toes,” TK said grimly. “It’s not like we’re here for a tea party. Crusademon’s only the messenger. Who knows what’s in store for us up ahead?”

Zoe grudgingly agreed with the other blond.

Crusademon lead them through the winding tunnels turning in what seemed like random directions down corridors and sometimes through the odd mine. It took them about an hour to reach their destination. They all stared around at their surroundings with awe. They were deep within the mountains in a chamber that reminded them of the Roman Coliseum only underground with marble floors, columns, and seating. The wall opposite of their entrance was a lava waterfall, providing a rather dramatic backdrop to the arena.

Sitting at a small patio table was a remarkably beautiful young blond woman dressed in a flowing green gown that hugged all of her perfect curves in the right places. Some of the boys, even the younger ones, had to prevent themselves from drooling. She was perfect. The girls took an instant dislike to her, smacking their guy friends out of what were surely absurd fantasies. They knew that this had to be Aiyokumon, the Zaigou Witch of Lust.

“At last! Welcome!” the woman exclaimed exuberantly when she saw them. “I have been looking forward to your visit! Please come over and join me for tea!”
This threw the DigiDestined off. They had been prepared to fight their enemy, not have tea with her. Yet the Zaigou had Gazimon set up chairs in rows for them to sit in across the tiny patio table from her. Crusademon seemed to have disappeared at this point since his services as a guide were no longer needed.

“Sit! Please!” she smiled brightly.

“Looks like you were wrong about the tea party, TK,” Davis muttered.

The blond had no cryptic come back for Davis’ smart ass remark because he was too busy staring at Aiyokumon’s breasts as she leaned over to give an order to a Gazimon. Kari saw this and smacked him hard outside the head.

“Don’t be a pig, TK,” she scolded.

TK diverted his gaze immediately, muttering an apology.

Tai glanced at Matt before giving a reluctant shrug and sat himself in the seat closest to Aiyokumon. Matt would have sat next to him if Sora hadn’t grabbed him and forced him to sit next to her in the back row with TK, Kari, Yolei, Ken, Takato and Jeri.

Once everyone was seated, Aiyokumon ordered the Gazimon to hand out the tea to them and reclined in her seat.

“Again, I welcome you to my humble abode,” she said, flashing a winning smile. “I was worried when you took so long to get here. I was afraid that I’d have to send Crusademon out to fetch you and he is a far cry from a pleasant host.”

Tai held his teacup tentatively while Agumon, faithfully by his side as always, refused to even hold his.

When Aiyokumon saw that no one had touch his or her tea, peals of laughter rang through the arena.

“Puh-leez!” she exclaimed. “I haven’t poisoned the tea! I swear on my soul as a Zaigou that no harm will come to you while we have tea. Why would I invite you and treat you to tea only to kill you with poison? It’s barbaric and a waste of good tea! Other Zaigou may resort to that method, but I would never sink to that level. I find no pleasure in it.”

As if to make her point she took a rather long sip from her own cup.

“I prefer much more dramatic methods,” she said sinisterly. “I always take the time to get to know my enemy before striking. We are civilized beings after all, not primitive life forms.”

“So you’re toying with us,” Tai said, deciding to play her game.

He reclined in his chair like she had and actually took a sip of her tea. Many of his companions stared at him as if he’d suddenly sprouted a second head.

‘Is he insane?’ Zoe thought, sitting four seats down from him on his right.

“In a manner of speaking,” the woman smiled delightedly; glad someone was taking her word about the tea. “I think I rather like you, boy. What is your name?”

“Tai,” he answered simply. “So what do you want from us? I doubt you asked us here simply to
have tea. You don’t strike me as the type of woman that does this very often. You’ve mixed up your cultures after all. You’re serving Japanese tea in English cups. Hardly the mistake of a civilized woman such as yourself would make unless one doesn’t care about such matters. Therefore, you aren’t cultured in tea in the very least. You prefer other hobbies.”

Zoe stared at him. The way they were talking you could have watched from afar, clear out of hearing range, and assume that their discussion was about the weather by the way they were carrying on.

“My, Tai,” she mused, “aren’t you forward? And you are correct in this matter. I am not one for tea. I threw this together on a simple whim just minutes before you arrived. …I’m sure in your world you’re quite favorable with the ladies. You’re quite charming.”

“Why thank you,” Tai smiled tightly, taking another sip of tea. “But that’s not an answer to my question.”

“You seem to be the most sensible person in this pathetic bunch, so I’ll answer you,” Aiyokumon grinned, setting down her teacup and leaned across the table, eyes feverishly riveted on Tai. “I invited you all here to see how good you are. My master has made such a fuss about you all so I simply had to see what you are capable of for myself before one of the other six Zaigou found you. I want to see if any of you are worthy enough to become my puppets.”

“Puppets?” Tai repeated in an amused tone. “My, isn’t that amazingly childish of you.”

It was meant as an offence, but Aiyokumon seemed rather pleased instead.

“I do like you, Tai,” she mused, sitting back. “Maybe I’ll have your life spared and make you my next puppet. I’m sure my angel, Takuya, would love to have a friend to play with.”

Tai froze, trying to keep his cool. She was baiting them now. Unfortunately Zoe wasn’t as rational. She nearly dropped her cup, sloshing warm tea all over her hand.

“What do you mean by “my angel, Takuya?”” she growled.

Tai shot her a warning glance, telling her to back off and gave another to Tommy and Koji who looked just as enraged as she was.

Aiyokumon gave Zoe an imperious glare as if looking at an inferior being.

“It’s just as I said, child,” she said snootily. “The boy was brought to me and entrusted to me to keep for my master. I have taken him in and made him my newest puppet. I do so love him. He’s much better company than the Gazimon and Crusademon is so dull. Now Takuya, on the other hand, I have yet to have a boring conversation with. He is quite the spit fire, if I do say so myself.”

Zoe knew she was being goaded, but hearing Aiyokumon say “I do so love him,” nearly knocked the sense out of her. JP had gotten hold of her teacup-free hand and that was the only reason why she wasn’t out of her chair trying to strangle Aiyokumon to death.

“My, what an impudent brat you are, my dear,” Aiyokumon sneered. “Your behavior is highly unbecoming of a young lady such as yourself.”

Zoe met her gaze with a defiant glare.

Aiyokumon suddenly burst into laughter.
“I see it now!” she cried. “You’re in love with the boy!”

Zoe blushed crimson, but didn’t deny it.

“Ah,” Aiyokumon sighed. “Now I understand. You’re hostile because I have your boyfriend. No wonder he wouldn’t let me have him so easily. He already had a girl! But no matter. Sorry honey, but he’s mine now so it makes no difference.”

Zoe froze, stunned, the color draining from her face. JP squeezed her hand tightly in reassurance, but what reassurance he was trying to convey she couldn’t figure out. Her mind was racing. What had this woman done to Takuya? What had Aiyokumon meant by “he wouldn’t let me have him so easily?” Had she…

“Oh!” Aiyokumon gasped. “I had no idea humans were capable of such physical interaction. No wonder he didn’t like me playing with his clothes at first. He really is sharp for catching on to my mind reading abilities so fast.”

Zoe stiffened and dropped her gaze. She had been thinking that Aiyokumon had raped Takuya in order to possess him, which actually wasn’t too far from the truth. Two emotions rushed through her at once. One was relief that Takuya hadn’t done it with a Digimon and the other was pure hatred and loathing towards Aiyokumon and at herself for letting her mind get carried away. Of course it was impossible for her to know about Aiyokumon’s mind reading ability, but she still cursed herself for giving Aiyokumon the idea.

Aiyokumon was still laughing.

“You can read minds?” Tai asked curtly, trying to regain control of the situation.

“Yes,” Aiyokumon sighed, wiping away a non-existent tear from her eye. “But only as long as I have maintained constant eye contact. Unless you’re one of my puppets, that is. In that case, I have access to your mind whenever I want to converse with you. I do so enjoy my little chats with Takuya. He is quite entertaining for a human. Speaking of Takuya, he has been dying to see you all again.”

She then snapped her fingers delicately. It was deathly silent as everyone waited. Finally, five minutes later, Takuya walked through a hidden door behind Aiyokumon, his face uncharacteristically expressionless and eyes vacant. He halted behind her, hovering over her left side. He showed no sign that he recognized his friends sitting there before him. This hurt them more than they thought it would. They hadn’t known what to expect, but see their friend like this was disheartening. Takuya was nothing more than a doll now.

“Hello, Takuya darling,” Aiyokumon smiled sweetly up at her puppet. “Thank you for joining us.”

“What have you done to him?” Koji asked through gritted teeth.

“A cast some of my best spells and used high quality potions on him,” she answered matter-of-factly. “I found that the Warrior Spirit of Flame inside of him protected the body whenever Takuya was incapable of doing so himself, like, oh say, when he’s unconscious. So I had to take Agunimon out first by using a powerful potion. Then, deciding to have some fun with a forceful possession, I cut Takuya’s own spirit and consciousness off from his physical body and battled with him for domination over his mind, imprisoning him inside it. So the Takuya you know and love is still here deep inside, but is incapable of doing anything along with the spirit of Agunimon. He is the perfect
puppet, mine to command at will.”

As if to make her point, Takuya’s arm wound around her slim hourglass frame. She wound her own arms around his neck and pecked him lightly on the cheek, loving the way Zoe fumed silently in her seat.

“It seems our visit has come to an end and the time for talk is over. Takuya darling? Get rid of them please,” Aiyokumon purred in his ear.

Then she evaporated into thin air and everything, the table, chairs, tea and teacups, disappeared. The DigiDestined fell onto their rear ends with the sudden absence of chairs and quickly scrambled to their feet. Takuya remained standing where Aiyokumon had left him.

“Takuya?” Koji said tentatively.

Takuya turned to face Koji and then suddenly he was right in front of him, a well-aimed kick making contact with his gut. Luckily Koji was somehow able to deflect most of the blow and was able to block an oncoming punch to his face.

“Takuya!” he growled. “Please, you have to snap out of it! I know you’re in there somewhere! You have to fight her!”

“He can’t, Koji,” Zoe heard Koichi say. “I can feel the shadows that fog his mind. He’s buried so deep inside his own mind that he’s not even present.”

Zoe stared numbly at Takuya who had thrown a well-aimed roundhouse kick at Koji’s head only to be blocked again by the experienced martial artist. Was it hopeless then? Was he lost to them forever?

Takuya – or rather Aiyokumon – must have realized that human attacks weren’t working because Takuya’s body stopped in mid action and backed away before bursting into flames. Somehow, without even using Takuya’s D-Tector, Aiyokumon had forced Takuya to transform into Agunimon. Koji had no choice but to become Lobomon and fend off his friend’s advances.

Tai had wisely come to the conclusion that he and the other DigiDestined would only get in the way of the warrior’s battle so he ordered everyone over to the entryway that they had come in from and ordered Izzi and Guardromon find the safest route out. Izzi opened his laptop and began calculating with Kazu and Guardromon while everyone gathered around and waited. The other four Warriors had transformed into their Digimon human spirit evolutions to bring up the rear and provide a suitable cover for their escape while Lobomon fought off Agunimon.

Agunimon was pressing Lobomon back though so Beetlemon broke off from the group and entered the fray as well. The two tried to press their advantage of out numbering Agunimon and gain some ground, but Agunimon managed to retain the upper hand. None of their attacks where having any effect on him, but he was having plenty of an effect on the two of them. He was bearing down on them with flamed punches and kicks. They were beginning to get beat pretty badly when Löwemon (Koichi) decided that it was time for him to aid them in the struggle. He broke off from the group as well and rushed back to help his twin and JP. No one bothered to call him back. His help was needed elsewhere. It was then that Izzi finally had the best route calculated and he was about to lead the way out when something unexpected happened.

Agunimon suddenly pitched over and everyone froze where they stood, watching. It looked like Agunimon was clutching his chest, and breathing heavily. His friend’s attacks had had an effect on him after all. He suddenly began to cough and hack loudly. It was an awful sound, like he was
about to “cough up a lung” as the saying went.

“It’s his lung cancer,” Joe gasped, being the first to realize what was happening. “His body can’t take the strain of battle. Not with three opponents. It doesn’t matter how powerful he is, the strain while he’s in that form is too great.”

Kazemon (Zoe)’s heart ached to see him like this.

Suddenly Takuya got up and attacked Löwemon, but the move was sloppy and misdirected. Löwemon dodged easily, backed up by Beetlemon who sent Agunimon sprawling onto the arena’s floor. Agunimon coughed again and aimed another attack at Löwemon, but Lobomon intercepted him.

“Why did he go for Löwemon?” Izzi wondered aloud. “Beetlemon was a lot closer.”

Feeling relatively safe in the arch of the entryway of the arena, the other DigiDestined had remained, forgetting all intentions of fleeing, too enthralled by the battle happening before them. The three warriors traded blows against Agunimon for another five minutes when it became obvious that since joining the fight, Löwemon had become Agunimon’s main target. It was completely unlike the who-ever-is-the-closest fighting strategy he had been using before when it was just Lobomon and Beetlemon fighting him. It was Kari who figured out why first.

“He’s going after Koichi because Koichi represents darkness!” she gasped. “The darkness inside of Koichi must draw Takuya to him. I’ve been watching carefully for a while now and I think that Koichi has gotten weaker after every encounter he has with Takuya!”

Izzi analyzed the next few attacks that Agunimon succeeded in making contact with Koichi and realized that the DigiDestined of Light was right. Agunimon seemed to be gaining strength as well, his coughing becoming less frequent.

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“Zoe, get him out of there,” Tai ordered one of the two remaining Warrior DigiDestined still with the group. “He won’t be able to withstand any more blows if you don’t get in there and take his place.”

Kazemon nodded and took off at full speed.

She arrived there in time to intercept Agunimon in another attack that would have hit the exhausted Löwemon.

“Koichi, get out of here!” she yelled over her shoulder as she tried to throw Agunimon back.

The Warrior of Darkness wasted no time asking for an explanation and simply did as he was told. It wasn’t until he was gone and after Beetlemon had helped her push Agunimon back that Zoe got a good look at the Warrior of Flame. Blood was dripping from his mouth and he looked like he could barely breath. Yet he was pressing on and reverting to his old strategy, attacking Lobomon who happened to be the closest. Kazemon set up for the next blow when Agunimon pitched over a second time, coughing up an unhealthy looking amount of blood.

“Takuya, please stop,” Kazemon pleaded. “You’re killing yourself!”

Agunimon seemed to pause. She waited to see what he did with baited breath, but any hope that he had heard her was dashed when he threw himself at Beetlemon.

“Taki! It’s us!” Beetlemon cried, somehow managing to block the sudden attack. “Z is right, you’re killing yourself!”
Kazemon reluctantly sent a kick into his ribcage to help Beetlemon disengage from Agunimon. Lobomon brought down his light beam sword with Agunimon just managing to block the attack with his right forearm.

“Come on Takuya!” Lobomon grunted, pressing his attack. “Break free!”

His sword suddenly erupted in a bright light and all were blinded.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Oh! Not cool! A cliff hanger? What has happened? Will Koji be able to get through to Takuya? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Yay! Tai's wearing goggles again! I missed seeing him wear them in season 2, didn't you? Now he's got cool big boy goggles! So what'd ya think? A lot is about to go down (not that a lot hasn't gone down already) and you won't want to miss it! WARNING! some of you may hate me for what is to come, but I promise you that nothing is ever as it seems in this story so I hope you tough it out and see what happens. Please review, I just love seeing even the simplest messages and let me know if you found anything confusing and unclear and I'll fix it.
The Deadly Promise

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Before leaving to rescue Takuya, Digitamamon informs the DigiDestined about Aiyokumon’s possessions, telling them to abandon hope of regaining their friend alive. Tai snaps on a new pair of goggles and declares that they have to at least try to save him. When they reach the Zaigou’s lair, they join her for an unexpected tea party where she goads and taunts them with how she’s possessed Takuya. Aiyokumon then disappears with her tea set up and the fight between Takuya and his friends begins. As Agunimon Takuya lashes out, he makes a concentrated effort to take shots at Löwemon. Kari is the first to realize that every time Agunimon attacks Löwemon, Agunimon grows stronger and Löwemon weaker in spite of being inhibited by his lung cancer, which is starting to affect him. Kazemon trades places with Löwemon in battle to get him out of there and when Lobomon and Agunimon next clash, Lobomon’s beam sword lights up, blinding everyone.

Chapter Notes

Here we are. Chapter 12. It took me a while trying to get it to be as good as it could. It wasn't supposed to happen this fast, expanding over two to three chapters instead of crammed into 1. I feel sorry for Koji because he's put on the spot and can't avoid what he knows he has to do. I hope you enjoy this chapter anyway. Let me know if you find something confusing or not well explained as well.

Just a reminder, the Adventure's original DigiDestined's digimon can't digivolve higher then champion level in the 02 season so no mega or ultimate levels will be seen from them in this story YET. Same with Tamers. :P

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

The Digital World: Location: Aiyokumon’s Arena

Koji had just barely managed to deflect Takuya’s kick and follow up with a quick block to protect his face. He couldn’t believe that he was fighting his best friend. He didn’t want to fight him, but knew he would have to strike back at some point.

“Takuya!” he growled. “Please, you have to snap out of it! I know you’re in there somewhere! You have to fight her!”

“He can’t Koji,” he heard Koichi tell him from behind. “I can feel the shadows that fog his mind. He’s buried so deep inside his own mind that he’s not present.”
Takuya choose that moment to aim a fairly strong roundhouse kick at Koji’s head that he blocked it easily, but he had to give some ground in order to maintain his balance. Koji was experienced in Kendo and the basics of other martial arts so he had a good head for this type of fighting, but he had no idea if this was really Takuya’s fighting style or Aiyokumon’s. Takuya struck Koji as the type of person skilled in a street fighter brawl style, not martial arts, but it wouldn’t be the first time Takuya had known how to do something that Koji didn’t think that his friend was capable of doing.

Takuya suddenly disengaged from their hand-to-hand fight and backed away. This confused Koji until Takuya burst into flames and emerged as Agunimon.

’Soo it’s come to this, huh?’ Koji thought, reluctantly spirit evolving into Lobomon.

They began to trade blows again, Agunimon with his fists and Lobomon with his light energy sword. Neither of them was connecting with any seriously damaging blows, but the exertion of their efforts would eventually wear them down. Lobomon thought they were pretty even until Agunimon seemed to gain a second wind and started pressing him back and bombarding him with even more powerful attacks, hammering down on him with his fiery fists. Lobomon was losing ground fast. Then Beetlemon was there, pressing Agunimon’s sudden advance back again.

This reminded them too much of the time Takuya had first gained his warrior’s beast spirit. He had lost control of his senses and fought against them then as he was doing now, only this time neither Koji nor JP were going to let Tommy step in and try to snap Takuya out of it.

Lobomon and Beetlemon continued their attack, but Agunimon – even out numbered – remained in control of the battle and still held the upper hand. None of their attacks seemed to have any effect on him, but he was having plenty of an effect on them, wearing them down a lot faster then they could wear him down. It didn’t take Lobomon long to figure out that Agunimon was drawing energy and strength from the nearby wall of lava. This arena Aiyokumon had brought them to played to Agunimon’s element advantage. In their group Takuya had always been the most in tune with his Digimon’s spirit. None of the others, not even Koji himself, had come even close to being as in sync with their spirits as Takuya had.

Agunimon continued to bear down on them with flamed punches and kicks. They were beginning to get beaten pretty badly when Löwemon joined the fray. The three of them fought back together, attempting to gang up on Agunimon when the Flame Warrior suddenly doubled over gasping. Lobomon held the other two back, giving Agunimon room to breath. They watched uneasily as Agunimon began to cough heart-wrenching coughs. One hand clutched at his chest and the other covered his mouth as the coughing steadily got worse. He began to cough so hard that blood came up, pooling in his hand and dripped onto the arena’s marble floor. The sight made them sick. In the heat of battle, the fact that Takuya had lung cancer had faded to the back of their minds. Now they watched helplessly as their friend struggled for breath.

“Oh my,” a soft voice cooed. “Done already, Takuya darling?”

Lobomon growled, recognizing Aiyokumon’s voice, as it seemed to emit from somewhere near Agunimon. There was a slight shimmer in the air and a see-through vision of Aiyokumon appeared crouching beside their collapsed friend. No one except for the three of them, standing only feet away from the illusion, could see or hear her.

“Poor baby,” she cooed, stroking Agunimon’s mane of hair. “It hurts in spite of my potions and the element advantage I gave you doesn’t it? Lets see if I can’t make that pain go away…”

Aiyokumon pulled out a small sharp looking shard of some sort of black jewel out of the folds of
her dress. She admired it for a moment and then thrust it’s point into Agunimon’s forehead. If he could have, it looked like Agunimon would have screamed in pain, but instead he coughed up another handful of blood, gasping for breath.

Lobomon, Beetlemon and Löwemon were horrified. What had she done to him? Suddenly Agunimon got up and attacked Löwemon, but the move was sloppy and misdirected. Löwemon dodged easily, backed up by Beetlemon who sent Agunimon sprawling onto the arena’s floor again. Agunimon coughed again but aimed another attack at Löwemon. Lobomon managed to intercept him.

Lobomon began to realize that Agunimon was only going after Löwemon now, even if he or Beetlemon were closer. Was this happening under the influence of that jewel shard Aiyokumon had implanted in him? He also began to realize that Löwemon’s strength was dwindling. He knew his twin was opposed to fighting, but as the Warrior of Darkness, Koichi was strong and often an important asset in a battle. In this case, he was also their freshest warrior, having only been battling with them for not even ten minutes. So what was going on?

It wasn’t until he intercepted another blow for Löwemon that he got his answer. Something was wrong. The instant he made contact with Agunimon, it seemed like a powerful amount of energy began to flow back into the Warrior of Flame.

‘He’s draining Koichi’s energy!’ he realized.

Before he could warn his twin, Agunimon launched another attack at Löwemon, but Kazemon was suddenly there, just in time to intercept the attack that would have definitely hit the exhausted Warrior of Darkness.

“Koichi, get out of here!” she yelled over her shoulder as she tried to throw Agunimon back. Löwemon wasted no time asking for an explanation and simply did he was told. Beetlemon helped Kazemon throw Agunimon back, who was breathing heavily again, blood freely dripping from his mouth. In spite of his worsening condition, Agunimon attacked Lobomon this time. Lobomon countered easily and just as Agunimon was setting up his next attack, this time aiming for Beetlemon, he pitched over for a second time, coughing up another large amount of blood.

“Takuya, please stop,” Kazemon pleaded. “You’re killing yourself!”

Lobomon thought he saw Agunimon pause for a moment, but any hope that he had heard her was dashed when he threw himself at Beetlemon again.

“Taki! It’s us!” Beetlemon cried, somehow managing to block the sudden attack. “Z is right, you’re killing yourself!”

Kazemon sent a swift kick into Agunimon’s lower ribcage to help Beetlemon disengage from him. Lobomon brought down his light beam sword, Agunimon just managing to block the attack with his right forearm.

“Come on Takuya!” Lobomon grunted, pressing his attack. “Break free!”

His sword suddenly began to vibrate within his grasp and a bright light erupted around the two of them, but they were unaffected by it. Lobomon looked directly into Agunimon’s clouded blue eyes. He became absorbed in those blue orbs and then suddenly felt himself pitch forward and was falling. The bright light from his sword had vanished, replaced with an empty darkness.

He was no longer Lobomon, but his human self. He took in his surroundings quickly, seeing what
looked like an ice encrusted Agunimon in front of him. His eyes soon became riveted on the limp figure hanging chained beside the frozen warrior. Takuya was bound in wispy silver chains, his body faintly glowing a fiery tinge.

“Takuya?” Koji gasped, hand outstretched towards the vision of his friend.

Takuya’s eyes opened and met his gaze. They were sad but determined.

“What’s going on?” Koji asked, stepping towards his friend. “Where are we?”

“We’re inside my mind, but there’s no time for a proper explanation. I don’t have much time,” Takuya stated. “Koji, there is something you must do for me. Only you can do it. Promise me as the Warrior of Light that you will do what I am about to ask you.”

Koji paused. He had never seen Takuya so serious before. It was hard to believe that any of this was real. How could he be inside Takuya’s mind? How did he know that this wasn’t one of Aiyokumon’s infamous illusions? But the Takuya in front of him had his face set in the determined look that had become one of his trademark expressions, minus the smile. It was a look Koji knew well. Whatever he had to say must have been important.

“I promise,” he said slowly, deciding to accept this as reality.

“You swear?” Takuya challenged.

“Yes! I swear already!” Koji sighed exasperatedly.

Koji decided that this had to be the real Takuya. Only he would have something important to say and drag it out in spite of the warning of a time limit.

“You have to kill me,” Takuya stated bluntly, getting straight to the point.

All feeling left Koji.

“…Kill you?” Koji whispered.

Takuya nodded grimly.

“I… Takuya I ca-” Koji spluttered horrified.

“Don’t you dare say you can’t!” Takuya growled roughly. “You promised! If I live, Aiyokumon and her master get what they want. I don’t have much time left to live anyways.”

“You have a terminal case of lung cancer, I know,” Koji slowly shook his head. “But that’s no excuse to end your life any sooner than it has to!”

“It’s not an ordinary cancer!” Takuya fired back. “If you don’t kill me, he lives and Aiyokumon’s master will get what he wants! You have to stab me through the chest and the tumor!”

A disturbingly realistic image appeared between the boys. Lobomon was piercing through the upper left section of Agunimon’s chest with his light blade. It was there for only an instant, but it was already ingrained in Koji’s mind. Takuya was serious and Koji had given him his word without thinking about what he’d have to do. He was really going to have to kill his best friend. But why? Why did this have to happen?

Takuya’s faded figure suddenly began to fade even more into the surrounding darkness. A low, dark chuckle rose in volume from behind him. Koji’s spine shivered. He knew that voice. It belonged to the one who had nearly taken Koichi away from him half a year ago.

“Lucemon,” Koji whispered, shocked. How was he still alive? They had destroyed him before returning to their own world… hadn’t they?

“Takuya!” he called out to his vanishing friend.

Takuya’s body suddenly became enshrouded in flame, becoming more solid than the shadow it had been only moments ago, fending off the darkness momentarily.

“It seems our time together is up,” he panted weakly, the chains around him becoming more binding. “She knows I’m speaking with you now. Please Koji, do this for me. If you don’t, Lucemon will take over my body and be reborn more powerful than ever with me as his core. I’d rather die than let that happen, but fighting Koichi gave him some strength and has sped up his awakening process! There’s not much time left. I don’t have much time. I can only hold out for so long.”

Koji felt himself being pulled upwards, but he resisted.

“Please Koji,” Takuya whispered with a sad smile. “Only you can do this. It needs to be done by someone that possesses the power of light. That Kari girl isn’t strong enough for this. It needs to be you. I’m sorry that it’s you that I have to ask, good buddy. I really am. …I can only guarantee that I’ll hold out for another hour. You need to forget that it’s me you’re fighting and treat Agunimon like any other enemy. This needs to end now!”

“Takuya!” Koji cried helplessly. He couldn’t do this.

“Take care of the others, Koji,” Takuya sighed, his eyelids growing heavy. “I know you can do this. I believe in you… You’re my best friend.”

Koji couldn’t resist the pull any longer and he was yanked up out of that dark world, leaving his friend behind with Lucemon and in Aiyokumon’s clutches.

He was Lobomon again and his sword of light was still clashed against Agunimon’s forearm. It was as if his meeting with Takuya hadn’t happened. The light around them dissipated and the battle resumed, only this time Lobomon was out to kill. He no longer bothered with sweeping or glancing blows. He jabbed and made quick neat cuts, aiming at the left side of his enemy’s chest. Agunimon was attacking back with just as much ferocity. There were a few well-aimed kicks and fiery punches that managed to break through Lobomon’s defenses. Lobomon reasoned that Takuya must have retained some sort of control inside his body before, slowing down the actions by just a fraction. But now, after making contact with him, Takuya had lost any control over his body that he may have had.

This was turning out to be an even more pressing battle as the two kept each other locked in combat, leaving Beetlemon and Kazemon out of it completely. The Warriors of Wind and Thunder were forced to wait on the sidelines and watch their two fellow warriors clash repeatedly with no opening for them to join in without getting in Lobomon’s way.

Lobomon was growing weary as he continued to single handedly take on Agunimon. He watched how Agunimon’s body was beginning to fail under the strain of battle. Agunimon wasn’t getting enough air into his lungs and it was beginning to show. His movements became more erratic, sloppy, and eventually weak. Agunimon swayed on his feet, unable to continue fighting
offensively and was barely holding out defensively. Lobomon was tired too, but he pressed his advantage, his thoughts staying focused on the grim task that Takuya had given him. As long as his opponent remained in Agunimon’s form, he knew he’d be able to fulfill the uncompromising promise. Finally there was an opening and Lobomon took it, jabbing straight at the exposed chest.

As if reading his thoughts, Agunimon dedigivolved. Takuya’s body lay collapsed on the ground, breathing in ragged and desperate gasps trying to fill his lungs with air. Blood was pooling in his mouth, coming up with every labored breath and cough. Koji’s heart filled with despair. He couldn’t do it. He was in the perfect position, yet he could not find it inside himself to score the final blow. His blade halted in mid-air, pointing at nothing.

No one had seen him nearly kill his best friend, but it was just as well that they hadn’t. They would be shocked and hate him for what he now had to do. It didn’t matter that only hours ago he had been so gun-hoe about rescuing Takuya. Now he had to kill him, but he just couldn’t do it. Takuya’s body – he refused to think of it as Takuya himself anymore – was right there in front of him, presented to him openly enough to end this, as Takuya wanted him to. To prevent whatever plan Aiyokumon had in store for Takuya. To prevent Lucemon from returning to life once again. But because he could not find it within himself to kill his best friend his enemies had won. He had failed Takuya.

Aiyokumon’s infuriatingly girlish voice giggled up from the bloody body’s struggling form.

“Awe,” she cooed to him as she had done to Takuya earlier. “The boy of Light can’t do it. He can’t save his little friend even after that friend risked his very existence to ask him to. Awe~ Poor baby.”

Lobomon got angry. He didn’t like her taunting. It was her fault that Takuya was like this. It was her fault for forcing them to fight. It was her fault for pushing Takuya’s body beyond its limits.

“Lets take this up a notch, shall we?” she cackled.

Takuya’s body tensed, the shard of that strange jewel glowing darkly in the center of his forehead. He let out a loud wild cry and the whole arena began to rumble. Lava exploded over the stone walls, fiery embers lighting up the enclosed space. Takuya’s body burst into flame once more and evolved, not into Agunimon or his beast spirit, BurningGreymon, but into its fusion form, Aldamon, who looked like Agunimon only with fiery bird’s wings.

The shock wave of the heat sent Lobomon flying into Beetlemon and Kazemon. They caught him just as he reverted back into Koji. The next thing any of them saw was a giant fireball hurtling towards them.

“Blizzard Blaster!”

Kumamon was suddenly there with Flamedramon, his blaster pumping out snowballs and dissipating the fire into mist and Flamedramon’s fists extinguished any pieces that he had missed. Kumamon quickly explained to them that the other DigiDestined had wanted to help, but only the Digimon with flame attributes had been able to Digivolve here. Flamedramon had proven to be the only one that would have been of any use for fighting in this environment. If Agumon had been able to warp Digivolve into Wargreymon, he’d have been right there with them as well, but as it stood, only Flamedramon stood a chance. The others, Greymon, Birdramon, and Growlmon, were simply too big and wouldn’t have been able to maneuver well in the now quickly crumbling arena.

“Koichi is getting everyone out,” Kumamon told them, ending his brief explanation. “Aldamon is tearing the whole place down. We’ve gotta stop him.”
Koji got back up and pulled out his D-Tector again.

“Leave this to me,” he said. “I’m the only one that can stop him.”

“Enough of the lone wolf act bud,” Beetlemon growled, irked. “I thought that you had learned that already. Besides, you look beat.”

“He’s right, we’re a team!” Kazemon added.

“Can any of you fusion evolve?” Koji pointed out none too gently.

None of them answered.

Koji fusion spirit evolved and became Beowolfmon, an upgraded version of Lobomon with a golden-clawed sword, and took off without another word.

“Let’s back him up anyways,” Kumamon nodded, using slide-evolution to transform into Korikakumon, a yeti snow-beast type Digimon.

Kazemon and Beetlemon reluctantly followed suit and became Zephyrmon, a bird woman, and MetalKabutarimon, a tank version of Beetlemon. Flamedramon followed them silently, firing up with the same element advantage as Aldamon.

Beowolfmon was already fighting with Aldamon high up in the air above the now collapsing arena. They ended up bringing the ceiling of the place down on top of the others during one of their massive powerful collision attacks. Beowolfmon was relieved to hear signs of Zephyrmon blowing away the debris, thus saving the others, but he had to remain focused on the fight at hand. He had wasted half an hour already and he knew that he had to finish this quickly. The arena was now nothing more than a crater in the side of a rather large and active volcano. It was night outside and there was a heavy cloud cover. The only light was provided by the hot lava that was beginning to pool into what was left of the arena.

Aldamon’s energy levels were being refilled, freely absorbing it’s element’s full power now that it was out in the open and no longer held back behind stone masonry. Beowolfmon groaned inwardly. He should have struck when he had the chance. The two were hammering away at each other as they had done as Lobomon and Agunimon, only their attacks were far more destructive, leveling and widening the crater around them. It was all that the other four could do to keep out of the way and leave the fighting up to the two higher-level Digimon.

Beowolfmon was loosing now though, and he knew it. This frustrated him beyond comprehension. He hadn’t kept his promise to Takuya and it looked like he wouldn’t be getting a second chance. Aldamon threw him to the ground in a heap, just missing a puddle of lava on his right. He heard Zephyrmon call out to him, but he couldn’t tell from where. She sounded too far away. Korikakumon and MetalKabutarimon called out to him too, but he had no way to respond. He was exhausted.

There was a sudden pressure on his back and he knew Aldamon was there, trying to crush him into the ground. He could hear Aiyokumon’s voice giggling at him as Aldamon kicked him over onto his back. It was then he found the source of her voice. It was coming from that jewel shard embedded in Aldamon’s forehead. She was inside of Aldamon, controlling his actions through the shard. It was the only way that Takuya’s body was still moving. She was feeding it her energy and had given it the ultimate home field advantage.

Aldamon was suddenly gone from his side. He had jumped away when Korikakumon charged in
with his twin axes. MetalKabutarimon was firing at Aldamon from a distance, while Zephyrmon and Flamedramon joined Korikakumon in defending their fallen comrade. Beowolfmon could feel his body yearning to lose the strain of his highest DigiVolution form, but he forced it to remain in tact. As he struggled with holding himself together he could hear the sounds of his friends getting beaten by Aldamon. He heard, not Zephyrmon’s voice, but Zoe’s when she screamed in terror. She had been the first to dedigivolve. Korikarumon’s pained yet angry roar could be heard next. He must have been trying to defend Zoe from an attack. Flamedramon’s voice was Veemon’s again, having lost all his strength fighting the more powerful Digimon Warrior. Only MetalKabutarimon’s attacks had remained steady and consistent from his distant vantage point, but Aldamon silenced him too eventually. Everyone’s moans and Aiyokumon’s cheerful laughter could be heard clearly in the cold night air. The voices of the other DigiDestined who had escaped could also be heard cheering from a far distance, encouraging them not to give up.

Just when things seemed to be at it’s worst the moon came out; a full one. It’s light cleared the sky of all clouds. Night’s natural source of light was finally out. Beowolfmon could feel the renewing energy shoot through his body. It numbed the pain and healed most of his wounds and bruises from the prolonged battle. He could fight again and this time Aldamon wasn’t the only one with a home field advantage. He had one now too. Beowolfmon launched himself at Aldamon’s figure in the distance, trying to ignore the protesting cries that came from his wounded friends. There would be time to see to them later. Right now, he only had minutes left to fulfill his promise.

Aldamon’s eyes widened with surprise, as he found himself confronted with an enemy he had thought he’d defeated. This confirmed Beowolfmon’s theory that Aiyokumon was inside the body and in control. Before, there had been no emotions displayed on that face. When in the battle she had entered the body, he had no clue, but now he was even more determined to defeat her. How dare she enter his friend’s body and use it as her own.

They resumed their brutal attack patterns again, but Beowolfmon had gained the upper hand with his surprising comeback. Aldamon’s actions became more panicked and flustered as it tried to fend him off. Beowolfmon actually got a powerful attack to make contact and sent the flaming Digimon hurtling into the ground as it had done to him only minutes ago. He wasted no time with the follow up attack. It was going to end here. It had to.

This time there was no mistaking the action he was committed to. Of course it was Zoe who caught on first. He heard the strangled exclamation of “NO!” escape her lips as he slid into his human warrior form, Lobomon, once more and poised his blade of light energy, aiming right for the spot that had been engrained in his mind since he made his promise to Takuya. Tommy and JP yelled out to him as well, but he ignored them. It had to be done. He had promised…

Suddenly, in a final act of self-preservation, Aiyokumon forced Aldamon to dedigivolve back into Takuya’s human body. Lobomon cursed as he faltered again, his blade stopping just millimeters from piercing flesh. He just couldn’t do it. The body of his friend was already badly beaten internally as well as externally from the abuse it had received within the last hour. Blood was oozing from the various cuts and gurgling up from his infected lung. Takuya’s mouth became contorted in a satisfied grin, but it wasn’t Takuya’s grin. It was Aiyokumon’s. And in spite of all that, he still couldn’t do it. Not when it took his best friend’s form. He could kill a Digimon. Give him a Digimon enemy and he’d gladly slay them, knowing that they’d be reconfigured and later reborn. But a human could only live once. That was why he couldn’t do it.

He had failed again. Time was up.

Aiyokumon’s giggling voice came bubbling out from between the body’s blood stained lips, her victory shining through within clouded eyes. Lobomon couldn’t move. He tried to stab down, he
really did, but his body had frozen on him. He could feel the frustrated tears welling up in his eyes.

‘I’m so sorry Takuya,’ he thought despairingly. ‘I’m not as strong as you are.’

He could hear Zoe, JP and Tommy approach him warily. He could feel their eyes on him, but it was Zoe’s incredulous and heated stare that was burning into the back of his head. He didn’t dare move now. He couldn’t face them. Not only had he failed to fulfill his promise to Takuya, but he had also betrayed his friends in this lone incomplete action.

What happened next, no one was prepared for.

Lobomon hadn’t moved his blade from its close proximity to the possessed boy’s chest. In fact, he hadn’t budged at all. Aiyokumon was obviously enjoying her victory and his failure. She began to laugh aloud through Takuya’s limp body when the arms moved of their own accord. They grabbed hold of Lobomon’s blade and thrust the point into Takuya’s chest, a crimson stain blooming underneath the yellow and red shirts. Lobomon stared, shocked, but he wasn’t nearly as surprised as Aiyokumon was. Brown eyes flew open, the mouth forming an angry ‘O,’ but the expression soon softened. The clouded eyes became clear and the mouth formed a content smile. Takuya was back.

Lobomon instinctively withdrew the blade but with it came an explosion of dark energy. It gathered into a misshapen shadow that took the form of Lucemon. The other Warriors recognized the figure instantly, shocked and confused to see it coming out of Takuya’s body through the gaping wound. The shadow shrieked and twisted and writhed in the air, cursing the Warriors of Light and Flame before dissipating and vanishing completely in a puff of smoke. Lobomon was soon aware that Aiyokumon had also come out of Takuya’s body too.

“How dare you! You’ve killed your own friend!” she shrieked. “You wrecked my possession! My master will not be pleased to hear you’ve ruined his plans! Join your precious friend in death!”

She lashed out at him with a black whip and threw him into one of the few walls of the arena that had remained standing. He was so exhausted from the prolonged battle that he couldn’t hold his Digimon form any more and reverted back to Koji while sliding down to the ground. His friends cried out as Aiyokumon drew a sinister looking bald from the folds of her dress. She lifted the sword and he braced himself for the coming blow. Everyone was so focused on what was happening that they didn’t see Takuya get up. Takuya used the last vestiges of air in his lungs and the final reserves of his strength to evolve into Agunimon one last time to take the blow that was meant for Koji in the gut. The Zaigou of Lust’s blade had no problem piercing through Agunimon’s armor and slicing through him with a sickening: Thunck!

Everyone stared at him, unable to comprehend what he had just done. Aiyokumon looked surprised to see Agunimon as well. His blood flowed freely from the new and fatal wound.

“How… you know… what they say…” Agunimon somehow managed to rasp. “When you… play with fire… you’re bound… to get… burned…”

He set himself alight and spread the flames onto the Zaigou witch through her sword’s blade that was now soaked with his blood. His blood proved to be highly flammable and the spatter that had hit her when she struck him caught automatically. She shrieked in pain as Agunimon released a mighty thrust of fire, throwing her into a lava stream close by. He continued to burn her until she burst into shards of data, the jewel shard in his forehead disintegrating with its owner. He was Takuya again once she was gone and collapsed in a bloody heap.
Koji reached him first, cradling his broken friend in his arms. Blue eyes met honey brown in their final moments. Koji desperately clung to his friend, as if holding him close would somehow stop the blood from flowing from the two wounds. Blood soaked into his clothes and out of the body that needed it. Koji had never felt so helpless in his life, even when compared to the time he had rushed into the emergency room to see Koichi wake from his coma.

“Koji… Thank… you,” Takuya gasped, smiling faintly up at him as the others joined them. “You… kept your… promise…”

Koji shook his head.

“No,” he choked. “I couldn’t. It was all you in the end. I had failed.”

“What’s he talking about?” he heard Zoe whisper hoarsely to JP and Tommy.

Takuya’s head jerked in a negative motion.

“No… You di…dn’t…”

Takuya raised his hand up in a fist.

Koji couldn’t stop the tears from flowing any more. They had begun their friendship by acknowledging each other with a fist bump. Now they were going to part ways in the same manner. Koji raised his fist as well and lightly tapped it against Takuya’s before taking the hand into his own.

It was at that moment that the other DigiDestined arrived on the scene and Koichi took his place among his friends beside Koji. Takuya looked at each of them in turn, ending with Zoe. She gently took his hand away from Koji and held it in her own. No words were exchanged between them, but Koji could see them speak to each other through their gaze alone. Tommy was crying with JP’s arm around his shoulders while the older boy allowed his own tears to fall silently. Koichi rested his head on Koji’s shoulder. The other DigiDestined hung back and allowed them to share each other’s company in their friend’s final moments. Those who wore hats or goggles removed them out of respect. The Warriors remained silently huddled together as Takuya breathed his last few breaths before peacefully passing away surrounded by friends under the light of the full moon and a blanket of stars.

~*~*~*~*~*~

One Zaigou down and six more to go, but Takuya’s dead! What will happen now? How does this bode for the Warriors and the other Digidestined? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Ok, don't get upset. Yes I killed off Takuya, but let me remind you that nothing is ever as it appears in this world. I don't write anything without a reason. This was a pretty graphic and action packed chapter.
Remembrance

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

When Koji’s light beam sword temporarily blinds everyone he finds himself in Takuya’s subconscious. Takuya makes Koji promise to kill him because if Koji doesn’t, Lucemon will return using Takuya’s body as its core. It is revealed that Lucemon is actually the tumor growing in Takuya’s lung. Koji finds himself struggling to keep his promise and fails to follow through when presented with his first opportunity, unable to kill his friend while in his weak human form. The battle rages on and things looked grim until the moon comes out and Koji finally finds the strength to end the fight, but Aiyokumon uses the same underhanded scheme of switching back to Takuya’s defenseless body before Koji can land the finishing blow. Takuya finds a moment of inner strength, however, and stabs himself on Koji-as-Lobomon’s blade, killing Lucemon and shattering Aiyokumon’s control over him. Enraged, Aiyokumon aimed to strike Koji down, but Takuya finds one final surge of energy to become Agunimon once more to intercept the attack and takes the fatal blow himself. After killing Aiyokumon with his flames, Agunimon reverts back into Takuya and dies surrounded by his friends.

Chapter Notes

Here’s chapter 13! Finals are now over and winter break has now begun! I can’t guarantee that I’ll update any quicker as I have been doing until now for the next month, but I’ll do my best! ^_^

After such an action packed chapter last time, I felt that there needed to be break before I started any more. I also wanted to give Takuya a proper send off. This chapter shows just how important Takuya was to the Warriors and what they thought of him.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Sekizou Volcano

The DigiDestined were taking refuge inside one of the mountain’s many caverns. After Takuya died no one had spoken. No one wanted to. Joe had taken it upon himself to clean up Takuya’s body in preparation for tomorrow’s burial while everyone else set up camp for the night. By the time he was finished, it looked like the former Warrior of Flame was merely sleeping. The two large bloodstains on Takuya’s red and yellow shirts were the only things that marred this illusion. Once camp was set up, Koji went off on his own to the back of the shallow space while everyone else sat around the fires. No one knew what to do now. They had never truly lost one of their own
before. Not without the hope that that person would come back. Finally it was Zoe who couldn’t stand it anymore. She had been sitting, staring into the fire before her thinking back on what had happened within the past hour.

Before Takuya had reclaimed control of his body and thrust Lobomon’s sword into his chest she had been ready to yell abuse at The Warrior of Light. She couldn’t believe that Koji would take a fight against one of their own that far. JP and Tommy had tried to assure her that Koji wouldn’t, but the attempts had been half-hearted. They had all seen their friend with his sword’s point practically imbedded in Takuya’s chest. When Lucemon had appeared, all anger and shock towards Koji had vanished. It didn’t make any sense. Why was Lucemon in Takuya’s body? Had Koji known that Lucemon was inside of Takuya? If so, how did he know? What was the promise Koji had made to Takuya? When had they the time to make that promise? There were too many unanswered questions and she needed to know the answers.

“Koji!” she called out, breaking the silence.

Everyone was startled. Her tone was angry, but it was also tinged with grief. Koji emerged from the back of the cavern, his face expressionless. It was as if he didn’t know what to feel, so he had chosen not to feel at all. He faced her, but did not speak.

“Tell us everything!” Zoe demanded, choking. “I – I! …I don’t understand. …! I don’t understand so tell me!”

Everyone remained silent, waiting for his answer.

Koji didn’t speak at first. He stared at Zoe for another minute before looking away. He sat down between Koichi and JP and simply stared at the fire with his arms resting on his knees. He appeared to be hypnotized by the flame and did not speak for a long time. Zoe was getting impatient, but before she could yell at him he finally spoke in a soft hushed voice. What he asked shocked her and everyone else.

“If I were to ask you to kill me, would you do it, Zoe?”

She froze.

“W-what?”

“I said, would you kill me if I asked you to,” he replied. “If I made you promise.”

“What are you talking about?” she spluttered incredulously. “What does this have anything-!”

“It has everything to do with what happened to Takuya!” Koji yelled back. He stared hard at her for a long time before his expression crumpled into one of despair. He buried his face in his arms.

“Remember when my blade made that bright light halfway through the fight?” Koji asked softly.

“Yes. Why?” She nodded. “I couldn’t see for a few minutes. No one could.”

“Then Agunimon and I alone weren’t affected,” he mused, seemingly to himself. “During that moment I somehow ended up in Takuya’s mind. Or at least my consciousness did. He made me promise, made me swear to him that I’d do what he asked of me. …And I agreed before knowing what it was he wanted me to do.”

“And what was that?” Zoe asked a little too roughly.
“He asked me… no,” Koji paused. “He ordered me to kill him.”

Everyone stared at him in shock.

“What?” Zoe asked, her voice now small.

“He wanted me to kill him,” Koji repeated.

“Why?” Tommy gasped, tears running down his face.

“It was because of the darkness growing inside of him,” Koichi murmured. “He wanted Koji to kill him before the darkness dwelling inside of him took over his body completely. Isn’t that right, Koji?”

Koji stared at his twin, shocked.

“How do you…?” Koji trailed off.

Koichi smiled sadly at him.

“I know because I could feel the darkness inside of him feeding off my own dark energy. That is why I left the battle when Zoe told me to. I was hindering your efforts just by being in close proximity to him.”

Koji looked back into the fire’s flickering flames once again.

“It was incredibly dark inside of Takuya’s mind,” he whispered. “I could barely see him. He looked so faded, like a picture that’s been projected onto smoke instead of a screen or wall. He told me that I had to kill him. That I had to stab him through the chest and the tumor or else… Lucemon would take over his body and be reborn more powerful than ever with Takuya at his core. He told me that we couldn’t let that happen. He said that it had to be me. I had to kill him as the Warrior of Light.”

He laughed without humor. It was a bleak and pitiful laugh. Then his face became one filled with endless sorrow and regret.

“He made me promise, Zoe,” he whispered. “Can you imagine how hard that was for me? He didn’t ask any of you, he asked me! I had to be the one to kill him. He told me that I had one hour before Lucemon awakened. That was all the time he could give me. But I failed him. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t kill my best friend even though it needed to be done. Even though it was what he had wanted! When I was fighting him as Agunimon I had no problem wielding my blade against him. As long as he was in his Digimon form, I could face him and carry out that promise. It was when Aiyokumon made him human again that I couldn’t strike. I couldn’t even move my blade to cut the skin! Twice I froze like that. Twice! It was Takuya’s own strength and will that saved him in the end. … That saved us.”

It was quiet now. No one had dared to interrupt him as he poured out everything: his guilt, his shame, and his grief. Tears were freely streaming down his face as he buried it in his arms. Koichi wrapped a comforting arm around his brother’s shoulders. JP and Tommy stared numbly into the fire, while Zoe stared stricken at Koji. She’d had no idea what her friend had gone through. She had yelled at him. Blamed him. Koji had been the one who had suffered the most when Takuya died, and he was still suffering more than any of them. He was the one who had to bare the burden of killing his best friend. He’d made a promise to Takuya and found that he’d been unable to keep it. Not only that, but Takuya’s last act had been to protect Koji from Aiyokumon. Koji would be haunted for a long time by the memory of his best friend being stabbed in his place.
Her friend was hurting even more than she was and there was only one thing she felt she could do. Zoe rose from her spot and stood in front of Koji. He looked up at her miserably, waiting for her to start yelling at him, to blame him for what he’d done, or rather, what he hadn’t done. Everyone gave her apprehensive stares. It was quiet for a long moment and Zoe’s face was unreadable.

“I’m sorry, Zoe,” Koji whispered hoarsely.

She could see it in his eyes. He was pleading with her for the forgiveness that he so desperately needed from her, from everyone, even though he had essentially done nothing wrong. She knelt down in front of him and then wrapped her arms around his huddled figure. Koichi quickly removed his own arm from around his brother so that he wouldn’t get caught up in the embrace. Koji sat, stunned, as the blond hugged him tightly. It was a moment before he hugged her back. No words needed to be spoken. She had forgiven him, and they both mourned Takuya’s loss.

In her mind, there was nothing Koji could have done differently. She knew that there was no way Takuya would have expected Koji to really kill him. Takuya must have had Koji make that promise because he knew that Koji would do his best to keep it. He must have only needed Koji to get close enough with the light blade to do the job himself. At least, that is what she chose to believe.

No one slept well that night. Most of them had nightmares. In the morning, they walked down the mountainside to the forest at its summit to find a good spot to bury their friend. They found a nice clearing and decided that it was as good a place as any for the funeral, but Koji stopped them from digging a grave.

“I think we should cremate him,” Koji explained. “He was the Warrior of Flame after all.”

“I think so too,” Zoe agreed softly.

JP and Koichi nodded.

Tommy wasn’t listening. He was staring at the whistle that hung around his neck. It was the only part of his birthday present from Takuya that had come with him to the Digital world. It was a plain silver whistle, but now it meant everything to the boy as a reminder of his friend. Last night he could have sworn that he had heard Agunimon’s voice speaking to him through the whistle. It had to have been a dream, but it had felt so real. Agunimon had told him that Takuya had died a warrior’s death and that every Warrior of Flame was destined to go down in flames so that he could one day rise from its ashes. It was probably the spirit warrior’s way of assuring Tommy that he’d see Takuya again some day, if not in this life, than in the next one.

“What did you say, Tommy?” Zoe asked him, looking amazed.

Tommy blinked. He hadn’t realized that he’d said anything.

“Huh?” he spluttered. “What’d I say?”

“Something about the Warrior of Flame rising from the ashes,” JP mused to himself. “That sounds familiar. Like the dream I had last night.”

“You had a dream of Agunimon too?” Tommy asked before he even realized what he was saying.

“Yeah!” JP nodded. “He was saying that Takuya would always be with us. I think he was just trying to help me move on. I mean, we must be here for a reason so I think he was saying that we shouldn’t let Takuya’s death bring us down. If we give up, then Taki died for nothing. That would mean that Agunimon himself had died again for nothing.”
“I had a similar dream,” Koichi nodded.

“That’s too weird,” Zoe wailed. “’Cause I had one too. What about you Koji?”

“I did,” Koji admitted. “Only in mine, Agunimon said that if we truly wanted to honor Takuya’s sacrifice, we’d give him a warrior’s funeral by burning his body as it is custom for all Flame Warriors. I don’t know if that’s true, but that’s what he told me.”

“Well many cultures do believe that burning the body rids it of all impurities so that the soul can move on to the after life,” Izzi mused from behind them. “It was considered an ideal funeral service for mighty warriors.”

“Like the Vikings,” Henry spoke up.

“And Jedi,” Kenta added.

“That’s just a movie,” Rika said, rolling her eyes.

“Yeah, well, in they still were considered great warriors,” Kenta said, blushing a bit.

“All right, point made. Let’s start gathering enough timber. Are you sure this is what you want?” Tai asked the five remaining Warrior DigiDestined.

They gave each other a single glance before nodding firmly. If burning Takuya’s remains was the way to honor a warrior’s death, then they were going to do it. Takuya deserved that much. Agumon had certainly thought so.

It took them a good hour to gather enough timber and make it into a proper looking pyre to lay Takuya’s body on top of. They all paid their last respects. Suzie, Ai and Mako had found some flowers and placed them next to Takuya. Zoe was touched by the gesture and nearly broke down right there, hiding her face in Koji’s shoulder. Koji was back to wearing an expressionless mask, but he didn’t shrug Zoe off. Tai ended things by saying a few parting and respectful words about Takuya before allowing Agumon and Guilmon to set the pyre on fire. They all watched as the flames engulfed the timber and Takuya’s body. It was hard for them when the smell of charred flesh and hair reached their noses, but they remained in the clearing to prevent the trees from catching fire. They kept the fire going even as the day quickly faded into the night.

As they settled down for the evening, Tai suggested that the Warriors share their fondest memories of Takuya. He knew that this was hard for them, but they needed to get it out and move on. JP had been right when he had said that they were all brought to this Digital World for a reason. They couldn’t mourn forever. They simply didn’t have that luxury.

No one wanted to speak at first, but eventually JP laughed. They all looked at him as if he were crazy.

“Look at us,” he chuckled. “We’re pathetic. If Takuya could see us I’m sure he’d throw a major fit! He’d call us a bunch of moping bums and tell us to get off our butts and do something.”

Koichi managed a chuckle.

“Being down certainly wasn’t his style,” he agreed. “Takuya never was down for too long. If he ever was he’d scold himself.”

“He just had a short attention span,” Zoe scoffed lightly. “He couldn’t stay in any emotional state for very long. I swear he had more mood swings than a girl.”
JP laughed.

"The idiot," Koji muttered. "He certainly was obnoxious in the beginning."

"You two couldn’t stand each other!" Zoe grinned.

"Really?" Koichi asked, wide eyed, looking at Koji.

"Yeah!" JP grinned. "That’s right, you came along after they resolved most of their differences."

"They fought all the time," Tommy chimed in.

"Gee, sound like anyone you know, Matt?" Tai grinned at his blond friend who elbowed him for the jab.

"I could think of some people like that," Henry mused, glancing with a soft smile at Rika who was sitting between Takato and Ryo. The redhead glared at him.

"You guys could never decide on a plan of action without having to argue about it first," Zoe laughed.

"You’re one to talk, Zoe," JP snickered. "As I seem to recall, you and Takuya got off on the wrong foot in the beginning too. Like that time we were trying to decide which set of tracks to follow after Tommy got his spirit."

"We were headed for the forest terminal," Tommy sighed, laughing. "And Takuya picked the wrong way."

"I seem to remember you picking that wrong way as well, Tommy," Zoe gently scolded him. "You two couldn’t believe that I got a spirit."

"Didn’t I have to save you in the end even after you got your spirit?" Koji asked.

Zoe shot him a glare.

"So what?" she retorted. "I seem to remember you getting your butt kicked pretty badly a few times as well. It was my first time using Kazemon’s spirit! I was still getting the hang of it."

"And I wasn’t?" Koji challenged, a casual smirk forming on his sullen features. "Because that was only my second time as Lobomon."

"It took you long enough to get a hang of your beast spirit," Tommy mused.

"Well I had no problem with my beast spirit," Zoe boasted.

"I didn’t have much trouble either. …But I was certainly having déjà vu fighting Agunimon yesterday," JP sighed. "Remember when Takuya got his beast spirit?"

Koji groaned.

"What happened?" Tai asked, partly out of curiosity and partially to keep the conversation going. Koichi looked interested too, never having heard the full story himself.

"We were getting hammered by Grumblemon, the corrupt Warrior of Earth," Koji explained. "We were somewhat rescued by BurningGreymon, the Warrior of Flames’ beast spirit, but it had possessed a Shamanmon. Shamanmon was in pain from the possession so Takuya rescued the
Digimon, but ended up getting possessed himself. The beast spirit caused him to go out of control. JP and I had to fight him in an attempt to knock some sense into him, but we didn’t make any progress. He started to beat us pretty badly.”

“You got thrown on top of me a few times,” JP groaned with a laugh. “You’re heavy too, in your Beast Spirit form.”

Koji made a face.

“It’s not like you made much of a soft landing, JP,” he scoffed. “Not in Beetlemon’s armor.”

“But do you remember that roar of his?” JP asked, shuddering.

Zoe nodded.

“It didn’t even sound human,” she whispered. “Bokomon had said, “Of course it doesn’t. That’s why they call it a beast spirit.” It was like Takuya wasn’t even in there anymore.”

“Then how’d you stop him?” Davis asked, caught up in the story.

“We didn’t,” Koji sighed. “Takuya nearly burnt down the entire forest. It was Tommy who got through to Takuya in the end.”

Everyone looked admiringly at the little boy.

“Awe,” Tommy blushed. “I didn’t do much at all. All I did was get caught.”

“I thought he was going to crush you,” Zoe shivered, remembering the incident. “You looked so small in his clawed hands. You reminded him of who he was and woke him up out of that possession.”

“I thought he was going to run away,” Koji sighed. “After Tommy broke through to him, he was so horrified at what he’d done that he’d bashed his head into the rocks and crushed them. I can’t remember another time where he’s been that upset. He hated himself for letting the Beast Spirit take control of him like that.”

“As I recall,” JP mused, “he was too freaked to even want to try turning into his Beast Spirit again until Tommy was kidnapped by Grumblemon later that day.”

“He had more problems with his Beast Spirit than any of us,” Koji agreed. “Fire certainly isn’t an easy element to control.”

“Not nearly as hard as darkness,” Koichi disagreed. “My corrupted spirits possessed me for half of the time I was in the Digital World. If it weren’t for you guys and Ophanimon, I’d still be Cherubimon’s puppet.”

Koji nodded, solemnly.

“True,” he admitted. “Fire doesn’t have to war within itself in order to stay balanced like darkness does.”

It became quiet for a minute before Tommy started laughing.

“Hey,” he giggled. “Do you guys remember the day we decided that we should do something other than meet up in the park and went to Tokyo Disney Sea instead because he won those free tickets?”
“Yeah…” they nodded slowly.

“Well I was just thinking about the time we were waiting in line for the Indiana Jones ride. Takuya was balancing on that railing, remember?”

“Oh god,” Zoe choked. “He nearly fell over into the pit below!”

Koji and JP were shaking their heads, grins slowly spreading across their faces.

“I remember that,” Koichi chuckled. “He nearly took me down with him. I was leaning against the same railing and when he nearly lost his balance, we both started to teeter over.”

“I decked him good for that,” Koji mused, smiling at the memory. “The moron. What was he trying to do again?”

“It was his short attention span getting the better of him again,” Zoe sighed. “The line was moving slowly so he decided that he needed a proper distraction.”

“Yeah,” JP grunted. “A fast pass to the emergency room is the perfect distraction. Do you guys remember his face after we pulled him back? Priceless!”

“Not nearly as much as the one he made after Koji knocked him outside the head,” Tommy snorted.

They all laughed.

“He was nuts!” JP snickered.

“Well, yeah,” Zoe sighed. “But he had his moments.”

“Like the time those guys were picking on me after school,” Tommy frowned, staring up at the stars above the clearing. “He was picking me up on the way to our weekend meeting. I had said something that must have offended this other kid and he tried to beat me up after school got out. I was lucky that Takuya got there in time, because he was beating me pretty badly. He chased the bully off and treated me to some ice cream before we joined you guys.”

JP shook his head.

“Well when my school got together with other schools for sports day, none of the teams from my school would let me join,” Zoe mused as she gathered her thoughts. “I didn’t know that it was his school that was involved until I spotted him warming up for the soccer games. I remember how everyone on his team seemed to look to him for the plays. He was never a glory hound, like I thought he’d be. He was pretty popular with the girls,” she frowned. “After the game, he saw me in the bleachers and waved. A lot of the girls from my class noticed and started asking me about him.”

“Were these the same girls you had trouble making friends with?” JP asked.

“Yeah,” she nodded. “This happened almost right after we returned from our adventures in the Digital World. The next set of events that came up that day were the integrated school events. There had to be at least one person from the other school competing in a group. No one wanted me to join their group from my school, but Takuya recruited me for his. We entered the three-legged race and some other two-contestant events together for our group. We didn’t win them all, but we won more than any other pairing. I had an easier time making friends after that. I was asked to be on more teams for my school later that day and Takuya cheered me on even if it was against his
own school.”

JP leaned back against a tree he had his back to and joined Tommy in gazing up at the stars.

“Takuya did have a way of making you feel like you belonged,” he sighed. “He never left anyone out of anything.”

“That’s true,” Koji smiled, staring into the slowly dying flames of Takuya’s pyre. “After Koichi joined us, Takuya tried to give me some advice about how to be a brother.”

Koichi smiled, remembering his own private pep talks with Takuya.

“He’ll be greatly missed,” he murmured, leaning his head on his twin’s shoulder.

Koji wrapped an arm around Koichi’s shoulders and nodded mutely.

“Yeah,” Zoe and Tommy sighed in unison, hugging their legs.

JP nodded.

“I didn’t know him as well as you all did,” Tai smiled, “but he talked fondly of you guys during the time it was just me, Agumon, Takato and Guilmon in the cave tunnels. He seemed like the kind of guy who didn’t give up on anything.”

“He was,” Zoe nodded. “It was sometimes one of his most annoying qualities, but it was also one that we all admired.”

“‘Never give up’ was his mantra. That and ‘Leave no man behind,’” JP chuckled.

“‘That last one was the saying that got him in the end,’” Koji said bitterly. “Even if it meant he might have lived, he would never leave any of us behind.”

It was quiet for another moment before anyone spoke again.

“You can’t keep blaming yourself for what happened, Koji,” Zoe sighed, looking at her friend. “It’s just the way Takuya was. You didn’t ask him to shield you and throw himself onto Aiyokumon’s blade. He chose to do it all on his own.”

Koji remained silent, continuing to gaze into the pyre’s flames. The only sign that he accepted her words was the movement he made to hold Koichi a little closer.

“I know, Zoe,” he finally sighed. “I know.”

Does Koji really understand? What will they do now? Will Takuya's death affect them in a negative way or will they persevere through it all? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this chapter and are looking forward to the next one as the story moves into a new story arc. Please let me know what you think in your comments!
Until next time!
The DigiDestined retreated into the mountains and camp out for the remainder of the night. Before sleep, Koji confesses what he promised Takuya and the circumstances behind everything that happened during the fight. The next day the group descends to the mountain’s summit and spend all day making a pyre and burn Takuya’s body. That night the Warriors reminisce about Takuya and share their memories and stories about him with the others.

Here's chapter 14! I know I've kinda been dragging out the whole Takuya's death bit, but now we finally move on to gaining some answers to the means behind his death. It took me a few days to get this where I wanted it and a lot of reviewing certain episodes in the series. This is the start of a new story arc in this story and I hope you enjoy.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

In the morning the pyre’s fire had died completely, leaving nothing but a large pile of ashes. Tommy was the first to wake up and he couldn’t help looking among the debris. There was nothing left of his good friend and older brother figure. Not even a pane of plastic glass or a charred strap from his goggles remained. A sound behind him alerted him to someone else’s presence.

“Good morning, Tommy,” a girl’s voice greeted him.

He turned and found the quiet Tamer girl, Jeri, standing there.

“Morning,” he mumbled before looking back at the pile of ashes.

She joined him and stood by his side. They remained quiet for a few minutes before Jeri spoke again.

“You two were close?” she asked softly.

“He was like an older brother to me,” he confirmed.

Jeri nodded.

“I know what it’s like to loose someone precious,” she said softly. “When my mother passed away it felt like the world was ending.”
Tommy glanced at her. She was holding an orange dog-looking sock puppet to her chest as she stared at Takuya’s ashes.

“I was only a year or two younger than you are,” she continued. “She had been sick for some time before she… Well, my fondest memories of her are from when I was little. She would put on these hand-made sock puppet shows for me. I became attached to the puppets. I even kept one of them as a memento.”

She looked fondly at the sock puppet. It was old and a little beat up, but it looked like it’d been loved and taken care of. It made Tommy look at his whistle. She noticed the movement and nodded at it.

“Did Takuya give that to you?” she asked.

“Yeah,” he sighed. “It was one of the things he gave me for my birthday a few days ago. …It feels a lot longer than that.”

Jeri nodded, a sympathetic smile on her face.

“Everything will be alright,” she said. “Things may seem grim now and it may even get worse, but that means that things can only get better after that.”

Tommy smiled a bit. What Jeri said made sense to him. When they had been fighting in the Digital World last time, things kept getting worse in their efforts against Lucemon until they finally defeated him and came home relatively safe and sound. They had thought that they had defeated Lucemon for good, but he guessed that they must have overlooked something. Something that none of them had even considered at the time.

“Morning!” Zoe’s voice called over to the two of them.

Tommy was jolted out of his thoughts and quickly spun around to face the blond.

“Morning, Zoe,” he stammered.

She was smiling, but it wasn’t her usual bright smile. Tommy doubted that anyone would see that smile for a while. She looked distracted as she nervously looked at the ashes.

“There’s nothing left of him, Z,” JP’s voice sighed from somewhere to their left.

‘How long has he been there?’ Tommy wondered. He hadn’t noticed JP hidden in the shadow of a nearby tree.

Zoe’s smile faltered slightly, but came back a little stronger than before. She let out a sigh of relief.

“That’s…good I suppose,” she managed to say. “I was afraid that there’d be an arm or a…part of him that was still…”


“Oh…yeah,” Tommy nodded hesitantly.

He felt Jeri place a hand on his shoulder and smiled. She was really nice. Out of all of the other DigiDestined from the other worlds, Jeri was his only friend so far outside of the Warriors. Most would have thought that he’d get along with Cody because they were both the youngest in their groups, but that was not the case. Cody was one of the few who still didn’t trust Koichi and,
therefore, didn’t want to be too close to someone who associated with him.

“Morning all,” came Tai’s loud call as he joined them, rousing some of the others who were still sleeping. Koichi and Koji were with him. “How’s everyone this morning?”

“Fine,” they chorused.

He smiled sympathetically as he took in the sight of the large mound of ashes that had once been a friend and fellow leader. He pulled the pack off his back and dug inside it, searching for something. They all looked at him curiously, wondering what he’d show them. It took him a moment, but he finally pulled out five tiny little round orb jars, each one on a gold chain. He handed one to each of the remaining Warriors.

“Izzi packed these little jars in case he found something he wanted to analyze,” Tai explained. “Digitamamon gave him way more than he needed though, so last night we decided that you five should have one and fill it with Takuya’s ashes. That way a piece of him is always with you. I added the chains with some help from Mimi so that you could wear them around your necks. You don’t have to use them like that though. It’s just that, if it were any one of my friends, I’d want something to remember them by. …Even if it was just a glass orb filled with their ashes.”

Zoe’s eyes clouded over at the sentiment and clutched the little chained orb in her hands. Koji and Koichi shared a glance while Tommy stared numbly at his. JP also stared at his glass orb jar, but was the first one to turn around and scoop up a little bit of ash from the center of the burnt out pyre where the ashes would most likely be Takuya’s and not from the pyre’s wood. He put the stopper back on and hung the chain around his neck.

“Thank you, Tai,” he said, bowing slightly and with a small smile.

Tai returned the smile and turned to wake those who were still asleep. Jeri decided that she’d better follow as well so that the Warriors could bid their lost friend one final goodbye.

Zoe was the next one to fill her orb with Takuya’s ashes followed by Koji and Koichi. Tommy was still staring at his glass orb, wishing that it didn’t have to be like this. He wished for the hundredth time within the past thirty-six hours that Takuya hadn’t died. That Takuya was still with them and not a pile of ashes.

He finally unstoppered the glass orb jar in his hand and scooped up some of Takuya’s ashes for himself. When he stuck the top back on firmly he looked inside. The ashes were flakey white and grey, and in some places appeared to swirl in the orb. They were still warm so the glass heated up a little. When Tommy closed his eyes, he could pretend that Takuya was still with him inside the jar, warm and alive instead of dead and cold. Even if he hadn’t been the Warrior of Flame, Takuya had always been such a warm and lively person. He never felt cold to the touch even in icy cold weather and he shivered like any normal person. Maybe it was because Tommy was the Warrior of Ice, that he thought that Takuya was always so warm.

Later that day, it was decided that they should leave the forest and return to Sekizou City and meet with Lord Byakkomon. When they arrived, the city was even livelier than it had been before. News had spread that the DigiDestined had defeated Aiyokumon and they were welcomed like heroes. None of them felt like heroes, but they allowed the crowds to greet them and accepted the city’s citizens’ thanks and praise as they were ushered to the palace situated in the center of the stone city. Digitamamon joined them half of the way there accompanied by his Gatsumon trio and Floramon.

“Is it true?” he asked, his yellow eyes wide. “Did you defeat her?”
Tai nodded, acting as spokesman for the DigiDestined once more.

“And your friend?” Digitamamon asked, in a more subdued tone.

“Dead,” Tai managed to whisper hoarsely over the crowd so that only the egg Digimon could hear.

“I warned you,” Digitamamon sighed. “No one ever escaped her clutches alive. The boy might as well have been dead when you got there.”

Tai shook his head.

“It was Takuya who saved us in the end. He killed Aiyokumon.”

“Did he now?” Digitamamon asked, surprised. “Looks like that witch chose the wrong DigiDestined to possess. I take it she underestimated him?”

“From what I’ve gathered,” Tai nodded.

“You mean you don’t know?” Digitamamon asked, exasperated.

“Only Koji would know,” Tai stated sadly. “And I doubt even he knows the full extent of his friend’s condition at the time or the degree of mental captivity Takuya was really bound in. But I think it’s safe to say that the Zaigou of Lust underestimated Takuya. She’d be alive if she hadn’t and we’d all be dead.”

Digitamamon took in what the DigiDestined of Courage had told him. It was quiet between the two of them for a moment before either spoke again.

“You lot will have ten percent discounts when you buy from my store,” Digitamamon said gruffly in order to change the depressing subject. “For every Zaigou you kids defeat I’ll add another ten percent to the discount.”

Tai smiled.

“So at the end of this insane quest, we should have an eighty percent discount at your store?” he laughed.

“Everything will be free if you can defeat Kushyamon himself,” Digitamamon nodded, all business. “Within reason of course. Any practical supplies like the ones you asked for before will be free, but luxury items will be half price. I have a business to run after all.”

Tai grinned, but inside he only hoped that the price for defeating the rest of the Zaigou wouldn’t be the life of another DigiDestined. He wasn’t sure the group could take so much loss.

They finally reached Sekizou City’s great palace and were led into a grand audience chamber that could only be the throne room. There was a large and elaborately engraved high-backed chair at the end of the room. A young man who looked like he was only a few years older then Joe entered the room in regal robes of purple and green. Four Knightmon accompanied him.

“My Lord Byakkomon,” Digitamamon said reverently, bowing as low as his shell allowed him. The Gatsumon and Floramon did the same. Some of the DigiDestined gawked at the Lord’s apparent youth and human appearance, but they all bowed as well.

“Rise,” the human looking Digimon smiled. “Digitamamon, you have done well. You may leave with your companions while I speak to the DigiDestined. I have heard that they have been through
They all rose from their bows and once Digitamamon, Floramon and the Gatsumon left the room, Tai noticed how the Knightmon appeared to have melted into the shadows, leaving the DigiDestined relatively alone with the young lord.

“Who speaks for you?” Byakkomon asked.

Tai took one step forward to separate himself slightly from the others.

“I do,” he said with an authority that no one dared to argue with.

The Digimon Lord of the West looked Tai over as he rose from his throne. He came down to stand before the appointed DigiDestined leader and began to circle him as if he were examining Tai’s worth. The other DigiDestined watched the proceedings nervously. Tai appeared relaxed, as if being inspected in such a way was normal to him. This was not the first time his calm surprised the others. He had been just as calm while having tea with Aiyokumon before the battle two nights previously.

“You must be the DigiDestined of Courage from Gennai’s world,” Byakkomon mused finally, smiling at Tai. “You’re not exactly the way he described you to me. He told me you were rather rash and impulsive for a leader.”

Tai chuckled, trying to hide his surprise that Byakkomon knew Gennai.

“Well, with age comes change,” Tai grinned, trying to match the young lord’s cool demeanor.

Byakkomon nodded. “That is certainly true. The world is ever changing. Especially the Digital World.”

He looked over the rest of the DigiDestined with a single glance and frowned.

“I see that the rumors are unfortunately true,” he sighed before returning to his throne. “You have lost your Warrior of Flame. That is indeed a grave loss. Fire is a powerful element and ally. How did he die?”

Tai told the Digimon Lord of the West what had happened with the Zaigou of Lust from the beginning, starting with the tea party to Takuya’s final sacrifice that ultimately ended Aiyokumon. Byakkomon listened intently, taking in everything and missed not even the tiniest detail given. When Tai was finished the entire room was quiet.

“You have suffered greatly,” Byakkomon said finally. “I give my humblest grievances to the fallen warrior’s companions. Now I know why Kushyamon wanted him so badly. It was as Lady Ophanimon had feared.”

The Warrior DigiDestined’s ears perked at the familiar name.

“I beg your pardon?” Tai inquired politely.

The young lord looked down from his throne at Tai.

“You said that Takuya had developed a severe case of lung cancer?”

“Yes,” Tai replied slowly, wondering where this was going.

“Lady Ophanimon, Lord Seraphimon, and Lord Cherubimon had contacted me not too long ago,
before any of you arrived in this Digital World. They voiced a concern that had been plaguing them for some time. You see, after the Legendary Warriors defeated Lucemon, they assumed that he was destroyed for good this time and that his data had been purified to be reborn again. Only Lucemon was never reborn, as he should have been. Not even in a different Digital World.”

“Wait, is that possible?” Tai asked.

“For a Digimon to be reborn in a different Digital World?” Byakkomon asked. “Yes. Just ask your friend.”

Out of the shadows came a lion Digimon standing upright like a man, wearing pants and a sword at his hip.

“Leomon!” all but Davis, Ken, Cody, Yolei, Willace, Michael and the Warrior’s group exclaimed.

The newcomer smiled and gave a slight bow in their direction.

“It’s good to see you all again,” he said in a low rumbling voice.

“Why don’t you rejoin your Tamer, Leomon?” Byakkomon suggested. “I’m sure she has missed you greatly.”

“I shall,” Leomon bowed. “My greatest thanks, my Lord, for reuniting me with her.”

With that said, Leomon crossed the large space and stood next to Jeri who looked like she was going to cry at any moment.

“Leomon was your Digimon partner?” Sora asked Jeri incredulously.

“He is my partner,” Jeri emphasized. “Oh Sora! You were right!”

“About what?” the red head asked, confused.

“Remember when we were in that awful desert cavern?” Jeri asked. “You told me that I’d be sure to meet my partner again someday, and you were right!”

She flung her arms around Leomon’s and cried silently. Her partner patted her back and smiled fondly down at her.

“It’s been a long journey,” he smiled at her fondly. “I found myself reborn in another world different from the one I knew. It was there that I learned of the legend of the DigiDestined and had been hoping one of the them would turn out to be you, but instead I found these seven.” He gestured to Tai and the other six original DigiDestined from the Adventure World.

“So you are the Leomon we knew,” Mimi cried. “I’m so sorry Leomon. If I had just stayed out of the way you wouldn’t have-”

“It’s alright, Mimi,” Leomon chuckled. “I was glad to give my life once more to save the DigiDestined. And if I had not died, I would not have been reconfigured in this Digital World and reunited with you all.”

“But how is it possible for you to die in one world and then get reconfigured in another?” Izzi asked.

“I want to know how you were even reborn at all” Henry said. “When you were destroyed by Beelzemon, Leomon, he absorbed your data.”
Impmon looking down and the floor, guilt flooding through him. Even though Jeri had forgiven him, he knew that by destroying Leomon he’d caused her great pain and suffering that the D-Reaper had taken advantage of.

“I can explain that,” Byakkomon stated, drawing attention back to him. “There are very special circumstances in which a Digimon’s data slips out of it’s original world, and is then transmitted and reconfigured in a different Digital World. Due to the instability of the Digital World he was currently in, when Leomon died the first time, a few key bits and shards of Leomon’s data managed to escape being absorbed by Beelzemon. When Guilmon digivolved into Megidramon he nearly tore the Digital World apart, creating cracks in that Digital World’s barrier shortly after Leomon died. It was during this lapse of worldly stability that the remains of Leomon’s data slipped through the cracks and ended up in Gennai’s Digital World. Enough of his memory data had survived to keep his memories intact. He might not remember everything from his time in his first home world, but his memories of the Tamer DigiDestined and their short time together remains in tact.

“Shortly before he died again, the Dark Masters had taken over and warped that world. Many other Digimon slipped through the cracks formed in that world’s barrier with Leomon and came here. Why do you think Gennai needed the original eight DigiDestined to give up their crests? It was to provide not only better protection for that Digital World, but for its barrier’s stability as well. Getting back to what was originally Lady Ophanimon’s concern, Lucemon hadn’t been reborn even though he was destroyed in that major battle with the Legendary Warriors. The instability of their Digital World would have provided the perfect conditions for Lucemon’s core data to slip through and be reborn someplace else, so they reached out to many of us higher plane Digimon from all of the Digital Worlds in existence, but none of us found any trace of the Lucemon that they sought.”

“All right,” Tai said nodding, trying to keep up with what he was being told. “So Lucemon didn’t reconfigure his data in any of the existing Digital Worlds. What conclusion did Lady Ophanimon come to?”

“Ah,” Byakkomon sighed. “Once it had become apparent that Lucemon had yet to be reborn in any world, Lady Ophanimon, and Lords Seraphimon and Cherubimon began developing alternative theories and eventually came to the only plausible conclusion. That Lucemon hadn’t been destroyed as completely as they’d thought and had somehow managed to hide a piece of himself somewhere before he was destroyed.”

Before Tai could ask any further questions Byakkomon snapped his fingers and the banner behind him moved aside to reveal a viewing screen.

“Gennai was kind enough to supply Ophanimon with this footage from her world of what was supposed to be Lucemon’s final moments, which she later sent to me. How he found this I have no idea, but if you watch carefully you will see that this footage supports their theory.”

The image of Susanooonmon, the mega form of all ten Legendary Warrior spirits combined, was hovering a short distance away from a terrible looking purple dragon Digimon holding a dark orb in it’s clawed hands. All of the Warriors except for Koichi were having déjà vu as the images began to move and sounds and their voices echoed around them as if they were in a movie theatre, saying things that they had said long ago.

“What are we gonna do?” Zoe’s voice asked.

“If we don’t do something quick, we’ll be destroyed too,” Tommy’s voice added.
“But what can we do against that attack?!” They heard JP counter.

“Wait! I know,” Takuya’s voice exclaimed.

The sound of his voice made the Warrior DigiDestined’s hearts feel heavy.

“What?” the other four voices asked him in unison.

“You have to trust me guys,” he stated. “We’re going inside.”

Susanoomon’s visor came down and then he took off towards the dragon. It took a swing at him, but Susanoomon kept on coming, plunging right into it’s chest.

“We made it,” came the collective relieved sigh from Susanoomon as he pressed through the dark interior of the dragon.

“For all the good it’s going to do you,” a soft child-like voice hissed. “Nothing can stop my utopia now!”

The screen zoomed out to reveal a chrysalis worm looking thing with a ring around it’s pointed tail and wings sprouting from it’s back. Lucemon.

“You’re nothing but a tyrant who’s too weak to accept that he might be wrong!” Susanoomon cried. “We will stop you!”

“Powerful words,” Lucemon hissed. “Let’s see if you have the power to back them up!”

The ring around it’s tail began to glow red.

“Let’s do it!” Susanoomon agreed grimly.

“Stand tough guys!” Takuya’s voice called out on its own.

“Right!” the others agreed.

Lucemon hissed and a hail of light spears erupted from the glowing ring, raining down on the mega.

Susanoomon took a few in the chest before balling up a little.

“He’s not as strong as he thinks he is,” he grunted before launching his attack on the evil Digimon.

“No!” Lucemon screeched as Susanoomon gained ground, nearing him every second. Impossible!”

“Impossible is our specialty,” Susanoomon retorted as he soared even closer to his enemy.

Lucemon let out an enraged hiss, blasting a direct hit at the mega, but Susanoomon kept coming.

“You’ll need more than that!” Susanoomon cried.

“Nooo!” Lucemon screeched one last time. “I cannot be defeated by a human!”

“Guess again!” came the reply as Susanoomon smashed his fist into Lucemon’s forehead, nearly splitting him in half.

The purple orb broke and the dragon let out a wail. The images and sound stopped there. The
DigiDestined knew that there was more to the fight, but Byakomon rewound the footage to the point where Susanoomon’s fist came in contact with Lucemon’s forehead.

“Watch carefully,” he instructed.

When he replayed the footage it progressed in slow motion as Lucemon’s body began to split. The image froze suddenly and only a few of them could see the immediate significance of what they saw. Susanoomon had his fist full into Lucemon’s split head, but Lucemon had a feeler inserted in Susanoomon’s chest. It had happened so fast that no one had noticed it when it ran at normal speed.

“Ophanimon believes that Lucemon injected a part of himself into Susanoomon so that a part of him would live on if he was actually defeated. Takuya just had the misfortune to be the one to absorb the hit. It is my belief that because Takuya had Lucemon inside of him, Crusademon was ordered to abduct him. Kushyamon and the Zaigou must have wanted Lucemon for something.”

Tai nodded.

“So what are the Zaigou going to do now that they don’t have Lucemon?” he asked.

“That, Tai, is what you will have to find out on your own,” Byakomon said grimly. “Unfortunately the only one who might have been able to tell us is dead. Takuya lived with Lucemon inside of him for months and had been under Aiyokumon’s control for at least a day. He must have learned something about Kushyamon’s plans. But it doesn’t do well to dwell on spilled milk as they say. What’s done is done.”

“So what do you believe should be our next move?” Tai inquired.

Byakomon looked at Tai for a long moment.

“What do you think you should do?” he asked.

Tai remained quiet himself for a moment before speaking, selecting his words carefully.

“We are in no condition to face any more of the Zaigou at this point in time, but they are sure to know that Aiyokumon is dead. Crusademon was nowhere to be found after he brought us there, so I’m pretty sure he’s informed the next Zaigou in line of the situation. We’ve made our presence known in this city so it would be unwise for us to remain here any longer than necessary. It would only put you and your people at risk. We’ll leave as soon as possible.”

Byakomon nodded.

“You make many fair points. But what do you intend to do once you leave this city’s limits?”

“What we’ve always done,” Tai answered simply. “We’ll rough it. Digitamamon has provided us with more than enough supplies. The only problem will be fighting the Zaigou off once they do find us. In this Digital World it appears that different terrain provides certain elemental advantages to specific types of Digimon and weakens others. That could prove to be troublesome when it comes to overwhelming combat conditions in spite of our numbers.”

“So you’ve figured out that much already,” Byakomon smiled.

“Izzi did actually,” Tai admitted.

The Lord of the West nodded.
“You and your own group of DigiDestined are in a pickle of your own, aren’t you?” he asked. “None of your Digimon have the ability to Digivolve to their Ultimate levels.”

Tai shook his head.

Byakkomon rose from his throne again, deep in thought.

“I cannot ask Gennai to return your crests to you,” he sighed, “but I know of another way to unleash a greater elemental power. Your friend was right about the elemental advantages in this world, but there is always a way to bend the rules.”

He pulled a metallic medallion from around his neck and held it out in the palm of his hand. On it was an etching of a tiger with a blade between it’s fangs.

“This is the Medallion of the West. It grants me the ability to fight at full power no matter what elemental advantage the terrain provides, whether it’s to my own or my enemies’ advantage. In the hands of one of you chosen children it will grant the others who share the same traits as the holder the same benefit. It will grant you all the ability to allow your Digimon partners to Digivolve to their highest possible level. However, it is only effective in the hands of a warrior.”

He looked significantly at the five possessors of the Legendary Warrior’s spirits.

“All four of the Lords in this realm hold a medallion of this kind. Gather them all and you should have an advantage against the Zaigou. Especially the higher ups, closest to Kushyamon. It is a pity that Takuya, your Warrior of Flame, is no longer with us,” he said grimly. “He would have been the ideal candidate for Lord Suzakumon to give his medallion to. We four Lords knew that this day would come and that we’d have to give these medallions to the chosen ones. There is a prophecy, but I’m afraid I do not know it’s finer details. Lord Genbumon of Himizu can tell it to you when you reach his kingdom to retrieve his medallion. His realm is the closest one to this city.”

“What does this prophecy say?” Tai asked.

“Oh the usual,” Byakkomon shrugged. “A great evil will come upon this land and a group of heroes will rise up to bring hope to the people, yada, yada, yada. That sort of thing.”

Tai couldn’t help but smile at the young Lord’s careless attitude toward the whole thing.

“So we go around collecting these medallions and then go pick a fight with the Zaigou?” he asked sarcastically.

“Essentially yes,” Byakkomon sighed. “But never go picking a fight with the Zaigou. Let them come to you. It’s easier to make mistakes when you’re part of the assault instead of the defense.”

He approached the DigiDestined one more time before stopping just in front of JP. Their eyes locked and they looked at each other for a long time. Byakkomon broke the contact after a couple minutes and JP shuddered, shaking his head as if to clear it.

“Warrior of Thunder,” Byakkomon said grimly, getting JP’s attention once more. “I find you a worthy candidate and charge you with the care and the power of this medallion. May you lead your friends strongly into battle, and safely out of harm’s way.”

He placed the medallion in JP’s trembling hands.

“With this in your possession,” Byakkomon explained, “all insect and electric type Digimon will have the power to Digivolve to their highest possible level and give you an advantage on any type
of battle field, but you’ll always be at your strongest in any sort of clearing.”

JP bowed to Lord Byakkomon and slipped the medallion around his neck next to the glass orb that contained some of Takuya’s ashes.

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Wow. JP's gained some important responsibilities. Can he raise to the occasion? Or did Byakkomon choose the wrong warrior to entrust his medallion with? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

So what'd ya think? Finally a method forming from the madness. For this chapter I did watch the last episode of Frontier in so the dialogue is 100% accurate. I watched it so I see if Lucemon was ever in contact with Susanoomon so that the way Lucemon got into Takuya's body and became a cancer would work. Thank goodness there WAS a moment and if there hadn't, my story would have been screwed and I would have had to get really creative. Please let me know if anything was unclear and I will do my best to clear it up.
Kushyamon’s Plot

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The morning after burning Takuya’s body, the Warriors bid their friend a final farewell, scooping some of his ashes into little mini specimen jars on necklace chains that Tai gives them. The DigiDestined return to Sekizou where the Digimon welcome them like heroes. They meet Lord Byakkomon and are reunited with Leomon after learning that it is possible for a Digimon to die in one world and be reborn in another. They learn how Lucemon came to be inside Takuya and how they should proceed next. Lord Byakkomon gives JP his Medallion of the West after recommending that the DigiDestined head north to Himizu and see Lord Genbumon to learn more about their enemy and a prophecy that foretold of their coming.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is mainly in JP’s POV, but we get to meet the big baddy himself and hear a little bit from Willace’s perspective. We also see a little bit of a language barrier as Japanese DigiDestined interact with our two American DigiDestined. Any English dialogue is in bold. I hope you enjoy this chapter!

DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Kushyamon’s Lair

The great dark fortress stood tall and intimidating, casting shadows over all the nearby Digimon villages. The Dark Lord Kushyamon stared out lazily over his domain. He was a human looking Digimon like the Lords of the North, South, East and West. He was young in appearance like Byakkomon, but not as handsome. He had pasty pale skin that was almost bone white. His long greasy black hair was pulled back in a loose ponytail out of his face and revealed his inhumanly hard and angular chiseled features. His eyes were as black as coals and his mouth was a grim slash.

Crusademon appeared behind him, kneeling.

“My lord,” the Digimon said in his monotone voice. “Lady Aiyokumon was defeated by the DigiDestined.”

“I am aware of that. And the boy?” Kushyamon rasped, his voice high in pitch, but deep in tone. It sounded as if many voices of various tones were speaking in unison.

Crusademon had to suppress a shiver.
“He too perished, my Lord,” he answered, bracing himself for the coming rage.

The Dark Lord hissed and Crusademon could not help but flinch. The dark knight hadn’t known fear until he’d met Lord Kushyamon, and it was the Dark Lord’s anger that frightened him the most.

“I see,” Kushyamon growled. “That halts my plans for a short time. You say the boy has perished. What of the cargo he was unwittingly harboring?”

“Regrettably destroyed, my Lord,” Crusademon answered. “The Warrior of Light purified Lucemon’s data with his blade of light. The Dark Angel Digimon is no more.”

Kushyamon snarled. He had needed Lucemon’s dark energy, but it was no use getting upset over purified data. He still had the other dark lords from the world where that trash of data known as Gennai resided, but Lucemon had been by far the most powerful.

“How did the boy die?” he asked.

“He was pierced through the chest by the Warrior of Light’s blade and soon after impaled himself on Lady Aiyokumon’s sword in order to save the warrior from her wrath,” Crusademon bowed. “The DigiDestined cremated his body. There is nothing left. I checked the ashes myself.”

Kushyamon’s mouth was turned into a severe downward slash.

“How unfortunate. His corpse would have made for an entertaining puppet. Arukenimon!” he barked.

The spider woman appeared from the shadows.

“Yes, my Lord?” she inquired in her silky voice.

“You’ve just returned from watching the brats haven’t you? What are the DigiDestined up to now?” he demanded.

“They had an audience with Lord Byakkomon,” she answered promptly. “I couldn’t follow them in due to the Lord of the West’s high security, but I over heard something about a medallion. The Warrior of Lightening is in possession of it.”

“The Medallion of the West,” Kushyamon growled. “Byakkomon has made his move and sent the DigiDestined on a ridiculous mission to fulfill that prophecy.”

He suddenly smiled, revealing his pointed teeth and let out a loud, spine-chilling laugh. “Fine then! Let them try! They have no hope of fulfilling such a ridiculous prophesy without their precious Warrior of Flame. It might as well be a fairytale. There was nothing left of him right, Crusademon?”

“Yes, my Lord,” Crusademon vowed. “There was nothing left but ashes.”

Kushyamon cackled maliciously.

“Call the remaining Zaigou,” he ordered. “There are alterations to our plans to be made.”

Crusademon and Arukenimon bowed and left swiftly to follow his orders.

Kushyamon remained were he was and stared out in the direction of Lord Byakkomon’s realm, with a smiled pulling over his fanged teeth. It was time to make his first move against the so-called
“chosen saviors” of this forsaken world.

The Digital World: Location: The Northern Section of Sekizou Forest

JP was staring at the medallion Byakkomon had given him for what seemed like the hundredth time. He couldn’t believe that he had been entrusted with such a great responsibility. He had an even harder time believing that this little trinket could amplify his warrior spirit’s powers as well as the Digmon that shared the same properties he did. He had always been the skeptical one in his group, but someone had to question their actions. Just because Takuya and Koji were his group’s leaders, didn’t mean that JP didn’t feel any sort of responsibility as the oldest member of their group. In some ways he felt that he should be the leader, but he knew that it wasn’t age that made a leader. It was communication and people skills, and JP just wasn’t as strong in those areas as Koji was or Takuya had once been.

He was quiet as they all followed Tai and Izzi through the dense forest toward the northern realm of water and ice. Everyone was chatting in one of four groups, but he positioned himself alone at the back watching out for his friends. Zoe was with Sora, Rika, Mimi and Yolei giggling about something, Tommy was talking with Jeri, Mako, Ai, Suzie, Kenta, Kazu and Takato, while Koji remained up front talking to Tai, Matt, Joe, Henry and Izzi with Koichi tagging behind with Ryo, Davis, Ken, Kari, Cody and TK. JP couldn’t help but find it ironic seeing Kari talking cheerfully with the Dark Warrior. Koichi had befriended the DigiDestined of Light rather quickly after their little “misunderstanding” that had taken place only a few nights ago. He noticed that her boyfriend didn’t seem too happy about this though, so JP had decided to keep an eye on the blond boy wearing the tan fisherman’s hat.

JP couldn’t hold back a sigh. That’s all he ever seemed to do. Keep an eye on things. Out of all the Warriors he felt like he was the most unimportant and useless member of the team. Zoe was the only girl in their group and had no problem making her opinion heard, getting right into the thick of things. Tommy was the kid of the group and everyone felt the need to look after him like a kid brother and make sure he was all right. Koji had been the gang’s co-leader alongside Takuya and was now their most powerful fighter. Koichi was always looked after by his twin and everyone looked out for his well being due to his past slip into the “dark side,” as Takuya had once joked after watching way too much Star Wars. All JP had been able to do was go along with Takuya and Koji’s plans and provide the comic relief.

No one had really noticed him anymore once they had finished their first adventure in a Digital World except for Takuya, but he was dead now and ever since his death JP felt himself melt back into the shadows. No one saw him and when they did, they seemed surprised to see him. Tommy had confirmed this worrying theory of his that very morning when he hadn’t noticed JP join him by the pyre’s ashes until he’d spoken. Gaining the medallion hadn’t really changed anything either. But being practically invisible had its advantages. No one really bothered him and it gave him the advantage of being able to observe the other DigiDestined from the Tamers and Adventurers groups.

He was observing two boys in particular at the moment. They were part of Tai’s group, both blue-eyed blonds, but they didn’t appear to be related like Matt and TK were. They hadn’t joined any of the clustered groups ahead of them, sticking to the rear like he was, absorbed in their own conversation. He hadn’t really noticed them before since they seemed to prefer keeping to themselves, but what had caught his attention now was the fact that they were currently speaking in a foreign language he recognized as English. He came to the conclusion that they were American from the look of them and the sound of their accent. He was grateful that he was one
quarter American on his mother’s side and had felt the need to learn the language in order to converse well with his English-speaking grandparents. JP tried to remember the two American’s names while he listened in on their conversation, surprised that it wasn’t idle chatter.

“I wonder what we’re going to do after we gather the other three medallions,” the blond with the Betamon mused.

“Probably try to take down whatever members of the Zaigou we haven’t run into and have defeated by then,” the other sighed. “I doubt that the enemy will leave us alone until we get them all. Who knows how long it will take? I bet that they’re gathering their forces as we speak.”

“Aren’t you the positive one, Willy?” his companion joked.

JP finally remembered. The one with the twin Digimon was called Willace. Once he remembered his name, he recalled that the other boy was Michael. He felt a little ridiculous for forgetting Michael’s name since the two had only been introduced a million times in the strange caves. He thought it was a little odd that all the DigiDestined were all native Japanese speakers except for those two. They were just as invisible to the others as he now was. Maybe you just had to be invisible to notice the invisible.

“Try thinking on the positive side for once,” Michael continued. “I know we don’t have much going for us, but Tai seems like a very capable leader. And we have one medallion already!”

Willace nodded.

“Relax Willace,” his Terriermon smiled.

“Michael is right,” it’s twin, Lopmon, agreed. “We have to believe that we can make it through this and find a way to return home.”

“It’s not that,” Willace sighed. “I’m just afraid of who else we might loose along the way. I didn’t know that Takuya guy, but it hurt to lose him. Do you get what I’m saying? It hurt to lose someone we didn’t even know that well, so what’s going to happen when we lose someone we do know? What if it’s Davis next? Or Mimi? Will we be able to keep it together? I don’t know how the Warriors group can move on so easily.”

JP decided that it was time to enter the conversation and make his presence known. He had begun to feel a connection to the two boys because he shared many of the same concerns, but he didn’t want them to misunderstand him or the other Warrior DigiDestined.

“It is not that we have moved on,” JP said slowly, making sure what he said made sense. It had been a while since he had spoken English, but it was quickly coming back to him. “We are all just trying to… cope in our own way.”

Willace and Michael were startled. Not because JP had joined them – they had noticed him trailing nearby in for the last couple of minutes – but because they hadn’t expected him to know English that well.

“You speak English?” Michael gasped.

“Sorry,” JP laughed. “I didn’t mean to upset you.”
“No!” Willace quickly assured him. “I just hope we didn’t say anything that upset you.”

“Yeah,” Michael agreed. “It’s not like we’re speaking English because we don’t want to be over heard. It’s just easier for us. We didn’t know that anyone other than Mimi knew English.”

“We can speak in Japanese if you’d like,” Willace suggested, quickly switching languages.

JP shook his head.

“I’m good,” he shrugged. “Speaking in English doesn’t bother me.”

“You do appear to be fluent,” Michael smiled. “You speak our language a lot better than we can speak yours!”

Willace laughed, agreeing whole-heartedly. It was hard keeping up with all the Japanese lately, and it gave them a headache trying to stay focused on understanding what was being said all day long. That was why the two Americans had bonded and became close. They didn’t have to speak a different language to understand each other. It excited them that, aside from Mimi, another DigiDestined knew English. It was true that some of the others, like Izzi, Yolei and Rika, knew basic English, but not enough to hold a long-standing conversation. They asked him how he learned English, and he explained about his grandparents. They later explained that they were actually part of an American DigiDestined group and not the Japanese team.

“So you guys aren’t really part of Tai’s group?” JP asked.

“No,” Michael shook his head. “I’m a friend of Mimi’s from New York. Before coming to Japan I’d only met Davis twice. Once in the real world, but the first time was with Yolei, Cody, TK and Kari at a diner in the Digital World. I’d heard of the others through them.”

“I didn’t know any of the older original DigiDestined,” Willace sighed. “Back when I was living in Colorado, Kokomon – who’s Lopmon now – had been infected with a virus and suddenly disappeared. I moved to New York a few years later and he found me again, but his data was corrupted. He fought with Terriermon and that’s what attracted TK and Kari’s attention to me. I saw them for the first time from the other side of a chain link fence, but I ran away from them. Kokomon had told me to go back to the beginning so I went back to Colorado, warning TK and Kari not to follow me. I ended up hitchhiking once I ran out of money for transportation and that’s how I met Davis, Yolei and Cody who were also hitchhiking. TK and Kari had called them over to the states to meet up with them because Kari had thought that I needed help. I didn’t know that anyone else had or even knew about Digimon before I met them. I was so used to taking care of things on my own and consequently never have been part of a team before. They helped me save Kokomon, but he… died in the end.”

“But I came back to you Willace,” Lopmon smiled.

Willace smiled back, patting both of his Digimon’s heads.

“Yes you did.” he smiled sadly, and then looked back to JP. “I also heard about the others from Davis, but it wasn’t until a few hours before ending up here that I’d met any of them. Davis had invited me to Japan for their DigiDestined anniversary so I’d bought a plane ticket, but I
don’t know how Mimi knew who I was since we’d never met.”

Michael laughed.

“Mimi’s got her sources,” he smiled. “Even I knew about you from her, but of course I got my information second hand.”

“Wait,” JP frowned. “You mean you two didn’t know each other even though you live in the same area?”

“Nope,” Willace shook his head, a rueful smile gracing his features. “We live in different areas in the state of New York, not in the actual city that you might be thinking of. I met Michael at the airport just before we boarded, but neither of us knew the other was a DigiDestined until Mimi showed up and recognized me somehow.”

“Kari must have taken pictures of your adventure,” Michael shrugged. “She could have shown them to Mimi and that’s how she recognized you.”

Willace shrugged.

“It’s possible,” JP grinned, noticing the camera hanging around the girl’s neck even as they spoke.

“Say JP,” Michael said, catching the big boy’s attention. “Do you mind if I ask you something?”

JP shook his head.

“Before Lord Byakkomon gave you that medallion,” the American started slowly, “what was that look about? The look you guys shared before he “found you a worthy candidate?””

JP shivered involuntarily.

“Sorry,” he muttered. “It was really strange. When he looked into my eyes it was like he could see right through me. It kinda felt like he was rummaging around in my head looking for something. I was reliving some rather random memories at the time too, like he was pulling them up to view for himself. Like he was trying to find out what kind of person I was. It felt as if he was doing it for hours even though I knew it was only for a minute or two.”

Willace and Michael traded uneasy glances, not liking the idea of having someone roaming around in their minds.

“But I suppose I satisfied him,” JP let out a shaky laugh. “He said so himself before giving me the medallion.”

The three boys and their Digimon eagerly moved the conversation in a different direction to how Willace could tell his Terriermon and Lopmon apart from Henry and Suzie’s.

“Simple,” Lopmon giggled. “Suzie’s Lopmon is a girl and I’m a boy.”

“And I don’t go around saying ‘Momentai’ like that Terriermon does. What does that word mean anyway?” Terriermon huffed.

“Something like “Hakunamatata” I’m sure,” Michael shrugged.

“Hakunamatata,” Willace chuckled. “Haven’t you ever seen the Lion King?”

“Once,” JP said, putting on his exaggerated thoughtful face. “When I was five I believe. It had some catchy songs in it.”

It was then that Willace and Michael, accompanied by their Digimon, decided to breakout into a soft chorus of ‘Hakunamatata.’ JP even jumped in once the words came back to him. It earned them a few looks from some of the others nearby, but that just made it even funnier and they cracked up into silent hysterical fits of laughter.

That night when they settled down, the trio bedded down together. Mimi had come over earlier to chat for a little while, but had rejoined the girls around the fire for dinner. JP kept them all entertained with his simple magic tricks and Terriermon and Lopmon told jokes. Betamon was a silent Digimon, but he told a joke or two whenever Terriermon and Lopmon had to stop and think of another round of jokes. Their new companionship didn’t go unnoticed.

Koichi had left his twin and the others for a while and joined them. They greeted him warmly, but had to revert back to Japanese for conversation since Koichi didn’t speak any English.

“So what brings you out here?” JP joked, gesturing to how separated from the main group they seemed to be.

“It was getting rather crowded,” Koichi sighed.

“Ah, I forgot,” JP grinned. “You’re not a crowd person. Got a little claustrophobic did you?”

“Something like that,” Koichi grinned back sheepishly.

“Well welcome to our small band of misfits!” Michael joked. “Maybe we should start making T-shirts.”

Betamon rolled his eyes, smiling to himself. Willace even cracked a smile at the bad joke while his twin Digimon snickered. But they certainly were the misfits of the large group. It was inevitable that there would be a few in this large collection of groups. Michael and Willace were considered misfits due to their different nationality. JP was just simply the odd man out of his group now. Koichi was technically still on the outs with some of the other DigiDestined due to his warrior’s element, but he was a misfit by nature and preference, preferring smaller closely-knit groups over large expansive ones. The four bonded well that night and amused themselves by trying to teach Koichi English. He was an amazingly quick learner and knew how to say some basic things by the time they decided to get some sleep. Michael, Willace and JP were surprised that Koichi slept with their group instead of rejoining Koji, as was the quiet boy’s habit, but didn’t make a fuss since they had become such good friends.

JP was part of the final watch shift for the night so he left them an hour before daybreak to relieve Zoe. Willace was the next one to wake up that morning and watched the sleeping forms of his remaining companions as he letting his thoughts wander over these new friends. He’d liked Michael ever since they’d met, but he was glad that he now had someone else to talk to. JP was certainly an interesting fellow though. Willace liked the boy’s subtle and implied humor. JP had a surprising amount of knowledge about all sorts of trivial things and turned out to be quiet the conversationalist. He hadn’t noticed any of these things about the rather large boy before now due to his backseat placement in the Warriors group. The same could be said about Koichi. Both Warriors had seemed like such quiet persons, but last night they had been full of comments and
engaging conversation. Even if Koichi really was quiet by nature, he still talked more that night than Willace had heard him speak throughout their entire adventure so far.

“Whatcha thinkin’ about Willace?” Terriermon asked him.

Willace looked down at his faithful Digimon partner and smiled.

“I was just thinking about how nice it is to be around friends,” he said simply. “For the longest time it’s just been the three of us. You, me and Lopmon.”

“Yeah,” the Digimon nodded. “I personally like JP. He’s pretty fun and knows about the strangest things!”

Willace chuckled.

“That’s just what I was thinking,” he whispered.

Lopmon was beginning to rouse next to his twin, snuggling into Willace’s side in response. Willace stroked Lopmon’s forehead around the sensitive spots at the base of the three horns, making the brown and pink Digimon giggle. Terriermon decided that he too wanted some attention and positioned himself near Willace’s free hand to be stroked. The human partner complied with a sigh. Having twin Digimon meant having to treat both the same, never favoring one over the other. Sometimes it was a bit of a hassle, but he usually managed. He was glad he had both of them.

“Good… morning.” Koichi’s voice mumbled.

Willace looked up from his two partners and saw the boy rub his eyes tiredly.

“Not a morning person, huh?” Willace chuckled.

Koichi gave him a blank stare and Willace realized that he’d automatically responded in English.

“Sorry,” Willace laughed. “Good morning.”

“Good morning,” Koichi mumbled again, this time in Japanese. “What did you say in English just now?”

“Ah,” Willace smiled. “I said ‘not a morning person, huh?’ Sorry. You greeted me in English. I forgot that you didn’t speak it much.”

Koichi chuckled, shaking his head.

“No, I’m not much of a morning person. I’m glad that I remembered how to say ‘good morning,’ but you lost me when you responded in English as well. I only caught the word ‘morning’ and that was it.”

Willace rose from his spot and helped Koichi up as well, the boy still looking a little tired. They started to head deeper into the camp.

“Should we go save JP from early morning guard duty?” Willace wondered aloud.

“Not without me you will not,” they heard Michael grumble, joining them from behind.

“Willace!” Terriermon called, dragging his sleepy twin brother behind him. “Don’t leave without us!”
“Wait for me!” Betamon called out, scrambling after Michael.

Kochi and Willace chuckled as they paused, waiting for the stragglers. When they reached JP he was leaning against a tree, eyes shut.

“Sleeping on the job?” Michael called out teasingly.

Willace muttered the translation to Koichi.

JP opened one eye and grunted.

“It’s called resting. Besides, I was trying to get in tune with my warrior spirit while still in human form,” JP explained. “Takuya used to claim that he could to it, but I’m not sure how he managed. Not even Koji can do it.”

“Then why are you trying?” Michael asked.

Willace noticed that Koichi looked like he already understood why JP was doing it.

“I don’t know,” JP muttered. “I have been trying this even before Takuya passed away, but recently I guess I figured that if I could talk to the spirit of Beetlemon, then maybe he could tell me more about Agunimon and how he and the Legendary Warriors’ managed to live on as spirits even after they died. Maybe find out if Takuya turned into a spirit, as unlikely as that sounds.”

JP looked up at the clear sky, his hand wandering unconsciously to the medallion hanging around his neck. When he touched it he felt a spark. He yanked away his hand out of surprise, letting it sway across his chest.

“JP?” Koichi spoke out, concerned.

JP ignored him, carefully picking up the medallion again. An electric current seemed to flow down his arm and into his body.

‘He’s coming,’ Beetlemon’s voice echoed in his head.

JP was no longer with his friends and their Digimon. He was soaring over the treetops of the forest in an eastern direction to where it met the central plains. He spotted a blur heading speedily towards him, pausing for a moment before entering the forest. His Digimon spiritual instincts told him it was another Digimon, a powerful one with a human form much like Aiyokumon, making him another Zaigou, only this one was male in appearance. He looked down right angry, his all too handsome features contorted with rage. It didn’t take a genius to figure out he represented ‘wrath.’

JP was suddenly back at the campsite, panting. Willace and Michael were calling out to him, one on either side, and Koichi stood directly in front of him. The other DigiDestined had awoken by their frantic calls and hurried over to see what was wrong. JP didn’t bother with words. He gently pushed Michael and Willace away and Koichi automatically took a couple steps back. He pulled out his D-Tector and quickly spirit evolved into Beetlemon. This alarmed everyone.

“JP, what the hell?!” Zoe yelled at him.

“Wrath is coming,” was all he said in response, angling his body toward the east.

Koichi didn’t question him, quickly spirit evolving himself into Löwemon. Koji, Zoe, and Tommy reluctantly did the same. Izzi was the one to understand the significance of what JP said before anyone else did.
“Another one of the Zaigou is coming,” he cried out. “Tentomon, you’ve got to digivolve!”

The Digimon was quick to follow his partner’s order.

“Tentomon Digivolve to!” he cried as he became engulfed in a yellow glow. “Kabuterimon!”

“JP’s got the Medallion of the West!” Izzi shouted over the hum of Kabuterimon’s beating wings. “You’re an insect type like Beetlemon so you should be able to Digivolve to your ultimate level!”

Kabuterimon complied once again and evolved into a giant red beetle-like Digimon called MegaKabuterimon.

“Izzi!” Tai called out urgently. “Who else can digivolve to a higher level?”

“How much time do we have?” Izzi called over to Beetlemon who was still staring off into the east.

“Two minutes,” the Warrior of Lightening muttered.

Everyone quickly got behind the waiting battle ready warriors but Tai had to drag along Izzi who was frantically pulling up the Digimon analyzer Gennai had installed into his laptop years ago.

“Izzi,” Tai growled.

“Just a nanosecond,” Izzi growled back. “Got it! Only Guardromon can Digivolve to a higher level, but if Veemon and Armadillomon Armor Digivolve to Raidramon and Digmon, they should get a power boost since Raidramon’s an electric type and Digmon is an insect type. The same goes for Cyberdramon and Wormmon will get a boost if he digivolves into Stingmon.”

Kazu yipped and whipped out his digivice.

“Let’s go, Guardromon!” he hooted.

“Indeed,” his machine Digimon beeped. “Guardromon Digivolve to…Andromon!”

A fitter looking cyborg Digimon replaced the rather bulky Guardromon, his sensors automatically locking on to the oncoming enemy from the east. At Kazu’s command, he joined the Warrior DigiDestined, taking his place next to Beetlemon. Wormmon had Digivolved only a second behind the cyborg. The newly evolved Stingmon and a battle rearing Cyberdramon joined the front lines. Cody and Davis whipped out their D3s so that Veemon and Armadillomon could join them, but before they could do anything the Zaigou of Wrath appeared in the clearing.

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Who is this new Zaigou? What kind of powers is he capable of? Will the Medallion of the West be of any help? Find out next time of Digimon: Digital Monsters.

Chapter End Notes

Uh oh, cliffhanger! Sorry guys, but I had to do it. I wanted to bring the Digimon back into it a little more since I’ve been so focused on the DigiDestined and speak through some of the characters that have just kinda been there, but not involved. I hope I
accomplished that in this chapter. I'm gonna try to involve them a little more. So what
didja think? How'd I do? I hope I made it clear when they were speaking English, as
opposed to Japanese (what they really should be speaking).
Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The evil Lord Kushyamon doesn’t take the news of Aiyokumon’s demise well or the fact that he’s lost both Lucemon and Takuya for his plans. He sends for the rest of his Zaigou and proceeds to alter his plans to compensate for this new development and the arrival of the DigiDestined. Meanwhile, the DigiDestined are making their way to Himizu city in the north. JP bonds with the American DigiDestined from Tai’s world as fellow outsiders with Koichi joining them later that night. The next morning JP is trying to connect with the spirit of Beetlemon when he and the Medallion of the West react to the approach of the Zaigou of Wrath. JP manages to warn everyone in time to prepare for the confrontation.

Chapter Notes

Ok, probably one of my shortest chapter, but a lot still happens. I hope this doesn't come as a disappointment. This starts out in JP's perspective, but it kinda shifts to an overall detached perspective. The events in this chapter are the exact reasons i have for rating this story T because we get kinda graphic here (not that i haven't gotten graphic in earlier chapters).

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

The Digital World: Location: The Northern Region of Sekizou Forest

Beetlemon experienced a spine chilling sensation when the Zaigou entered the clearing. He could sense that this one was even more powerful than Aiyokumon, and far more intimidating. He doubted Tai could buy them time with idle chatter like he had the last time. At least there wasn’t a hostage situation this time around. That was the one thing going for them at the moment, but that could easily be altered if they let their guard down.

The Zaigou cocked his head to the side, his angry expression fading into a cold mask.

“Are you the DigiDestined?” he said in a deceptively soft and sweet voice. “Why, you’re no threat at all. But to have defeated my sister, Aiyokumon, you must be stronger than you look.”

Beetlemon tensed. Now he understood the enraged expression on the Zaigou’s face earlier. If this was Aiyokumon’s brother then they were in trouble.

“And you are?” Tai called out, angling himself out from behind a tensed Cyberdramon so that the Zaigou could see him. Agumon stuck to his human’s side, refusing to let his partner go out there
without him for protection.

The Zaigou’s full lips pulled back into a smile revealing sharp and perfectly white teeth.

“I am called Iramon,” he greeted with a bow, but when he righted himself again he was back to looking angry. “The Zaigou of Wrath.”

“Ira is Italian for Wrath,” Kazemon muttered to Tai.

“So I see,” Tai called out to the Zaigou in a smooth matter, astonishing his companions once again. “Your title suits you well.”

Iramon let out a cold laugh.

“Aren’t you an amusing one,” he snickered.

“Lady Aiyokumon thought so too when we sat down for tea,” Tai actually smiled.

“Ah,” Iramon growled, his tone disapproving. “You spoke with her, did you? My sister always had a thing for playing with her prey before she struck. I however…”

Beetlemon tensed, seeing the slight movement the Zaigou made and felt the medallion around his neck warm under his Digimon Warrior’s guise. Raw power and energy pulsed through his veins and he was nearly winded by its sudden surge, but he held out, feeling stronger than he’d ever felt. He could feel the other insect and electric Digimon behind him undergo the same sudden power surge, a pleasant hum began thrumming in his chest.

“…will not bother with such trivialities,” Iramon continued, suddenly drawing twin blades from scabbards concealed behind him and lunged forward wickedly fast towards Tai. Agumon and the other Warriors reacted, but Beetlemon had seen the movement before any of them and reacted first. With his new strength and energy, Beetlemon was quick enough to meet and successfully block the coming blades with his armored forearms before they could imbed themselves in Tai’s side. He grunted with effort as he shoved the Zaigou back. Once Iramon was forced away the other powered up Digimon chose to attack. MegaKabuterimon sent a “Horn Buster!” at him, but he quickly sidestepped. Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon tried to gang up on him, but he blocked their attacks just as easily.

Tai, realizing that the tiny clearing was too confined for everyone to battle and that only the powered up Digimon and the Warriors had any chance, quickly ordered everyone else to move out. Some of the other Digimon Digivolved to champion level to provide speedy transportation and extra protection while the DigiDestined fled north in hopes of reaching the edge of the Northern boarder that marked the start of Lord Genbumon’s realm and, consequently, another Zaigou’s hunting ground. With Lobomon and Tai’s OK, MegaKabuterimon left the battlefield and carried off almost two thirds of the DigiDestined and their remaining partners while Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon tried to hold Iramon off with the Warriors. Greymon, Growlmon, Birdramon, Kyubimon, and Garurumon carried the remaining few that MegaKabuterimon couldn’t carry. Cody and Davis finally had the chance to have their partner Digimon Armor Digivolve into Raidramon and Digmon before Tai ordered Cody to ride behind Matt and TK on Garurumon, and Davis to join him on Greymon.

With a final encouragement from Cody and Davis, Digmon and Raidramon quickly joined the battle and managed to knock Iramon away from poor Kumamon who was trying to use his slide evolution to become Korikakumon. Beetlemon was getting right in there, saving Kazemon from what would have surely been a fatal blow from the twin blades. The Warriors were all changing
into their beast spirit forms, but Beetlemon remain as he was. If he became MetalKabutarimon then he’d lose his speedy mobility in this small forest clearing and in such a close range battle that could prove to be a fatal mistake. Digmon and Andromon were launching missiles and drills whenever Iramon managed to disengage from whomever he was fighting and Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Raidramon were quick to block any of the Zaigou’s attempts to disengage from the battle completely and go after the fleeing DigiDestined.

The battle seemed to rage for hours when it was only mere minutes. Iramon didn’t appear to be losing any energy as the fight wore on and only Beetlemon and the other remaining Digimon were able to keep up with him. Everyone knew they were in trouble when the other Warriors were beginning to revert back to their human spirits. Beetlemon was suddenly trying to be everywhere as he attempted to protect and shield his exhausted comrades.

“Guys, you have gotta get outta here!” Beetlemon roared as he thrust Iramon back from Kazemon for what seemed like the hundredth time. “Get out of here while you can still retain your Spirit forms!”

“No, JP,” Lobomon shook his head, panting. “We… can’t leave you here.”

“That’s bull and you know it,” Beetlemon growled. “You guys are done for if you stick around any longer. I’m the only one who stands a chance! Let me, Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon handle this.”

“Hey!” Raidramon barked before sending a rather excessive blast at Iramon. The Zaigou of Wrath faltered for a moment from the blast and that gave Cyberdramon the opportunity he needed to follow up with a series of his own blasts and a rapid series of attacks from Stingmon while Andromon covered him.

“You left me out!” Raidramon growled once he was sure Cyberdramon and Stingmon could handle the Zaigou for the moment.

“And me!” Digmon added gruffly before firing more drill missiles in an attempt to trip the Zaigou up so that Cyberdramon could get another good blow in.

“Yes,” Beetlemon said evenly. “Because I need you two to help them catch up with the others. You can rejoin us once you do that. Please.”

Raidramon growled, sharing a look with his fellow Armored Digimon, knowing full well that he wouldn’t be able to rejoin the fight if he had passengers of his own to carry, but nodded his head. Digmon only sighed; knowing full well that he’d wasn’t as combative or fast as Stingmon, Andromon and Cyberdramon, nor as powerful even with the energy boost of the medallion. Most of his attacks were long range. JP was asking him to go back with the others as back up and to cover their retreat.

Lobomon was going to protest, but a tired and spent looking Löwemon urged him onto Raidramon’s back. The pouting Armored Digimon took off once they were on. Kazemon picked up Kumamon and took to the sky with Digmon to follow them from above, but she hesitated and gave Beetlemon a concerned look.

“Go!” he roared at her, firing a blast at Iramon who had finally disengaged from Cyberdramon. Andromon rushed forward to aid him.

“Just come back!” Kazemon cried, tightening her grip on Kumamon and took off after the others, Digmon bringing up the rear.
Beetlemon nodded grimly even though he knew that she couldn’t see him anymore.

“Are you done?” Iramon sneered, shaking off Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon. “Is the Warrior of Thunder free to do as he pleases?”

Beetlemon braced himself as Iramon broke past the other three Digimon. He met the Zaigou blow for blow, but was beginning to take some minor hits himself. Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon got in there as best they could, but Iramon always threw them off to engage with Beetlemon again. They were all beginning to wear down and Beetlemon knew that they needed to end this quickly. He thrust Iramon back once again and sent his most powerful blast at him while screaming at Stingmon, Cyberdramon and Andromon to do the same. They bombarded attack upon attack at Iramon until they were exhausted and nearly spent, waiting for the dust to settle, hoping against hope that they had at least wounded the Zaigou.

But it was not meant to be. Wrath’s signature twin blades flew out of the dust cloud. One hit Andromon square in the shoulder armor making him spin around and crumple to the ground, reverting him back to Guardromon. It’s twin clipped Cyberdramon in the side before striking home in Stingmon’s chest. Cyberdramon fell to his knees clutching his wound. It wasn’t a major hit and he didn’t revert to any lower level, but he was paralyzed and couldn’t move an inch. Stingmon wasn’t as lucky and dedigivolved all the way back to Minomon. He whimpered on the ground, injured and unable to move. Guardromon found that he couldn’t move either, concluding that here had to have been a paralyzing sedative of some kind applied on the blade’s edge. Beetlemon had just barely registered this turn of events when he was suddenly gripped by the throat and lifted a foot off the ground.

“So you are the Warrior of Thunder,” Iramon scoffed. “You’re not much to look at. Why would that idiot Byakkomon appoint you the holder of the West Medallion? You are not entirely pathetic though since you have lasted this long.”

Beetlemon’s heart sank. Iramon was radiating such power. He had been merely toying with them the entire time. While they were sporting wounds and bruises from the battle, Iramon remained unscathed despite all the blows he had taken. This irritated Beetlemon. He wasn’t about to die and let this Zaigou get away without a scratch. But that was the fact that stunned him. He was still alive. Why? To what purpose would sparing his life serve the Zaigou of Wrath? If he was going to be killed, he’d rather have it done with instead of having it dragged out. Beetlemon slowly gathered his remaining energy into one of his fists. He didn’t have much, but he hoped it’d be enough for what he had in mind.

Iramon was still criticizing him, calling a useless lump and a sorry excuse for a warrior.

“If I’m so useless then why haven’t you killed me yet?” Beetlemon retorted.

Iramon’s eyes narrowed.

“Are you that eager to die, brat?” he sneered.

“No,” Beetlemon said offhandedly. “It’s just that I’d rather you just get it over with instead of bore me to death. I’m practically falling asleep up here.”

His sarcastic comments were lost on the Zaigou. Minomon, Guardromon and Cyberdramon couldn’t believe what they were hearing. If JP died, then that’d be two of the DigiDestined gone and that was something that they just couldn’t allow. Cyberdramon tried to fight off the numbness of the narcotic, but still couldn’t move. Guardromon wasn’t doing any better and Minomon was practically next to useless as an In-Training level Digimon. Iramon let out a long laugh before
crushing Beetlemon’s windpipe enough to render him speechless for a few seconds.

“I’ll tell you what,” Iramon sneered. “I’m going to let you live. For now. I had intended to do so from the beginning. I was sent as a scout for the others and was not given any order to kill you. Why do you think I simply wounded your comrades when I could have killed them so easily? Surely you must sense how I am much stronger than my dear dead sister. Besides, I think I rather like you an’ it’d be boring if you simply died.”

“I—cough—thought you didn’t play with—cough—your prey… like Aiyokumon,” Beetlemon choked.

“I don’t,” Iramon said simply. “I just don’t see the point in killing you at the moment. I’ll face you again and hopefully you’ll prove to be much more of a challenge by then.”

“Don’t underestimate me,” Beetlemon growled, using the last reserves of his strength to thrust his energized fist into Iramon’s stomach.

Iramon let him go with a gasp and backed up a couple of steps clutching his smoking middle. He let out a loud and angry growl. When he removed his arms from his stomach his clothes were torn and angry looking burns surrounded freshly healing white scars shaped like jagged lighting bolts. They stretched from the point of impact where his bellybutton should be, spidering out and up to just centimeters below his heart. Iramon let out a venomous hiss and glared at Beetlemon. Beetlemon felt his warrior’s spirit wanting to fade, but he held on. He did not want to show weakness to this vile Digimon. Iramon suddenly let out a spine chilling cackle and allowed it to become a booming laugh.

“Ha!” the Zaigou of Wrath cried. “I’ll admit you got me. It’s not often that I get wounded, but I’ll really have to pay you back for what you’ve just done.”

His face contorted in anger again. Beetlemon’s attack hadn’t seriously wounded him, but it had hurt his pride as a Zaigou. He let his natural emotion take over and he reclaimed his discarded twin blades, raising them above his head. Beetlemon had crumpled to the ground when Iramon had released him and now he lay on his stomach, his back exposed openly for the blow. But Iramon didn’t want to settle for the back. No, he wanted the front end and return the blow where it was due. He mercilessly kicked Beetlemon over until the defeated warrior lay helpless before him. He had to reign in his anger a bit so that he could be sure not to kill him.

Beetlemon could not hold back the scream when the twin blades slashed across his own stomach. Minomon, Cyberdramon and Guardromon had to look away as Beetlemon lost the ability to hold his spirit form. JP now lay bruised and beaten below the towering Zaigou. The armor of Beetlemon had prevented any breaking of the skin, but a large nasty ‘X’ shaped bruise was blooming across his mid section underneath his blue and yellow jumper. This angered the Zaigou of Wrath further. He had wanted the warrior to lie bleeding before him begging for the end, which he would mercilessly deny. He reasoned with himself that he had no choice but to raise he blades once more. He took in the sight of the rather large boy and decided that one blade should suffice. He hadn’t been given the order to kill him so he sheathed one of his blades in its scabbard and raised the other high. He reveled in JP’s scream as blade sliced flesh. There was now a line of red right through the center of the ‘X’ shaped bruise parallel to the boy’s hips.

“Don’t worry boy,” he sneered. “I was careful not to damage any of your organs. You will live if you receive proper treatment in time. You have a few hours.”

He couldn’t help but look at his own recent battle scars and was suddenly hit with a marvelously malicious idea. He reached down and yanked JP up by his hair so that he could analyze his face.
Despite being slightly over weight, he judged that JP was actually quite a handsome looking human with a rugged yet sweet sort of look about him. Iramon hated sweet. He’d soon fix that. He sheathed his blade and drew a small knife. He raised the sharp blade to the boy’s left temple and lightly inserted its point. He heard the boy hiss as the blade was slowly dragged down his temple to his eyebrow. Then he twisted the blade and pulled it back up a bit before twisting it back down, across the eye, and stopping at the side of the nose. Now a light red cut shaped like a lightning bolt was lined on the boy’s face. But it didn’t bleed enough for Iramon’s liking. He tightened his grip on JP’s hair and slashed down, up a little and back down on the boy’s face to deepen the cut. JP’s screams filled the air and Iramon let him go, satisfied that he’d paid the boy back in full for the his own marks.

“Consider us even, young Warrior of Thunder. I certainly look forward to facing you again. I have no doubt that you will become a formidable opponent. Just don’t let any of the other Zaigou kill you before then.”

Iramon finally took his leave, dashing off the way he’d come.

JP didn’t know what hurt more, the blow to his stomach or the new carving on the left side of his face. His consciousness began to fade in and out with the loss of blood. Now that the Zaigou was gone, so were the mysterious effects of his twin blades. Cyberdramon was finally able to move again and so was Guardromon. While Guardromon tried to detect the whereabouts of the other DigiDestined, Cyberdramon was careful to look over JP’s wounds. He did his best to treat the injured warrior but he was a fighter, not a healer. Guardromon suggested that they pad his interior and rest JP inside of him while they traveled.

Cyberdramon then filled Guardromon’s insides with leaves and made a sort of nest out of the blankets from JP’s traveling bag that had been conveniently left behind with them during the battle. Inside the pack were some basic bandages and they applied them as best they could. Joe had the more advanced medical supplies with him so they knew they’d have to quickly rejoin the others if they were to prevent JP from bleeding to death. Iramon had said that he’d have a few hours, but they knew better than to trust an enemy. JP moaned when Cyberdramon lowered him inside Guardromon as carefully as he could. Minomon went inside with JP, to keep pressure on the stomach wound. The boy just barely fit and it made the three of them worry if Guardromon could take off with such a heavy burden. It proved to be no trouble at all though when Guardromon engaged his extra thrusters and took to the skies, still receiving a bit of a power boost from the medallion. He was mindful of his important burden and flew as smoothly as he could.

It was twilight when they finally caught up to everyone else at the edge of the forest. They all surged forward to greet the two battle weary Digimon. The Warriors demanded to know where JP was and were relieved to hear that he was resting inside Guardromon. But that relief soon turned to anguish when Tai and Matt gently hauled the injured and unconscious warrior out of the robot Digimon. In spite of Minomon being there to keep pressure on the wound, blood had pooled in various places inside Guardromon’s armored body and the entire front of JP’s jumpsuit was drenched in it. The cruel engraving on the left side of his face alarmed everyone and Joe got to work immediately on the wounds. Willace and Michael offered their assistance as they tried to revive their friend. Once JP was patched up to the best of Joe’s abilities, Joe moved on to taking care of Minomon and Cyberdramon’s wounds under the watchful eyes of Ryo and Ken while Kazu and Kenta were doing their best to clean out Guardromon. Everyone was shaken by their encounter with Iramon and few slept well that night.

JP didn’t wake up the next morning but he was still in obvious pain and groaned in a now restless sleep. Joe became alarmed when he realized that JP had a fever.
“He needs proper medical treatment,” he explained to Tai and Koji. “There is only so much I can
do out here without a proper sanitized facility.”

Koji paled a little as he realized that they could lose JP. After losing Takuya, Koji didn’t know if
he or the others could stand to lose another friend so soon.

“We need to get to Himizu City then,” Tai sighed. “And fast. Do you think JP can hold out until
then?”

Joe pursed his lips together as he glanced at the feverish boy. Zoe was kneeling next to him,
dabbing his forehead with the cool water Tommy had fetched for her. Koichi was standing nearby
talking with Michael and Wallace, casting occasional glances at them.

“It all depends on his fever,” Joe sighed. “If it breaks, we’ve got some time, but I say we treat this
as if it were the worse case scenario. I give it two days before his fever gets the best of him. As
Iramon promised Cyberdramon and Guardianson, none of his internal organs were damaged, but
he’s currently suffering from some minor internal damage that I have no way of treating, and his
fever is lowering the defenses of his immune system that he really needs at the moment to fight off
any infection in his wounds. We have to hope that there are healers of some sort at our
destination.”

Tai nodded grimly and quickly had everyone pack up the camp while he and Izzi determined the
best route to the northern city of Himizu. Neither of them liked the look of the city’s surrounding
landscape. The map depicted a wasteland of sheer ice surrounding the city and dozens of lakes and
many other water features on the way there. Never the less, the Digimon packed up and
moved on. JP was settled into a stretcher that Michael and Wallace had fashioned the night before.
The two Americans carried it between them now with the help of their Digimon partners. Guilmon
and Cyberdramon took a turn an hour later and others volunteered to have a turn the hours after
that.

Their progress was agonizingly slow as they were forced to travel around lakes and find safe
passage across rivers and bogs they came across while JP’s fever got steadily worse. Joe did his
best to curb the fever’s progress, but no matter what ministrations he provided it didn’t make a
difference. JP was now drenched in sweat and had begun tossing in his sleep in the stretcher.

“Stop!” Joe finally cried, halting Matt and Tai who were currently carrying the stretcher. They
lowered it and did their best to hold JP down as Joe checked the bandages to make sure the
stomach wound hadn’t opened again. It hadn’t, but Joe knew that the stretcher wasn’t going to cut
it anymore. They needed to get JP to a treatment facility fast. Joe checked JP’s vitals and became
increasingly concerned when he found how faded the pulse was.

“We need to get him there now Tai,” Joe sighed. “He’s getting worse. At this rate he won’t make it
through the night.”

Tai sighed and ran a hand through his thick bushy locks.

“What do we do?” Koji whispered, looking at JP.

“The only thing we can do,” Tai sighed. “Some of us are going to have to travel ahead of the
others. I suggest that we send Sora, Joe, Jeri and Henry out with the younger ones, Ai, Mako and
Suzie, and have Tommy and Zoe go with them in case they run into any of the Zaigou. Birdramon
can carry JP securely in her talons so that he doesn’t open his wounds. Koji, you and I’ll hang back
to take care of the others. How does that sound to you?”
Koji nodded. It made sense to send the little ones on ahead with JP where they’d be safe. That way everyone could travel faster and JP could receive the treatment he needed. When Tai explained the plan to everyone else, the agreement was unanimous. Biyomon Digivolved and became Birdramon. She stood on one foot while she gently picked J.P. up off the stretcher. She took off, hovering just a couple feet off the ground so that others could board. Sora helped Jeri, Ai and Mako onto one foot and pulled herself, Henry and Suzie onto the other. Joe and Gomamon boarded Leomon’s back while Lopmon, Terriermon, and Impmon settled snuggly next to their Tamers. Zoe and Tommy Spirit Evolved into Kazemon and Kumamon. Kazemon picked up her snow bear friend as she launched herself into the sky after Birdramon. They could see Leomon tear after them on foot. The remaining DigiDestined waved after them, wishing them luck. Koji and Koichi could only hope that their friends got to Himizu in time to help JP.

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Will JP recover from his fever and wounds? What does Iramon have in store for our Warrior of Lightening should he survive? Find out on the next Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

So what’d ya think? Am I getting too dark? I hope not because this is only the beginning.
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The DigiDestined face Iramon, the Zaigou of Wrath, who turns out to be Aiyokumon’s brother. The Warrior DigiDestined, Cyberdramon, Stingmon, Andromon, Digmon, and Raidramon all stay behind to fight Iramon while the other DigiDestined retreat. The other Warriors aren’t holding up too well, however, so JP tells them to retreat with Raidramon and Digmon, leaving him, Cyberdramon, Andromon and Stingmon to face Iramon alone. It turns out that Iramon was merely playing with JP and the others, easily sideling the three Digimon and severely injures JP after he managed to get one final scaring blow in on Iramon’s stomach. Iramon pays him back in kind with a slash to the stomach and a lightning bolt-shaped cut over his left eye. Iramon then retreats. The three Digimon grab JP and return to the DigiDestined so that his injuries can be treated. JP contracts a fever, however, and Joe fears that he might not make it to Himizu at the rate they’re going. The group makes the decision to send some of their group on ahead in hopes of getting JP to Himizu in time to receive proper treatment.

Chapter Notes

This chapter starts out in Henry’s POV, but most of the chapter is in TK’s. I thought it was time for him to have a little chat with out Warrior of Darkness. I spent a long time on this chapter and in many ways am still unsatisfied because it's a load of fluff. If you find anything confusing please let me know and I will do my best to clear it up and fix it ASAP. Just to be clear, Yukimon and Otokomon are of my own invention. The Otokomon are this world’s version of the unknown race that Gennai belongs to which is why they are referred to as ”Gennais” until they learn their proper name. Because Henry is so unfamiliar with Gennai he assumes that he and the Otokomon are some kind of Digimon. I hope you enjoy and please review!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

The Digital World: Location: The Skyline Outside Himizu City

Henry knew that the task at hand was an important one but he couldn’t help but marvel at the scenery below. The monotonous icy tundra they’d been traveling over for the last three hours was now giving way to sloping drifts and rising plains as the rushed DigiDestined swooped into view of the great city below. The earthen city of Sekizou had been made of rock, but Himizu City was made entirely of crystal and ice. It glittered and shined in the setting sun, casting crimson rainbows across the landscape. Suzie’s eyes had nearly bugged out of her head when she tried to look at everything at once. Henry had to actually restrain her when she started to lean over Birdramon’s
clawed foot to get a better view. He saw Sora cast them an amused smile as she too turned back to look at the amazing city.

He could hear the shocked exclamations from the city’s inhabitants below them, but Birdramon ignored it all and beelined it straight for the crystal palace at the center of the city. Leomon and his two passengers were right below them, racing and dodging obstacles while Kazemon and Kumamon flew just behind Birdramon’s left wing. Sora pointed out a “welcoming committee” lining the upper balcony near the front of the castle. Birdramon flew where her partner gestured and Leomon was allowed to go through the palace grounds by the guards without a fuss. They were obviously expected.

“Pwetty Castle,” Susie squealed in Henry’s arms as Birdramon banked for a landing. Lopmon and Terriermon nodded in wordless agreement. Ai and Mako seemed to be cooing similar statements to Jeri and Impmon, but Henry couldn’t be sure over the howl of the wind of their decent.

Waiting for them was the oldest looking “man” any of them had ever seen. He had a snow-white beard that came down to his waist and a full head of thin hair that came down to the back of his knees. He was wearing white-blue robes, silver bangles on both wrists, a silver crown upon his head, and a silver medallion around his neck.

“He must be Lord Genbumon,” Sora breathed.

Henry nodded in agreement.

Birdramon hovered above the balcony, unsure of how to land with JP in her grasp. Genbumon seemed to be aware of their situation and motioned for four of his “men” behind him to take JP from the bird Digimon. After getting an OK from Sora Birdramon complied and gently released the critical conditioned Warrior into the waiting arms. As she did this, Leomon vaulted over the balcony and Kazemon came in for her own landing to put down Kumamon. Sora told Henry that the “men” that took JP looked incredibly like young versions of Gennai from her Digital World, only with slightly different facial characteristics. He took her word for it since he’d neither met this Gennai person nor was he used to seeing Digimon that looked so human – if they were even Digimon at all.

Birdramon finally landed and waited for her passengers to disembark before she dedigivolved back into Biyomon. Kazemon and Kumamon also reverted back into their human forms. Joe and Gomamon hopped down from Leomon’s back and joined Henry and Sora.

“Your Warrior friend will be taken care of,” the old Digimon lord rasped in a soft, but strong voice. “Please follow me. There is much that needs to be discussed.”

Henry traded glances with Joe, Sora, Zoe and Jeri before following the old lord. He made sure he held his sister’s hand firmly. Jeri was doing the same with Ai and Mako. Joe and Gomamon took the lead with Sora and since Biyomon was worn out from the long flight, Sora carried her Digimon Partner in her arms. Zoe and Tommy fell in line just behind them. Henry and Suzie came next with Terriermon and Lopmon at their heels. Leomon didn’t seem as winded as Biyomon and, ever the bodyguard, faithfully followed Jeri and her charges, bringing up the rear.

Lord Genbumon and his guards led them through grand winding corridors and brought them to a study of some kind. He sat in a lavish high backed chair and gestured that they should do the same. The guards melted into the background as some tiny snowflake Digimon called Yukimon served them chocolate mint tea, sandwiches and teacakes. Lord Genbumon said that their talk could wait until they received news about JP. Suzie, Ai and Mako were then led to the back of the room by the cute Digimon, but still within view of Henry and Jeri. The little DigiDestined squealed with joy
as they played with the Yukimon. Henry couldn’t help but smile. Suzie seemed to be enjoying herself for the first time since they’d come to this world. Lopmon, Jeri and Impmon seemed to be thinking along the same lines. It was quiet while they sipped their mint chocolate tea and watched the little ones play. Finally one of the men, they were all beginning to unconsciously think of as “Gennais,” walked into the room and brought them news of JP’s condition. The “Gennais” were all typically tall, about 6 foot, fit framed, looked to be around 25 years old, had clear blue eyes, thin mouths, tight lips, straight noses, and all had a full head of rich brown hair. They even wore a white and blue-grey version of the robes that Sora and Joe had seen the young version of Gennai wear back in their world. The only unique feature about this “Gennai” was that his hair was a little longer than the others and was braided in the back.

“His wounds were deeper than they appeared,” the “Gennai” spoke in a clear deep voice. “We managed to break his fever and seal the stomach wound. The surrounding bruising has somewhat cleared but it’s still very tender and any strenuous activity could reopen the wound. As for the cut on the left side of his face, we were able to heal it, but I’m afraid it’s left a pretty gruesome scar. How long was it before he received any treatment?”

“A couple of hours according to Guardromon,” Joe sighed, pushing his glasses back up to the bridge of his nose. “I did the best I could do under the circumstances.”

The “Gennai” nodded.

“He’d be dead if you hadn’t treated him,” he said.

“You saved his life. The Otokomon here,” Lord Genbumon said gesturing to the “Gennais,” “are healers and keepers of knowledge. They are peaceful Digimon that were once native to woodlands and plains. They knew of all sorts of herbal properties and remedies there, but when Kushyamon appeared they fled up here to my domain where they learned of the healing properties of crystals and treated water.”

Joe nodded before turning to the Otokomon.

“Is there any chance that you could show me your methods?” he asked.

“You are a healer in your homeland?” the Otokomon asked.

“Sort of,” Joe answered. “I am in the process of becoming one.”

“I’m sure we can have that arranged,” Lord Genbumon stated. “But for now there are more important matters to discuss than healing methods. On your way here you were lucky not to run into Paressemon, the Zaigou of Laziness.”

“Sloth in the Seven Deadly Sins line up,” Zoe muttered under her breath.

“Paresse means Sloth in French,” Sora nodded.

“The guy can’t be too bad with a title like that,” Gomamon commented.

No one could tell if it was meant as a joke or not.

“Paressemon is not to be taken lightly,” Lord Genbumon said sternly, eyeing the joking Digimon. “She can be quite the sadist. She cares for nothing.”

“I take it she’s the Zaigou who has control over this land?” Sora asked.
The wizen Digimon lord nodded gravely.

“She is. I’m not as young as I once was, but I’ve got enough in me to keep this city peaceful. Like I said, she cares for nothing so she leaves us well enough alone, but don’t let her title fool you. She’s not lazy in the slightest. It’s merely her persona. She may not be as to the point as Iramon, but she doesn’t mess around like Aiyokumon. She’s the type to ask questions later.”

“Sound’s like she’s the careless aspect of the sin Sloth,” Henry mused.

“How far behind you are the other DigiDestined?” Lord Genbumon asked.

Sora and Joe traded glances. They didn’t have a clue.

“I only hope your friends haven’t run into her,” the Digimon lord sighed. “If any of the Zaigou are underestimated in ability, it is Paressemon.”

The Digital World: Location: Near The Frozen Tundra South of Himizu

“Take a five minute break everyone!” Tai called out with a sigh.

TK plopped down onto an outcrop of rock. They’d been traveling for hours non-stop across many rivers and around a couple of lakes. His legs ached, but he didn’t complain. That didn’t stop Davis though.

“My feet are killing me!” the goggle head groaned, taking a seat next to him.

TK rolled his eyes.

“So are mine Davis, but you don’t hear me complain,” he said gruffly.

“Isn’t that what your doing now?” he heard a voice sneer.

TK locked eyes with Koji. What was this guy’s deal?

“Koji,” another voice sighed. “Let him be.”

TK turned his glare to the new speaker, Koichi. He still didn’t get along with the guy. He knew he was being an ass about it, but he just couldn’t shake the misgivings he had against the Warrior of Darkness because of what he represented. He had to admit that the guy was nice enough and certainly hadn’t given anyone a reason to hate him, but it was hard for TK to be persuaded so easily that darkness could be good. Not after what had happened to Patamon, Gatomon, Kari and Ken.

“I will when he does,” Koji growled, but stalked off towards Tai and Matt.

Koichi shot TK an apologetic smile before rushing off to follow his twin. TK glared back, but only out of reflex. When he realized he’d done it again he groaned. Davis noticed his friend’s predicament and shook his head.

“Should just get over it man,” Davis chided. “He’s a cool guy. Kari’s warmed up to him already, why can’t you?”

TK scowled again.

“Ah,” Davis grinned. “So that’s why. You don’t like Kari getting cozy with Darkness.”
“And you don’t?” TK shot back bitterly.

Davis held his hands up, palms out, in a defensive gesture.

“Dude, you have no reason to feel jealous,” Davis sighed. “Kari’s head over heels for you. …Trust me on that one.”

TK couldn’t help but look up when he heard the bitterness in Davis’ tone. He gave Davis a questioning look, but the goggle head sighed and pushed himself up off the rock they were sitting on and stretched as if he hadn’t said anything at all. TK stared at his friend, feeling a little concerned. Davis just hadn’t been much like himself lately. He had figured that Davis was just trying to get over the fact that he and Kari were officially dating now, but that was nothing new. Everyone else had seen it coming for months, so surely Davis hadn’t been so blind not to notice. No, him dating Kari couldn’t be what was bugging the Armored DigiDestined of Courage and Friendship, but if that wasn’t it, then what was bothering the usually cheerful and goofy goggle head?

TK watched Davis stretch and couldn’t help but grimace when Davis gingerly rotated his right shoulder. It was that shoulder that had been dislocated when Davis had saved him from falling out of the cables in the cylindrical cavern back in the caves. TK knew that it wasn’t his fault because he’d been knocked unconscious at the time, but he couldn’t help but blame himself.

Davis noticed his stare and grinned.

“Admiring my good looks TP?” he joked, easily falling into the old pattern.

TK snorted.

“As if goggle brain… how’s your shoulder?” he asked.

Davis paused mid stretched.

“Huh,” was all he said before continuing the stretch.

When TK didn’t get anymore of a response out of him he grew slightly agitated. He was about to push the matter when Davis snorted.

“Huh,” he said again. “Is that incident still bothering you? Dude, you have got to learn how to let things go. Yeah, my shoulder’s still a little stiff, but I’m fine.”

TK’s eyes narrowed making Davis roll his.

“Really,” the brunet insisted. “I’m fine. Good grief.”

“What are you two bickering about now?” the all too familiar voice of Kari descended upon them.

“Same old same old,” Davis shrugged, unconsciously covering for TK.

Kari’s amber eyes eyed them suspiciously, but let the matter slide.

“Okay… Well Tai says it’s time to move on again,” she said before walking away to let the others know.

TK and Davis traded looks before falling in step behind Tai, Matt, Izzi and – consequently – Koji and Koichi. TK reminded himself to be civil when conversing with the twins, but was often saved my Davis’ constant chattering. Now this was the Davis TK was used to. The joking and absent
minded Davis, not the brooding and thoughtful Davis.

“We should be coming to the beginning of a flat plane,” Izzi muttered an hour later as he somehow managed to walk, type with one hand and balance his laptop on the other at the same time. “It’ll begin at the top of this ridge and mark the start of the snow and ice portion of this northern territory. I’m going to be appreciating those winter snow jackets that Digitamamon packed for us this trip.”

“Me too,” Matt and Tai grinned, sharing a conspiratorial glance.

TK noticed the look but didn’t comment. There were a lot of moments that Tai and his brother shared, but he knew better then to pry. They tended to exaggerate in order to get a reaction out of him if he ever bothered to ask.

“How far until we reach Himizu city?” Koji asked.

TK analyzed the Warrior of Light. Koji looked a little worried. They’d been traveling all day and it had been four hours since Sora and Joe had left to get JP to Himizu city ahead of them. He couldn’t blame Koji for worrying about his friend. If he were in Koji’s position, he’d be worried too.

“A few more hours away,” Izzi sighed. “If we don’t stop. Otherwise I don’t see us making it there until sun up. I suggest that we either trudge on now with little to no breaks, or we camp up on that ridge and wait until morning to reach Himizu City. Once we start across this frozen tundra, we cannot stop.”

At the idea of waiting until morning Koji scowled up at the setting sun as if it had offended him. Tai rested a consoling hand on Koji’s shoulder.

“Don’t worry, Koji,” their ever-present leader said. “I’m sure they’ve made it by now. Everyone’s tired. We can afford to wait until morning.”

Koji looked up into Tai’s light amber brown eyes and finally nodded. Izzi and Matt released hidden sighs of relief. TK and Davis couldn’t help but agree. Neither boy was looking forward to crossing a frozen wasteland at night when it would be at its coldest. Everyone else seemed to share that opinion as the entire mood lightened considerably once Tai told them that they’d be bedding down for the night.

TK volunteered for the first watch and, to his hidden and ashaming horror, was paired up with Koichi for watch duty. Someone obviously had it in for him. He didn’t complained or requested to change partners or shifts, but he couldn’t avoid Koji’s narrowed and accusing glare. Tai and Matt were the other pair assigned to the first watch on the other side of the camp.

The first hour of watch was a quiet one. Everyone who wasn’t on watch duty had crashed as soon as they put head to pillow and there was no sign of an enemy. Tai and Matt were chatting quietly from where they were stationed with their Digimon but TK and Patamon had kept up an awkward silence. It didn’t seem to bother Koichi though. TK knew that he should use this opportunity to make things right between himself and Koichi, but he just couldn’t figure out how to begin the conversation.

“How…” he’d started, but clamed up instantly.

Koichi had heard him though and cocked his head to the side in a silent question, leaving TK free to ignore him and leave his question unasked, or continue the conversation. TK sighed inwards. Was he the DigiDestined of Friendship’s brother or not? He didn’t want to be the only
DigiDestined that didn’t get along with Koichi and felt that he should at least try to be friends with him. Kari would want it and he gave himself the excuse that he’d also be doing it for Cody, who he believed was only holding back from being friends with Koichi and the other Warriors because he was. The younger boy was always saying that you should never judge a person by reputation alone, but by their actions. Cody was his partner in many ways after all and the little boy had the most incredible sense of loyalty anyone had ever seen. TK knew that if he didn’t make an attempt to be friends towards Koichi and his group then Cody wouldn’t either out of loyalty to him. It was just the stubborn way the boy was. He left out a sigh and braced himself as he asked his question.

“How can you stand being the Warrior of Darkness? Doesn’t it bother you that you represent something evil?” he blurted out in a rush. There. It was out in the open now.

Koichi was silent for a moment before answering.

“It’s not like I wanted to be,” he replied honestly. “Especially after what it made me do… Did Koji ever tell you how I became the Warrior of Darkness?”

“You were possessed by an evil Digimon,” TK nodded, thinking back to the first time he’d met Koichi. It had been during that confrontation with Duskmon in the caves. That seemed like ages ago and he hadn’t been particularly listening to the explanations while he watched the fight.

Koichi chuckled bitterly.

“That’s putting it rather mildly,” he sighed. “Koji was being kind. He told you about my accident in the train station, right?”

TK nodded again. He remembered that part.

“You almost died,” he stated rather bluntly.

Koichi became silent again for a moment and TK thought that he might have said something wrong. He was making the boy relive painful memories after all in order to help him understand.

“I thought I had,” Koichi whispered softly. “When I had found out about Koji I wanted to know everything about him. Meet him even. It hurt to find out how perfect his life was. He had Dad, a new mom, a dog, a happy home… My mom and I are alone, you see, and she works over time so that she can support us. She gets sick often so I do my best to take care of her. I had no friends, only my mom. It was just a coincidence that I had been following him that day. I was going to introduce myself after weeks of… well I guess stalking rather fits my actions. I had finally found the courage to introduce myself to him. I missed the elevator he’d taken, rushed down the stairs and fell in my attempt to reach him. In a way I really did die. I was filled with regret. That is what allowed Cherubimon to summon my spirit to the Digital World. I found myself in a strange place where there was nothing but shadows and my own suppressed feelings. I had never felt such hatred. I hated everything; my life, my dad and his new wife, my life, … Koji. Cherubimon spoke to me. He gave me the spirits of the Warrior of Darkness. Told me that they’d chosen me. That it was meant to be. Koji says that he was manipulating my feelings to make me his puppet, his pawn. But what he will never let me admit to… is that I let him do it.”

TK listened to this confession. He didn’t know how to feel about it.

“I let him make me the Warrior of Darkness,” Koichi continued, his voice dead. “I got lost in my anger, my regret, and became Duskmon. I fought Koji. I nearly killed him – all of them. I lost myself and became so evil that I made even Takuya give up for a time. Takuya! The leader and the Warrior of Flame! …The one who had such uncanny optimism that he became the beacon of
"I was so lost that I allowed myself to be Cherubimon’s little puppet. I did whatever I was told. After fighting Koji for so long though I began to wake up. Koji and Takuya managed to bring me back, but it took some time for me to move away from the edge of despair. A new level of regret then consumed me, but it was that regret and the wish for forgiveness that returned the Spirits of Darkness to their true forms. I had to accept my actions for what they were, right my wrongs, intentional or not, let go and move on. Those last two were the hardest for me. How could I forgive myself for hurting and destroying so many things while I was Duskmon? In many ways I still tried to make it up to my friends all those months after our adventure in the Digital World. But I know better now. When we first arrived in this world I was lost in those awful memories. I was nearly lost again and that’s what summoned Duskmon from the shadows in that cave. He will always be there lurking, waiting for me to slip up again.”

TK paled. If what Koichi said was true, then not only did the boy have a connection to the evil that lurked in darkness, but he could summon it too. Duskmon had been powerful. This was unsettling information to be giving someone who was already unsure of Koichi.

“But Löwemon told me something,” Koichi continued with a slight smile. “What did he tell you?” TK nearly choked, but somehow managed to keep his voice normal.

“He said that the Spirit of Darkness is a greater burden to bear than any of the other Legendary Warrior spirits,” Koichi mused. “That there is a fine line to walk and many times that line will become blurred. It will be easy for me to forget and lose my way, but that I should not lose faith. I should not lose hope. Because Light is my brother and twin, he will always be there by my side to help me. I should never forget that he is there and that Löwemon will be with me too, as my true spirit guardian. He said that in my hands darkness is not evil. You see, darkness is a peaceful neutral, taking neither side. That’s how I can deal with being the Warrior of Darkness, TK. I never have to pick a side. I do what feels right by me. It may not be the best choice, but it’ll be one that I can live with. Right now I don’t know if telling you all of this with change whatever opinion you’ve made about me, but I feel that you should know. After all, you represent Hope. Maybe letting you know what’s happened to me is my way of finding some hope of my own so that I can continue to make the right choices after all the wrong ones I’ve made in the past.”

TK was silent again as he processed that.

“Can I ask you a question?” Koichi suddenly asked.

TK blinked, wondering what Koichi could possibly want to know.

“How come you’re so against the idea of Darkness being anything but evil?” Koichi wondered.

TK sighed and looked down at Patamon who had dozed off in his lap before this conversation had even started. It was a fair question. Koichi had answered his, so he supposed he owed the boy an answer.

“During our first adventure,” he started slowly, “in the Digital World there were only the seven of us; Tai, Sora, Mimi, Joe, Izzi, Matt and I. I was the youngest, younger than Tommy even. The baby of the group. We were fighting against an evil Digimon called Devimon and everyone’s Digimon partner but mine were able to digivolve to their Champion level. Devimon had beaten them all and was about to destroy me, but Patamon rushed in to my rescue and became Angemon for the first
time. In order to stop Devimon, Angemon sacrificed himself to get rid of him and cleanse the darkness that had been cast over File Island. I thought I’d lost him.”

TK ran a hand over Patamon’s back as he remembered that day.

“He became a Digiegg again and I raised him back to Patamon. We faced many evil Digimon after that, but they all wanted the same; the Digital World plunged into darkness and under their control. When Davis and the others join up a few years later a new kind of darkness had taken hold of Ken, causing him to spread misery throughout the Digital World.”

“Ken told me what had happened to him,” Koichi nodded.

“Sounds an awful lot like what happened to you, huh?” TK laughed bitterly. “It took some time for us to accept that Ken was no longer evil or a threat to any of us. Cody especially.”

Koichi nodded.

“And Kari?” he asked softly. He knew TK was holding back on that account.

“She’s a little more open to things and is all for second chances, but it took time for her to come around as well. Before Ken cast out the darkness within him, something had summoned her to another world that was filled with darkness,” TK frowned. “We still know next to nothing about it, but we call it the Dark Ocean. Only Ken, Yolei, Kari and I have ever been there, but nothing good comes of that place. It nearly took Kari away from me – I mean us.”

Koichi nodded again.

“You certainly have many reasons to hate darkness and I can’t fault you for that. Darkness is used for many evil things, but it isn’t something that can be controlled. I should know. Anyone who tries loses themselves to it and becomes consumed by whatever drove them to want to possess it. Even if those evil Digimon you faced had succeeded, they would have failed in their endeavors because darkness is an unobtainable power. Even I, the Warrior of Darkness, cannot control it. To use darkness you have to channel it and very few know how to do that. I doubt any of your past opponents were aware of that factor and were merely out for more power. Power is often mistaken as an aspect of darkness.”

TK stared. He just couldn’t figure this guy out. One moment he started feeling sorry and sympathetic and the next he’d start getting creeped out by how matter-of-factly Koichi spoke about things that he and his friends feared.

“Are the boys done chatting?” a girl’s voice chided.

Koichi and TK immediately jumped to their feet, waking Patamon. Out of the shadows walked a pale skinned girl around their age with black hair tied up in pigtails. She had a long pinched face with pouting lips that had way too much makeup on. She had a bored look on her face, her black painted eyelids hooded. TK was reminded of a teenage version of the Bellatrix Lestrange character from the Harry Potter movies.

“Who are you?” Koichi asked, his hand already in his pocket clutching his D-Tector.

The girl cocked her head to the side, looking at Koichi as if he’d asked a rather obvious question.

What does Paressemon want with Koichi? What is TK's opinion of the Warrior of Darkness now? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

I had really wanted to have more action in this chapter but I felt that TK just had to have that talk with Koichi. It's still a little heavy, but I felt that after what happened to JP in the last chapter I needed some talking to go on. I will continue the next chapter in TK's POV to maintain consistency. I hope you enjoyed and please let me know if I was unclear or made any mistakes in this chapter.
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Joe and Sora managed to get JP and their group to Himizu in time to save JP. While he’s recovering under the care of the Otokomon, Lord Genbomon tells them about Paressemon, the Zaigou of Laziness that watches over Himizu. Meanwhile, Tai and his group are still trying to get to Himizu on foot. They choose to camp for the night before entering the frozen tundra and reach Himizu in the morning. During the night watch, TK and Koichi are given the same shift and TK finally has his talk with the Warrior of Darkness, trying to better understand the other boy. They are later interrupted, however, when Paressemon appears.

Chapter Notes

Here we are with chapter 18! Well, as promised, this chapter continues on in TK’s POV. This chapter ended up quiet differently then I’d expected, but I’m quite satisfied with how it turned out. Will you be? Hope so! Enjoy chapter 18! Please read and review.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Outskirts of Himizu City’s Frozen Tundra

Patamon, TK and Koichi were frozen where they stood. Tai and Matt hadn’t noticed their unwanted visitor yet, and there was no way to warn them without Paressemon seeing.

“Don’t do anything foolish like warn your friends,” the young Zaigou yawned. “It’d be a useless effort because I’m not here to cause you trouble. …At least not yet. I only wish to convey a message to Dark.”

“Dark?” Koichi repeated.

“I think she means you,” TK muttered.

Paressemon smiled lazily.

“Now that Flame is gone, Dark, you are the one that will be targeted next,” she stated. “You will become the key to Lord Kushyamon’s victory in taking over this world and any other that he chooses. He has no interest in the others.”

“Why not take me now?” Koichi smiled in spite of himself.
Paressemon let out a soft giggle.

“My dear boy,” she scolded, waggling her finger at him. “I can’t simply take you. I’ve yet to receive the order. Besides, I don’t think it’d be fun to take another Warrior out of commission just yet. You’ve already lost one and another is being treated for a very serious injury that was inflicted in a scrimmage battle. You DigiDestined are turning out to be real a disappointment.”

TK frowned. If the injuries that JP had sustained were merely from a practice fight then what chance did they have in an actual battle against any of the Zaigou?

“Then what did you come here for if not to abduct me?” Koichi asked puzzled.

Paressemon’s grin became more pronounced.

“I only came to warn you of what is to come, but also to let you know that I am going to let you and the rest of the DigiDestined reach Himizu City unhindered unless I am provoked to do otherwise.”

“And why would you do that?” TK growled.

Paressemon frowned and a dangerous glint lit up her eyes.

“Would you rather have me attack you now?”

She bent low into a feral crouch, her black painted nails extending into foot long claws. Her lips peeled back from her teeth in a malicious grimace and a low snarl escaped from between clenched jaws. Shivers ran down TK’s spine, but Koichi seemed completely at ease and remained unfazed by the Zaigou’s intimidating stance.

“And you done?” Koichi asked in an almost bored tone.

The Zaigou’s lips twitched upwards once before she abandoned her crouched posture and her claws reverted back into fingernails.

“Aren’t you an interesting specimen,” she mused. “I really must talk to the others about the right to apprehend you myself. You could prove to be an entertaining… guest to have. But tonight’s not the night and I really must be going.”

“In that case, I look forward to it,” Koichi said with a slight bow.

The Zaigou of Laziness giggled softly before returning his bow with one of her own.

“Until later then,” she grinned flirtatiously before taking off into the night.

Once she was gone and out of sight, TK finally trusted himself to look at Koichi. Patamon remained silent, watching the two human boys uneasily.

“What the hell was that about?” TK asked as calmly as he could manage.

“No old habit,” Koichi grimaced, a disgusted look appearing on his face. “One that apparently hasn’t died away yet.”

“Explain,” TK demanded rather sharply.

Koichi sighed, the look of disgust now replaced with one of bitterness.
“When I was under Cherubimon’s control as Duskmon I was lumped together with the other corrupted Warrior spirits. I had felt no sense of camaraderie with any of them and quickly developed the habit of not speaking or conspiring with any of them. When I did find myself in a situation that required me to speak, I spoke politely to avoid aggression and quickly got to the heart of the matter so that I would not have to bother with small talk.”

“All right… So what about telling her that you are looking forward to being abducted?” TK asked puzzled, realizing that he still didn’t understand the boy at all even after the conversation they’d had before the Zaigou’s appearance.

“It’s just as it sounded. I was letting her know that if she were the one to take me I would go quietly, resigned to the inevitable,” Koichi sighed.

“What?” TK gasped. “You’re just going to let her take you? You’re not even going to fight back?!”

“You’ve seen how well resisting worked out for JP and Takuya,” Koichi smiled sadly.

“But what about Koji?” TK demanded. “How would he feel if you just let her take you away?”

Koichi shrugged.

TK gawked at him for a moment while Koichi stared off in the direction where his twin was sleeping.

“Koji wouldn’t like it,” he admitted. “But if I don’t resist she won’t have any reason to harm me. If I remain unharmed, Koji will be able to think logically about how to handle my abduction. With Takuya gone and JP injured, there is no one to keep him stable when it comes down to my well-being. He can’t afford to be rash. I think Paressemon was doing me a kindness by letting her plans be known to us. Despite her title she’s very cunning and should not be underestimated.”

TK studied Koichi with a sharp eye. He could feel the sincerity in Koichi’s words and that the boy really believed that what he was saying was true.

“Aren’t you afraid?” Patamon asked. “They could kill you, Koichi.”

“I don’t think that’s their intension,” TK sighed, rubbing the back of his head. “Paressemon said that he’d be the key to Kushyamon’s victory over this world.”

“Are we going to tell the others?” Patamon asked, worried.

TK looked at Koichi.

“You’re the one that’s going to be affected the most,” he said. “It’s your call.”

“You’d keep what happened tonight a secret?” Koichi asked with a small smile, raising an eyebrow.

TK frowned.

“I thought not,” Koichi chuckled. “We’ll tell Tai and my brother at least. They can decide whether or not to get the others involved.”

“I’ll go get them then,” Patamon said, taking off in the direction Tai and Matt were stationed for the watch.

Five minutes later Patamon returned with Tai, Matt, Koji, and Izzi. Tai had wanted Izzi and Matt to
know what was going on as well, so with Koichi’s permission TK quickly filled them in on what had happened. Koji’s expression hardened when he heard what Koichi’s response had been to the Zaigou’s plan. Needless to say he was displeased.

“I will not let her take you without a fight,” he growled.

“I expected as much,” Koichi smiled sadly. “But if she’s the one that comes to take me, I will not resist.”

“Why not?” Tai asked, a little concerned that Koichi might be suicidal.

“Because she won’t harm me,” Koichi stated. “There is more to this Zaigou then what meets the eye.”

“How do you know that?” Matt asked.

Koichi tore his eyes off his twin and shifted his gaze to the night sky.

“Out of all of our friends, Takuya was the only one deeply in tune with his Digimon Warrior’s spirit. He claimed that he could even converse with Agunimon in his human form. None of us are even close to doing that, not even Koji, and he was Takuya’s equal in almost every aspect. All that the rest of us can do is sense properties that belong to the element we are connected to, even when we were in the real world and no longer attached to our warrior’s spirits. For example, Tommy can tell how cold it is, when it’s going to snow and by how much. Zoe can tell when a large gust of wind is going to come and what direction it will blow without have to be out in it. JP can sense electrical currents and knows when a storm is coming. Koji can tell you when the sun and moon are going to raise and set and what phase of the moon it will be that night. As for me, I can navigate myself and help others through a dark room without any source of light and tell you what’s hidden from view in the shadows. However…”

Koichi trailed off, bringing his gaze to the ground instead of back to his brother and the other four listeners. His bangs covered his eyes, hiding them from view. Koji stared at him suspiciously. It wasn’t like Koichi to avoid his gaze.

“…Recently after my encounter with Duskmon inside the caves when we first got here, I’ve begun to get a better feel for darkness. It’s not just a sense for material matter anymore. I can sense the psychological darkness hidden deep within a person. I suppose if I wanted to, I could tell you how ‘evil’ or ‘dark’ a person is. That’s is how I know about Paressemon. Aiyokumon and Iramon were definitely full of darkness, but there was no depth to it. No layering around the core of their being. They are shallow bearers of darkness. Most of it, like in Iramon for example, was all one aspect of negative emotion like anger. Paressemon is different. She’s got layers to her core. I sensed many different volumes of darkness and not all of it was bad. In fact it was her innermost core layer that surprised me.”

Koichi looked up at them now, confusion in his indigo irises.

“She was sad.”

None of them had been expecting that statement.

“What?” Tai and Matt gaped.

Izzi looked contemplative.

“She didn’t look sad to me,” TK frowned. Patamon nodded.
“That’s why I said that we shouldn’t underestimate her,” Koichi sighed. “She’s good at hiding emotion. She didn’t look like it, but I felt a deep sense of sorrow and regret coming from her. It was the same kind of sorrow that I felt coming from Ken when he talked about his time as the Digimon Emperor, but... it was also the same kind of sorrow I feel when I think about all the horrible things I did under Cherubimon’s control. Trust me, it’s a rare thing to feel. It’s the feeling of irredeemable shame. Personally I think she hasn’t fully realized that she’s even carrying that emotion around. That’s how deeply it’s submerged into her core.”

“So, what? You’re saying is that she may have become a Zaigou against her will?” Tai asked.

“It’s possible,” Izzi mused. “It’s not like we know if the Zaigou were created for their purpose or if they were actually chosen to be what they are now. I find it curious that you have the ability to see into a person like that, Koichi. And you say you’ve only acquired this ability recently?”

Koichi nodded.

“Yes. I became aware of it during our struggle with Aiyokumon.”

“Interesting,” Izzi mused. “So you can sense the degree of darkness inside a person. I wonder if that’s why the Zaigou want you. To use you as some kind of darkness detector.”

“All the more reason you shouldn’t let yourself be taken,” Koji muttered at his brother. “How do you know she won’t hurt you? Iramon had said that he wouldn’t kill JP, but that didn’t stop him from slicing him up!”

Koichi flinched at his brother’s harsh and bitter tone, but he could feel the sadness behind those words.

“There are other ways of resisting than taking a physical stand, Koji,” he said softly. “Takuya knew as much, didn’t he?”

The pain that appeared on Koji’s face was evident.

“I just don’t want to lose you,” he said softly. “Not again. Please don’t put me through that again, Koichi. Isn’t once enough? Isn’t one sacrifice enough?”

Koichi looked at his twin for a moment before holding him in a tight hug.

“Now who said anything about me sacrificing myself?” he whispered. “Sure, I did that once before, but only because I thought I was already dead and had nothing left to lose. You’re not going to lose me again. I’ll go through hell and back before I let that happen.”

“Then why are you just going to let the Zaigou take you when they come?” Koji said reproachfully, gently pushing his brother back.

“I didn’t say I’d let just any Zaigou take me,” Koichi sighed. “I said I’d go without resistance if it were Paressemon. I will not let any other member of the Zaigou take me. You can count on that.”

“Why make Paressemon the exception?” TK asked suspiciously.

Koichi smiled a rather sheepish grin.

“Because I find her interesting.”

Koji nearly fell over at the statement.
“You what?” he choked.

“I find her interesting.” Koichi shrugged, a nervous blush creeping into his skin. “Out of all the Zaigou we’ve met so far, I—”

“Find her the most appealing?” Tai and Matt snickered.

“Oh, please,” Izzi said, rolling his eyes. “He’s referring to the unusual difference in darkness between Paressemon and the Zaigous of Wrath and Lust.”

“Exactly,” Koichi nodded, taking the lifeline.

“Was she attractive looking like Aiyokumon?” Matt asked TK, ignoring the previous statements.

“Only if you think Bellatrix Lestrange from Harry Potter was attractive,” TK scoffed.

“Seriously?” Tai laughed. “Is that what she looked like? Yikes!”

“More like a teenage version,” TK shrugged.

“Hmm,” Matt and Tai mused, trading conspiratorial glances.

“Oh grow up you two,” Izzi sighed.

Koji nodded in agreement, but TK could tell that his thoughts were running along the same lines as Matt and Tai’s. In another situation, TK himself probably would have found the idea of the Warrior of Darkness having a crush on the young Zaigou of Laziness humorous as well. Tai and Matt were only trying to lighten the mood after all.

“All joking aside,” Izzi grumbled. “It’s time to start the next watch. Koji and I’ll take this station.”

“Great,” Tai yawned. “I’ll go wake Takato and Ryo to take over for me and Matt. We’ll discuss what happened tonight with the others after we reach Himizu City and meet up with our friends there. Until then no one is to speak of this to anyone. Got it?”

Everyone nodded in agreement. TK followed Koichi to the edge of camp where the boy usually slept with Michael and Willace, but tonight Koichi positioned himself a short distance away from them. Against his inner voice’s protest, TK joined him. Needless to say Koichi was surprised, but TK ignored the confused expression and sat across from him, his back to Michael and Willace as well as the rest of the camp. Patamon settled into his partners lap, his worry evident on his face.

“So that’s it then?” TK asked softly. “You know Koji will try to stop you from going with Paressemon.”

“I know,” Koichi smiled sadly. “He’s never dealt with loss well, even if nothing is actually lost.”

“Why?” TK whispered. “Why will you voluntarily go with her? You aren’t really attracted to her, are you?”

“No,” Koichi chuckled then took on a thoughtful expression. “I’m going because… don’t laugh, okay? I’m going because I feel like that’s what I need to do. Paressemon is different from the other Zaigou. There is almost a human quality to her.”

TK stared hard at the shy looking boy in front of him.

“You think she’s human?” he asked slowly as if he were tasting every word.
Patamon’s head perked up.

Koichi shrugged.

“You do realize that we’ve only met three of seven Zaigou,” TK pointed out. “How do you know that the other four aren’t going to be like her? That they aren’t going to have multiply core… layers? Is that what you called it? I’m not going to act like I understand, because I don’t, but think about the repercussions of your actions if you let yourself fall into the Zaigou’s and – ultimately – Kushyamon’s hands. You’re a Warrior, Koichi. Takuya is dead and JP is in critical condition! How can you just give yourself up knowing that it could mean that the Warriors will loose one more?”

“I’m not giving myself up, if that’s what you think,” Koichi frowned. “I have other reasons for going. I’m all too aware of what is going on, TK. In fact, I may know more about our situation and understand it a lot better than anyone else here. There are other forces at work than the Zaigou. Don’t you find it odd that they are toying with us when it’s obvious that they could wipe us out easily? They have limits, TK. Remember? Paressemon said she couldn’t take me away tonight because she hadn’t received an order to do so. Guardromon and Cyberdramon said that Iramon didn’t kill JP because it would be against his orders. The Zaigou need reasons to justify what they do. What if they are being restrained by these orders because Kushyamon has something else in store for us? Haven’t you wondered why Takuya was targeted when we first arrived?”

“Wasn’t it because that Lucemon guy was inside of him?” TK asked, wondering where Koichi was going with his logic.

“Yes,” Koichi nodded, “But why did they want Lucemon? Think, TK! If they went after Lucemon, who was the greatest evil Digimon in our world.”

“You think they might be after the evil Digimon that we’ve faced in the past from our worlds too?” Patamon gasped.

Koichi nodded.

“I think it’s a very strong possibility, but the question is why? Why go through all that trouble to bring back an evil entity that is obviously weaker than the powers that they already have? Don’t you see? It doesn’t make any sense.”

“So the real reason you’re willing to go with Paressemon.” TK started, eyes wide.

“Is so that I can find out what’s really going on here,” Koichi finished, a determined expression on his face. “Now that Takuya is dead, I may be the only one who can.”

**The Digital World: Location: The Northwestern Tundra**

The next morning was a long one. The frozen tundra was cold, unforgiving, and the pace they were going at was agonizingly slow because if you rushed, you’d slip and fall and it’d take you three minutes to get back up and balanced again. On the bright side, Paressemon was a Zaigou true to her word and the half frozen DigiDestined made it to outskirts of Himizu City without any incident. For this, TK was grudgingly grateful. When he’d woken up that morning with Koichi and walked around camp with him, it had caused quite the stir. He hadn’t exactly kept his dislike for the Warrior of Darkness hidden since they’d met, so it was only natural for the others to be confused. All morning he avoided the questioning glances while he and Koichi joined their brothers at the front of the group. Only Tai, Matt, and Izzi acted as if nothing was different. Koichi, who was
already used to his company by now, wasn’t making a big deal out of it either, but Koji kept giving him glares. They weren’t entirely hostile, just confused. Kari and Davis were delighted about his sudden closeness to Koichi, but they’d be kidding themselves if they thought he and Koichi were anywhere near friends at this point. TK still held a few uneasy suspicions about the boy.

At the moment TK was walking a ways behind the Warrior twin pair next to Cody, who hadn’t spoken a word all morning. The great frozen city loomed ahead of them, but it’d be another half hour until they reached the gates.

“So what happened last night?” Cody suddenly asked.

TK glanced down uneasily at the youngest DigiDestined from his group. Cody’s face remained passive, neutral, giving nothing away as it usually did when he was trying to make a judgment of some kind.

“Nothing surprisingly,” TK shrugged.

“Hmm,” Cody grunted, his eyes narrowing somewhat. “I wouldn’t call your sudden companionship with Koichi, nothing. You never allowed yourself to get so close to him before because of what he represents. You instinctively disliked him. So what changed?”

TK frowned. Leave it to Cody to be so perceptive.

“We talked,” he shrugged again.

“How?” Cody persisted.

“About him mostly,” TK sighed. “About how he became the Warrior of Darkness and his understanding of the… element. That kind of thing. I hate to admit it but his story kind of reminds me of Ken’s.”

“…But?” Cody pushed again, his expression as impassive as ever.

“But there’s just something about him,” TK muttered. “Even though he told me everything I wanted to know and then some, I still don’t get the guy. It’s his way of understanding. His logic. I’d never have reached the conclusions he had if he hadn’t talked me through them the way he did. He let me get inside his head a bit last night, but I’ve come out of it more confused then ever. When I would get to a point where I thought I understood him, he would say something that would displace that understanding.”

“He is a rather complicated person,” Cody mused, glancing at the raven-haired boy and his twin. “He’d have to be if Darkness is his ally. Now what kind of conclusions are you talking about?”

“You’ll find out later,” TK promised, but glanced uneasily at the twins in front of them.

“So something did happen last night,” Cody muttered. “I knew that you were leaving something out.”

TK grimaced again.

“I’m under orders from Tai,” he grumbled. “He wants to wait until everyone’s together again before anyone says anything.”

Cody’s eyes widened a fraction and he raised an eyebrow.
“Sounds like there was more going on than a conversation last night.”

“You’re right,” TK nodded. “There was more than one conversation.”

“Anything else?” Cody demanded softly.

“No,” TK chuckled. “That was the surprising part. Everything that happened last night was all talk and no action.”

Cody looked like he was going to say something but he never got the chance. The gate to the city suddenly opened up and a large group of snow bears known as Frigimon came to greet them. Tai greeted them as if they were old friends. Everyone was quickly herded into the ice castle and brought to their waiting friends in a study. JP was still being treated elsewhere in the castle by the Gennai-looking creatures known as Otokomon.

“We were worried about you guys!” Sora sighed when she saw them. “Lord Genbumon told us about the Zaigou who’s stationed in this area by Kushyamon.”

“Then perhaps you’d better fill us in,” Tai said grimly. “Because TK, Patamon, and Koichi had the honor of meeting her last night.”

Everyone who wasn’t already aware of what had taken place last night gasped and stared at Koichi and TK.

“You guys met Paressemon and she didn’t attack you?” Henry asked suspiciously. “What did she want?”

“It was a simple matter really,” TK shrugged, ignoring Cody’s scrutinizing gaze. “She wants to abduct Koichi, but hasn’t received any orders to take him yet. She only stopped by last night to tell him she’d let us come to this city unharmed, but that the Zaigou will come for him eventually.”

“How awful,” Mimi and Palmon gasped.

Koichi waited for TK to reveal to the others what he had told him last night, but the DigiDestined of Hope surprised him. He changed the subject.

“So what did you guys learn about this new Zaigou?” TK asked Sora.

“Not much,” Henry grimaced, answering instead. “Lord Genbumon is weary of her. He says that we shouldn’t underestimate her. Despite her title as the Zaigou of Laziness she’s more of a representation of the careless side of the deadly sin known as Sloth. She cares for nothing and treats everything as if they were insignificant.”

TK peeked at Koichi out of the corner of his eye and noticed that the boy was nodding to himself. Something that Henry had said must have confirmed another theory the Dark Warrior had about the Zaigou. He wasn’t sure how he felt about Koichi yet, but he couldn’t help but feel fascinated by the boy’s logic. It was an unnerving sensation that he wasn’t sure he liked having, but he was helpless to curb the curiosity. He’d have to pick Koichi’s brain about it later.

“What about you, TK?” Sora asked, dragging him from his thoughts. “What was your impression of the Zaigou?”

TK shrugged. “She certainly isn’t anything like Aiyokumon. She looked like a young Bellatrix Lestrange.”
“You mean that crazy evil witch from the Harry Potter movies?” Yolei asked.

TK nodded. “She certainly gave Patamon and I a fright. I don’t recommend making her angry.”

“What did you do to make her angry?” Matt asked, frowning slightly. This wasn’t mentioned the night before.

“He did nothing really.” Koichi answered for him. “He simply asked why she was telling me that I was going to be abducted instead of actually doing it. She told him that she could attack him if that was what he wanted. Her intimidation technique was quite unnerving.”

“Yet you didn’t look scared,” Patamon pointed out.

Koichi smiled grimly. “I’ve seen scarier forms of intimidation. I used to be a bad guy, remember? What Paressemon was doing was just grandstanding. I imagine that she will look far more frightening when she decides to attack for real.”

“Why don’t you tell the others what you told us last night,” Tai suggested. “You had some rather interesting views on her.”

Koichi nodded and repeated everything he’d told Koji, Tai, Matt, Izzi, Patamon and TK the night before. Only TK couldn’t help but notice that Koichi didn’t mention his intension of going along with Paressemon’s abduction voluntarily. It was as if a silent agreement had been made that no one, except for those who already knew, should learn of Koichi’s intensions towards his anticipated abduction. Matt even pulled TK aside later and told him not to let anyone know. If Koichi changed his mind then they would have worried everyone for nothing. But TK knew that Koichi wasn’t going to change his mind and when that moment came, TK intended to be there when it happened.

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Uh oh. What's TK getting himself into? Is Koichi right about Paressemon? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

How was that? Not what you were expecting huh? I hadn't intended this to be another dialogue filler chapter, but a lot needed to be said and I wanted to show how perceptive Koichi is. That's what makes him unsettling to TK. He's been to the dark side and knows their inner workings. He's letting TK in on a side of him that I'm sure Koji has hardly seen for himself (or hasn't allowed himself to see). Does anyone other than myself enjoy seeing TK struggle to connect with Koichi? I'm probably going to have the next couple chapters in their POV but I might just end up doing doing it in Cody's thou. He's another character that has a lot going on in his head that we just didn't get to see much of in the TV series. So what did you think? Sorry that there wasn't any real action in this chapter. I promise you that the next one will thou. This one had a lot of dialogue and I wanted to make it significant and not cheesy or boring.
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Paressemon confronts Koichi and TK, but only to warn them that the Zaigou have plans for Koichi. After she leaves, Koichi informs TK, Tai, Matt, Koji, and Izzi of his intent to go with Paressemon is she is the Zaigou that comes to abduct him. He reasons that she won’t hurt him, and reveals that he can sense the amount of dark energies/darkness/evil inside of a person/Digimon, and has been able to since his confrontation with Duskmon back in the tunnels (Chapter 6). The small group resolves not to tell anyone else about what has happened until everyone is reunited in Himizu. When they reach Himizu the next day, they learn that JP is fine and on the mend, and Koichi and TK tell everybody what happened with Paressemon, but leave out mention of Koichi’s intentions to leave with her.

The Digital World: Location: Himizu City

“What are you thinking about?” Koichi was asked once again.

He sighed and looked back at TK. The boy had been nagging him every chance he’d gotten since the meeting a few hours earlier. They were currently on their own, without permission, in one of Himizu City’s largest streets in the middle of what appeared to be a market.

“Nothing, really,” Koichi answered truthful.

He really wasn’t thinking about anything particular, except maybe if he should risk getting a souvenir for Koji and his friends while trying to take in all the sights. It wasn’t as if they’d had the opportunity to do so in Sekizou City. Since it was believed that the DigiDestined were not safe outside the ice crystal palace while an active Zaigou was in the area, Koichi had snuck out. It was only by mistake that he’d happened into TK on his way out. The boy had been insistent on coming so Koichi decided to allow him to tag along. To be honest, he would have let TK come along even if he hadn’t asked. Koichi was used to the boy’s irrepresible presence by now. It had been TK’s brilliant suggestion that they bundle up so that they would not only be warm, but have their identities concealed as well. Thankfully cloaks weren’t uncommon in this region since it was always cold and only the snow and ice Digimon walked around without wearing any warm garments. The cloaks that they were wearing were actually spares given to them by the Otokomon who’d helped them sneak out. When asked why, the strangely human Digimon said that ‘It was none of their concern what the DigiDestined did,’ and had left it at that.
Currently TK was fuming slightly behind him.

“Then why’d you sneak out?” the DigiDestined of Hope pressed.

“Always suspicious, aren’t you?” Koichi chuckled. “I just wanted to see the city, TK. There is nothing wrong with that. Why? Did you think I was off to meet our new friend, Bellatrix?”

TK shifted his footing uneasily. Koichi shook his head, but was still smiling.

“Why did you call her that?” TK muttered as they passed a couple of Frigimon playing a game of ice bowling in a nearby alleyway.

“You like comparing her to that character and since calling her by her real name and title around here seems to have an odd effect on this city’s occupants, I thought you’d rather approve the use of ‘Bellatrix’ as a code name,” Koichi shrugged.

It hadn’t taken long for the DigiDestined to figure out that, aside from Lord Genbumon, all of the palace’s inhabitants were completely frightened of Paressemon and her kind. Even the mention of the title of a Zaigou or any other reference to them would have everyone clam up and look fearfully around the room as if the mere thought of the Zaigou could summon one of them on the spot.

“Fine,” TK sighed. “Yes, I admit, that’s what I’d been thinking. If you weren’t so casual about the entire matter, I wouldn’t—”

“Yes you would,” Koichi laughed. “I’m not blind, TK. I make you nervous no matter what I say or how open I am to you. I tell you everything up front. I’m probably more honest with you than I am with anyone else. Even Koji. There are just some thing’s that one shouldn’t hear.”

His companion frowned.

“That’s exactly why you make me nervous.”

“Then why follow me?” Koichi asked, curious.

“Why indeed?” TK muttered. “Especially since the feeling is worse now that we’re alone together.”

The boy paused suddenly, biting his lower lip. Koichi sensed the dark tinge of regret radiating off of him so he knew that TK hadn’t meant anything personal by the comment.

“Why didn’t you bring Patamon along then? You two are nearly inseparable,” Koichi wondered, smiling again so that TK could see that he’d taken no offense.

“He was tired,” TK sighed, obviously relieved. “He needed the rest so I let him sleep in. Besides, it’s not as if I had planed on going out, seeing as we were warned not to. You were just leaving and I had no time to really think things through past the cloaks after joining you at the last minute.”

Koichi nodded.

“So back to you,” TK grumbled. “What were you thinking when Henry told us what Lord Genbumon had said about Bellatrix? You were nodding your head.”

Koichi sighed and turned around to face TK

“Use your own head for once,” he said in a low voice. “Surely you’re smart enough to draw you own conclusions? Who says if I’m right any way? It’s all guess work after all.”
Koichi turned on his heel and stormed off into the crowd. He couldn’t hear TK’s quick footsteps at first, meaning that his words had stunned him for a moment, but it didn’t take long for the older boy to close the gap and follow him as they weaved their way through the crowds. When they were out in the open again just outside the entrance of a neighborhood, he stopped. He could hear TK’s light panting and sensed the boy’s core filled with confusion tainted with a touch of anger behind him, but Koichi neither spoke nor turned around. The two of them were silent, listening to the other breathe while they tried to gauge how the other was feeling to see if it was safe enough to talk.

“…Sorry,” TK muttered finally. “You’re right. I can figure things out on my own, but I can’t help but want to hear your take on things. To compare notes, you know? …You think differently than I do with that detached and factual logic of yours. I don’t know if it’s because you’ve experienced the workings of the other side first hand, but I can’t help but ask you what your opinions are. Nothing has really made much sense to me since we came to this world. Everything is so… different from what I’m used to. But then you tell me your thoughts and theories and I finally begin to make some sense out of this whole mess. It’s like you said last night. You may be the only one who can fully understand what’s going on. I just hate not knowing.”

Koichi remained silent, continuing to gaze down the rows of houses as he gathered his thoughts. The neighborhood’s streets were empty and a few In-Training level Digimon could be seen running around farther down at an intersection playing games.

“I’m sorry too,” he finally sighed. “I’m not sure why I said all that. I know why you ask me about these things. I’d do the same if I were in your position.”

TK nodded, relief spreading through him.

“Are you sure that you’re not the DigiDestined of Knowledge instead of Izzi?” Koichi joked lightly.

TK chuckled, shaking his head with an amused expression on his face. Koichi could sense the dark tension fade from the outer layer of the TK’s core. It had been a little unsettling for Koichi at first when he’d discovered that he could sense this sort of thing, but it was times like these that he was almost glad for it. It helped him prevent and dispel some awkward moments between him and TK. They were closer to understanding each other now then they had been the other day. Koichi even dared to think of TK as an overly cautious, but very reliable friend. Just as he had no problem telling TK what was on his mind, TK didn’t hold back his opinions of him either. It was definitely a grudging friendship, but a friendship non-the less.

“She’s planning something,” Koichi stated with a sigh, turning back around.

TK’s face twisted into a confused and blank look.

“Bellatrix,” Koichi clarified. “She’s acting on her own. She may have been ordered not to abduct me yet, but that order didn’t stop her from telling us what they have planned. The question you so boldly asked was a good one. Why tell us?”

“Wasn’t she informing us under orders?” TK asked puzzled.

“No,” Koichi shook his head. “She hasn’t received any order yet. She said, “I only came to warn you what is to come, but also to let you know that I am going to let you and the rest of the DigiDestined reach Himizu City unhindered unless I am provoked to do otherwise.” Those were her exact words. No mention of orders like the times with Lust and Wrath. She was there on her own. Henry said that she cares for nothing and that she finds everything insignificant. What if she thinks her comrades and master are insignificant as well?”
TK’s eyes shone bright with understanding.

“You think she might turn against them?” he asked with awe.

“Possibly,” Koichi nodded slowly. “She’s certainly bidding her time, letting us simply come here without so much as a snowball fight. Like I said earlier, this is all guesswork and theory, but maybe there was a reason behind her visit last night. She said that she would see if she could make arrangements so that she could handle my abduction herself.”

“You think she might use you to break free of… her master’s control?” TK asked, careful not to say the name Kushyamon aloud.

“Again, it’s possible,” Koichi shrugged. “I doubt it thou. She can’t take any significant sort of action without orders remember? It’s a restraint that I believe is cast on all of them.”

“For now,” TK said grimly.

“For now,” Koichi grimaced. “Ophanimon help us if they are all set loose.”

Suddenly everything felt cold to Koichi. He instinctively turned his gaze back down the rows of houses. The sun was setting so the Digimon children were no longer outside and not a soul could be found. He quickly looked back in the direction they’d come from. The market was still full of the usual hustle and bustle of shoppers, but it was a ways away from where they stood and the sounds were muted to his ears.

“What’s wrong?” TK asked.

“It’s too quiet,” Koichi muttered. “Do you feel cold?”

“No more than usual,” TK shrugged. “Why? What’s going on?”

“Not sure,” Koichi frowned. “I’m going to see if I can sense any abnormal source of darkness. I’m going to be out of if for a moment so if something happens, snap me out of it and lets get the hell out of here.”

Before TK could respond Koichi closed his eyes and reopened them slowly. To TK it appeared as if Koichi’s eyes had glossed over, becoming pure black, dead, and unseeing. Koichi didn’t need to move his head to sense the things around him. He ignored the dark feelings of frustration and the minor cases of irritation coming from the market place stall owners and it’s shoppers behind him. He focused his attention on the neighborhood before him, ignoring the bickering inhabitants, worried children that were trying to make their way home before dark, and the miserable beggars and homeless that inevitably inhabited any large city, human or digital. At first he found nothing out of the ordinary, but suddenly he was stunned by a burst of unfathomable dark energy.

‘Warrior of Darkness,’ a voice hissed directly into his head. ‘My mistress seeks your audience.’

‘Tell her to come get me herself,’ Koichi thought as he tried to lock onto the location of the dark source and it’s voice.

‘Impudent child!’ the voice cried. ‘It is my Lady Paressemon’s wish that you accompany me.’

‘Sorry, but I will only go if she comes for me,’ Koichi thought, finally zeroing in on the beast. It was a slim, lizard-like Digimon with a pure black core. It had to have been artificially made even more so than a normal Digimon. ‘I swore not to be taken by anyone other than Lady Paressemon herself.’
'We shall see about that you mortal brat!' it spat, but then the voice vanished.

Koichi did his best to get a fix on the aura again, but it was moving too swiftly. He was able to trace its path but then he froze. He realized where it was going to end up and quickly forced himself out of his daze.

“TK! Duck!” he cried.

TK heard the panic in Koichi’s voice and threw himself to the ground, but he had hesitated for a second. Something dart-like whizzed by, grazing his shoulder. It had only torn his clock open a little bit, but it had made a loud sinister hissing noise in the cold quiet air as it flew past his ear. There was a flash of light next to him and suddenly a black metal lion replaced Koichi. TK’s mind was blank for a moment since he’d only seen this Digimon once before, but he recalled the name eventually. Koichi had transformed into JägerLöwemon, the Warrior of Darkness’s beast spirit.

“Hop on my back!” it growled. “We need to get out of here!”

TK didn’t hesitate this time, hopping onto the beast Digimon’s back and leaned down to make himself as flat as possible. JägerLöwemon took off once he was sure that TK had a good hold on him and wouldn’t fall off. He sensed more of those dart things flying at them, but easily dodged them because he could sense their trajectory once the reptile Digimon let them fly. He figured that their pursuer was under Paressemon’s orders not to directly engage them since it had yet to actually show its face. He didn’t wish to stop and test that theory, though, not with TK on his back, and headed straight for Himizu Palace. It was a maddening ten-minute dash but when they neared the back gate, the dark aura of their pursuer suddenly vanished. JägerLöwemon didn’t slow down though, and neatly jumped the gate with a single bound. Exhausted from the long run, Koichi reverted back into his human form and a few of the Otokomon that were present let them pass through the grounds without question and even helped them sneak back into the palace the way they’d left. However, the human-like Digimon couldn’t help them get past the small but imposing figure that was waiting for them just inside the back door next to the mudroom.

“Cody,” TK sighed, thinking that it could have been someone else who’d have been much worse, like Matt or Koji or…

“TK!” cried a shrill and hysterical voice.

Patamon emerged with tear-streaked eyes from behind Cody.

“I-I was so-o worried!” the Digimon cried. “I woke up and you-you were just gone! I couldn’t find you a-anywhere!”

“Are the others looking for us?” TK asked, thinking the worst.

“N-No,” Patamon huffed angrily. “I-I found Cody and t-told him that I couldn’t find you. He-he said that he saw you s-sneak out with Koichi. We-we’ve been waiting this whole time!”

“I want answers,” Cody said softly. “Tell me what’s going on and I won’t tell either of your brothers that you two snuck out.”

Koichi chuckled softly, earning him a narrowed glare from the young, but serious, DigiDestined.

“You are wise beyond your years, Cody,” he sighed. “How long have you been watching us?”

“Since the meeting this afternoon,” Cody said, his face void of any emotion. “I was concerned.”
“For TK,” Koichi smiled.

“Yes,” Cody nodded slowly. “But I was concerned about you as well. Some things were left unsaid at the meeting and I want to know what they are and why you aren’t telling the others.”

“Perceptive,” Koichi nodded, his smile widening. “You’ve got a good friend, TK, but I must say that I’m rather surprised that you haven’t already told him.”

“Matt made me promise not to,” TK muttered.

“Tell me what?” Cody asked, glancing between the two taller boys.

“That Paressemon told me that the Zaigou are targeting me for abduction… and that I’m going to go through with it,” Koichi stated.

Cody’s eyes widened a fraction.

“But why?” he gasped. “Why let them?”

“He’s not going to let just any of the Zaigou take him, Cody,” TK sighed, but narrowed his eyes at Koichi. “He wants Paressemon to handle his abduction personally.”

“But,” Cody gaped. “Why her? Why go at all? She’ll kill you! We’ve already lost a Warrior and-”

“He knows this Cody,” TK grimaced. “He thinks that if he goes along with it he’ll find out what’s going on in this messed up world.”

“But…” Cody sighed.

In that moment he looked the age he really was. He was confused, sad even.

“You can’t,” he finished rather lamely. “You just can’t go. What about your brother? What about your friends? …What about the rest of us? This isn’t just about you Warriors. You all may be in the thick of it, but… we’re affected by what’s going on just as much as you are. How do you think we feel? We can’t become Digimon like you five can. We can’t actually fight. All we can do is send our friends out to fight for us while we stand by helpless. Useless.”

TK stared down at his younger companion.

“Cody…”

“You know it’s true TK,” Cody muttered bitterly before looking up at Koichi who stood a head taller than him. “We need you Koichi. I know I haven’t been as nice to you and your friends as I should have been, but please, for everyone’s sake, don’t go with Paressemon.”

Koichi smiled sadly at Cody and slowly shook his head. Cody’s face became a mixture of emotions: anger, sadness, confusion, but the most surprising emotion that Koichi sensed was understanding.

“You really are wise for your age,” Koichi sighed.

“I’m twelve you know,” Cody frowned.

“Really?” Koichi laughed.

It was TK’s turn to frown.
“What’s so funny about that?” he asked.

“Because I’m also twelve,” Koichi chuckled, shaking his head.

“Really?” TK and Cody gasped in unison.

“I thought you were older,” TK blinked.

“So did I,” Cody mumbled. “You’re my age?”

“Yeah,” Koichi smiled. “So are Koji and Zoe. …Takuya was twelve as well.”

Cody and TK exchanged bewildered glances.

“I thought you guys were at least my age,” TK breathed.

“And how old is that?” Koichi asked.

“Fourteen.” TK stated.

“I suppose we do seem a little older than we really are because of the weight of responsibility that we carry as the human hosts for six of the ten Legendary Warrior Digimon,” Koichi mused. “We’ve had to grow up a little more on our journey than any of you other DigiDestined. I’m not saying you guys had it easy or anything, because we’ve all seen our fair share of hardships and loss. It’s just that it’s like Cody said, we Warriors are always in the thick of things, never having the option to rely on someone else to fight the battle for us. We just…do what we can. That’s all that any of us can do, really.”

Well apparently Patamon and Cody weren’t the only ones who’d noticed Koichi and TK’s absence. Tai had found out that they’d snuck out of the palace as well. He hadn’t told Matt or Koji about it yet, but he told TK and Koichi that he would if they were stupid enough to do it again. In return for his silence, TK and Koichi were forced to tell Tai everything that had happened outside. Tai, Cody, Agumon, and Patamon listened intently to their story about the strange Digimon that had been appointed by Paressemon to bring Koichi to her. Tai was silent for a long time before he spoke again.

“All right you two,” he sighed. “No more adventuring out on your own. If you want to go out and explore the city again just ask one of us older DigiDestined to accompany you. I’m sure Mimi and Yolei would love to take you up on that. And bring Patamon along with you next time for God’s sake, TK. You two are lucky that that thing didn’t kill you. I especially don’t want you wandering off on your own Koichi. If Paressemon sent that goon after you it’s only a matter of time before the Zaigou try to abduct you in earnest.”

“I wouldn’t worry about that Tai,” Koichi chuckled.

“And why’s that?” Tai frowned.

“Because I doubt that TK or Cody are going to let me out of their sights anymore,” Koichi grinned, sensing the guilt but burning determination emitting from TK and Cody’s cores.

Tai nodded at the other two DigiDestined approvingly.

“Then see to it that they don’t,” he said grimly. “Your brother is on the verge of losing it, Koichi.”
He’s still distraught over Takuya’s death. I don’t think he can handle losing you too, even for a moment.”

Kochi nodded solemnly.

“All right,” Tai smiled, satisfied that everything had been addressed. “Now off you lot go. Matt, Izzi, and I are meeting up with Joe to see how he’s coming along with learning how to use the Otokomon’s crystal-healing methods. Why don’t you guys go fetch Armadillomon? I’m sure he’s missing you about now, Cody.”

“I doubt it,” Cody said with a small smile. “All he’s wanted to do since we got here is eat and sleep. He should still be passed out in my room.”

“Then why don’t you all accompany Koichi down to the infirmary to visit JP?” Tai suggested. “I heard that he’s woken up and is asking for his friends. I’m sure Koji, Tommy, and Zoe are already there. Wouldn’t surprise me if Willace and Michael are down there too.”

They all nodded in agreement and, after retrieving a newly awakened Armadillomon, headed to the infirmary. It was full of curtained off wards, but the one containing JP was left open for visitors. Just as Tai had predicted, Koji, Tommy, Zoe, Willace and Michael were all gathered around the bed. Tommy was the first to notice their entrance.

“Koichi! Over here!” he cried out needlessly, his face beaming with delight.

Looks of shock and surprise appeared on Koji and Zoe’s face when they saw who Koichi was with, but Willace and Michael didn’t seem to find anything odd about his current company. When they got close enough to actually see JP, they had to hide their own shock. The lightning bolt-shaped scar over JP’s left eye was an angry livid pinkish orange color, but that wasn’t what attracted their attention. His actual eye was no longer reddish brown like the other one. It was several shades lighter, looking dirty yellow in color flecked with black specks. The iris was pure white instead of black, giving Koichi the impression that JP could now look straight into his soul much like he could now look into another person’s core.

“Hey guys,” JP grunted, not sure what to make of Koichi’s current company either. “What have you been up to?”

“Same old,” Koichi shrugged with a kind smile. “Exploring mostly.”

The hidden implication made TK roll his eyes and Cody cough back a laugh. Patamon and Armadillomon looked at their human partners curiously and so did everyone else.

“What we did was a very loose definition of exploring,” TK sighed, rubbing his right temple. Koichi simply shrugged again.

“I’d say it was more like messing around,” Cody smiled, playing along.

“I suppose so. Tai did chew us out a bit,” TK mused.

“He chewed you two out. I was just the innocent bystander,” Cody pointed out.

“What were you guys doing?” Koji asked suspiciously.

“Nothing of much consequence,” Koichi smiled, sharing a conspiratorial glance with Cody and TK. “As Cody said, he found TK and I wandering and messing around. Tai caught us during a
rather awkward moment, had a word with us and said that JP was awake so here we are!”

The way he’d said it quelled everyone’s curiosity for the most part, but Koji still looked a little suspicious. JP had laughed at the trivial manner the story was delivered in and shook his head.

“Better then wasting away down here,” he sighed.

“How are you feeling?” Koichi asked, taking his natural position next to his twin, while TK and Cody hung back next to Willace and Michael on the other side of the bed.

“Fine. My gut still aches now and then, but I’m healed up for the most part. Those healing crystals that the Otokomon use are pretty amazing. They sealed my stomach wound quickly so it almost looks normal again. One of the crystals had a rather odd reaction with my eye though,” he said indicating his discolored eye. “They say that it’s become rather sensitive to energy now and since this whole palace is made of power crystals and special ice solutions it looks like this.”

“Does that mean when we leave here, it’ll go back to normal?” Koichi asked, fascinated.

“So they say,” he grumbled. “I doubt it. I can see some pretty freaky things out of this eye now. For example, when the Otokomon were using the healing crystals on me earlier today, I realized that I could see the flow of energy radiating through their bodies and into the crystals. I saw it again when they tried teaching Joe how to use them. He wasn’t getting it right away so I gave him some suggestions on what he could do. I’m not sure how, but I understood how they used those crystals just by watching them. I can’t put it into any technical or proper terms, but I must have figured it out well enough because I was able to help Joe use them the same way the Otokomon were. When I told Joe about it, he told me that he couldn’t see any energy flow. Izzi was there at one point and told me that he believes that it might be a side effect from the healing crystals, but the Otokomon say it has nothing to do with them.”

It was silent for a moment. JP looked uncomfortable and Koichi could feel it. His friend was feeling like a freak. …Like he had when he found out he was able to sense another person’s core or soul, depending on what you wanted to call it. The terms were interchangeable to him in this case.

“Perhaps it has nothing to do with the crystals,” Koichi mused, gaining everyone’s attention. “It’s possible that it’s an ability that Iramon passed unwittingly to you when he gave you that scar.”

JP frowned at the Zaigou’s name.

“You mean like how Harry Potter inherited the ability to talk to snakes through the scar that Voldemort gave him?” TK asked.

“What is up with you and Harry Potter?” Koichi snorted, highly amused. “First Paressemon reminded you of the character Bellatrix Lestrange and now it’s the similarity of the theories about transferred abilities through JP’s and Harry Potter’s scars?”

Cody laughed softly when Koichi put it like that. TK crossed his arms indignantly albeit in a dramatic fashion. This made Koichi and Cody laugh a little harder and TK couldn’t help but crack a smile as well. This was a rather odd scene for Koji and Zoe to witness, who were so used to seeing TK and Cody avoiding Koichi. Now here the three of them were, laughing and joking with one another as if they were long time friends. Koji shook his head. His twin brother still never ceased to amaze him.

~*~*~*~*~*

Seems like TK and Cody have finally become friends with Koichi. Will it last? And what about
JP's eye and the ever looming threat of Paressemon? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

I admit that I wanted TK to get injured in this chapter, but it's kinda hard to mount a lion digimon and hide the fact that you're badly injured from everyone in that condition, so TK got off lightly with a slight scare this go around. How many of you were confused that Koichi is the same age as Cody? I was wondering how I was going to pull that off, but I think it works because Cody is naturally short. Koichi doesn't seem like he's 12 does he? In case you are all wondering why Cody is 12 and not 9-10, the DigiDestined from 02 are 2 years older then they were at the end of their season/ the fourth movie, Revenge of Diaboromon (hated that movie fyi. they changed Tai's and Gabumon's voice!).
Parent Worries

Chapter Notes

So here we are at chapter 20! I really wanted to do something special for this chapter so of course this is probably the longest one I have written so far. Have you ever wondered why I always put "The Digital World" along with whatever location the story is taking place in instead of just putting the location? That is because not all of the story will take place in the Digital World. This chapter is about the human world side of things. I had been meaning to do this for some time, but just hadn't gotten around to it. So I apologize to those of you who wanted me to continue the story from where I left off last chapter, but I believe that in celebration in writing my twentieth, I needed to shake things up a bit (not that I haven't been doing so from chapter one). So lets go back to the day the DigiDestined were summoned away from home on that fateful day August 1. Please review and let me know how you feel about this chapter. Enjoy!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

One Week Previous… August 1

**The Human World – Tamers: Location: Hypnos Headquarters**

Mitsuo Yamaki was not a happy man at the moment. He was sitting behind the rather large and ostentatious desk in his office on the top floor of the newly restored Hypnos Headquarters building. Janyu Wong was sitting opposite of him, slightly out of breath and looking as if he were on the verge of a break down. According to his secretary, Riley, who was also the head of the engineering department and his girlfriend, Janyu had left work abruptly and ran off somewhere just half an hour ago. He had apparently rushed right back from wherever he had gone and demanded to see Yamaki. Janyu was just finishing a very exhaustive report on where he’d gone, why, and what had happened that had made him come rushing back.

“So you’re telling me that those kids went back to the Digital World?” Yamaki asked, clicking his Zippo lighter nervously.

“Yes,” Janyu answered him weakly. “My wife told me this morning that Henry and Suzie were going to the park to meet up with some friends. I was working here on level five with Daisy and I just couldn’t shake this strange feeling. When Shibumi told me about a strange anomaly that was happening over the children’s park I just knew that the kids were involved somehow. I rushed right over, but I was too late to stop them. There was this flash of light, the ground seemed to open up and then they were all gone. There are no other explanations as to where else they could be.”

Yamaki sighed. It had only been a couple of months ago since the D-Reaper program had gone haywire and was stopped by four children and their Digimon. Hypnos had just recently finished cooperating with fellow intelligence agencies to help quiet and soothe the public uproar that had
inevitably risen in the aftermath, restoring electronic systems and military facilities that had crashed during the nearly worldwide siege. On top of that, the Shibuya district was still recovering from the damage that had been caused a week before the D-Reaper incident by a swine Digimon, Vikaralamon, who had been one of the twelve Digimon Devas. That was back when Hypnos had been a secret government agency. Now the entire world knew about Hypnos and its purpose. Yamaki had quickly been made the official head and face of the agency, replacing his former superior. Hypnos’ official higher ups had received many comments from Yamaki’s staff and high-ranking military personnel recommending him for such a position.

“Call in the children’s parents,” Yamaki sighed. “I don’t want them finding out about this second hand. It was bad enough last time.”

“Yes sir,” Janyu nodded, pulling out his company phone and began calling his wife and the parents of all the children that he’d seen at the park.

“Sir!” a red-haired woman in a lab coat barged in. “You need to see this.”

“What is it Riley?” Yamaki asked his secretary, sitting erect in his seat.

The woman walked over to the large screen TV situated on the wall to Yamaki’s right and turned it on.

What appeared on the screen had to have been a movie of some kind, but it couldn’t have. What they were all watching was live feed from somewhere. It was soon discovered that every channel was focused on one individual. Combined, all the channels were covering thirty children. On eight of those channels there were children that Yamaki instantly recognized as the ones that had been involved in the D-Reaper incident, but Janyu recognized two more children around Suzie’s age that had claimed to be Tamers just like the others only that they shared a Digimon partner called Impmon. This was only moments before the Digimon were forced to return to the Digital World. Janyu was still pained by his actions that had sent the children’s Digimon back to the Digital World. He had done it for the greater good and there had been no other solution at the time, even if it had meant that his youngest son and daughter would hate him for it.

He had to shake these disruptive thoughts from his head though so that he could carefully observe every channel. At the moment all of the children, known and unknown were all falling through space. Most of them had been rendered unconscious, but some of them were very much awake, eyes wide with fear.

“This began broadcasting all over Japan five minutes ago,” Riley reported.

“It’s not just Japan,” a man with a receding hairline and flowing beard objected as he walked in. This was Shibumi. “We’ve just been informed that this is being broadcasted on every channel all over the world. No other TV programs anywhere can air. This feed has replaced them all. There are only thirty different views no matter how many channels there are. Each channel focuses on a specific child. None of them cover anyone else unless they are with the specific child for that channel. For instance you can’t see anyone else in Rika or Takato’s channel, but you can see Henry on Suzie’s and Suzie on Henry’s. As to who the children we don’t already know are I can’t be one hundred percent certain, but it seems that of the remaining twenty, eighteen are of Japanese origin and the other two are either American or European.”

Yamaki immediately ordered to have all of the children ID-ed. This confirmed the identities of the ten from Shibuya prefecture, but no one from any agency in all of Japan, the United States and or even the UK could ID the remaining twenty. The families of the ten children that had been ID-ed rushed to Hypnos HQ after receiving the phone call from Janyu and demanded to see Yamaki. The
families of the children and any staff member that had been present during the D-Reaper incident were then gathered in a special screening room with a wall completely made up of TV screens that were all focusing on their ten children. All they could do was watch and pray that nothing bad would happen. Yamaki ordered his remaining staff to prepare suites inside the building for the families. All of them wanted to stay in order to remain in the loop and be informed on what was going on, but some of them couldn’t get out of work in spite of the circumstances and had to leave for a little while. At the moment all of the children were either still falling through space or had landed somewhere unconscious. It was apparent that the ten of them had been separated in their fall except for Henry and Suzie, and Ai and Mako. The first one that had landed somewhere and wake up had been Kazu. His parents were relieved to see that he was all right for the moment. Yamaki ordered Riley to pull Kazu’s channel up on the main screen and to air the audio.

Kazu appeared to be alone behind what looked like a bunch of old fashioned computer banks from the eighties. Then one of the unknown children, a boy with auburn hair wearing a pair of round goggles similar to Takato’s, came into view on his screen.

“Who are you?” Kazu asked the boy, straightening the visor he was wearing.

“Actually, I was just going to ask you the same question,” the boy said. “I’m Davis.”

The boy held out his hand and Kazu took it.

“Kazu,” he grinned. “I was beginning to think I was alone here.”

Yamaki ordered Shibumi and Riley to find Davis’ channel and pull it up on the screen next to Kazu’s.

“Davish?” a voice with a lisp called from somewhere off both the boys’ screens. “Who ya talkin’ to?”

Davis was helping Kazu get out from behind the bulky computer bank when a blue dinosaur looking Digimon came into view to meet the boys.

“Davish, who’sh that?”

“Kazu,” Davis grunted as he finally pulled the boy out.

“Thanks,” Kazu grinned. “Wow! You have a Digimon too! A Veemon!”

“Davish, who ish thish guy?” the Veemon asked.

“Dunno,” Davis admitted. “Found him while I was looking for a way to turn off the power.”

“Why would you want to do that?” Kazu asked.

“A friend of ours is stuck in the wires and we can’t move him until we turn off the power source so that he won’t get electrocuted,” Davis explained.

Without waiting for the order, Riley and Shibumi quickly scanned the channels of the unidentified children and found one focused on an older looking red haired boy who appeared to be in the same room as Kazu and the Davis kid. When they pulled it up on the screen with Kazu and Davis’s, it was apparent that the boy was in trouble, tangled in a bunch of exposed cables and wires. A red insect Digimon was with him, trying to keep the boy from moving and electrocuting himself. Many of the parents gasped when they saw him. What if that happened to one of their children?
“Wait,” Davis’ puzzled voice echoed through the speakers and drew everyone’s attention back to his screen and Kazu’s. “You said ‘you have a Digimon too.’ What did you mean by that? Are you saying you’re a DigiDestined like I am?”

“A DigiDestined?” Kazu repeated. “Well, yeah, of course I am, but everyone in my group prefer to be called Digimon Tamers. I haven’t seen him in a while, but my partner is-”

“Kazu!” a robotic voice cried out off screen like Veemon’s voice had.

The two boys and Veemon turned towards the source of the voice and soon a large bulky iron Digimon came into view on Kazu’s screen. Everyone in the room back at Hypnos recognized this Digimon except for Ai and Mako’s parents who hadn’t been there during the D-Reaper incident. They were the only ones in the room who didn’t know a lot about Digimon.

“Guardromon!” Kazu exclaimed. “You’re here!”

“Kazu!” the robot Digimon cried. “You have no idea what I’ve been through! After I returned to the Digital world with the others everything seemed to be fine, but today there was a terrible electrical surge and beams from the core shot out at us and pulled us all into different fields. I arrived here and tried to perform a life form scan but there was electrical interference so I came to the source to shut it down and see if it enables me to perform my scan, but thank the Sovereign you’re here!”

“No worries!” Kazu grinned. “I’m glad you’re here too.”

“Ah, Kazu?” Davis said, trying to catch his attention.

“Oh yeah!” Kazu gasped. “Guardromon this is Davis and his Digimon partner, Veemon. They have a friend who’s in trouble and needs the power shut off as soon as possible. Can you do that bud?”

“Roger!” the robot chirped, stretching out an arm shooting out tiny cables that attached themselves to the nearest computer bank.

“Processing…” the Digimon hummed, lights flashing across his eye sockets.

“…Far wall third switch,” he replied finally and pointed to what must have been a wall off screen.

Davis rushed off of Kazu’s screen, but his own channel didn’t loose sight of him, not even for a second. He ended up tripping over another boy and as this one sat up he rubbed the back of his head and stared grumpily at Davis. Riley and Shibumi quickly searched for the new boy’s channel while the two talked.

“Thanks kid,” the new boy grumbled. “The one part of my body that didn’t hurt now does.”

“Sorry about that,” Davis laughed, but that seemed to annoy the bigger boy.

“Davish, whatcha doin’ now?” Veemon cried exasperatedly from Kazu’s screen since he was still with Kazu and Guardromon. “Do ya wanna help Izzi or not?”

“Izzi must be the red-head,” one of the parents muttered glancing sympatheticly at the poor boy’s screen below Kazu’s.

“Ah!” Davis panicked, suddenly jumping to his feet and rushing to a wall.
“Which one again?!’” he called out.

“Third,” came Guardromon’s replied.

“Say,” the new boy said, joining him. “What are you doing?”

Davis flipped a switch of some kind and all the screens went blank and remained dark. There wasn’t even any audio coming in, causing everyone’s heart to sink.

“Kazu?” Kazu’s mother whispered before breaking down into tears. Others near her and her husband tried to console the worried couple, but it was hardly effective. They were just as concerned for the other children as well.

“Well we now know the names of two of the unknown children: Davis and Izzi. Wish we could have gotten the name of that other kid. Try to see if we can get the feed going again,” he ordered Shibumi and his team. The man nodded and all the technicians got to work on it right away.

**The Human World – Adventurers: Location: Fuji TV Studio**

While Yamaki was getting his workers together at Hypnos in his world, a man by the name of Hiroaki Ishida had been planning on working late again that night at the TV station he worked at in another world, but shortly after he started his shift in the afternoon he was dragged to the broadcasting room. He was horrified. All of the channels were covering the same unscheduled event and two of the channels were focused on his sons Matt and TK. He recognized ten of the other twenty-eight children on screens as well.

“Hey Boss, aren’t those your sons?” Charlie, one of his techies, asked pointing to screens eight and nine.

“Yeah,” Hiroaki breathed. “But what’s going on?”

“I don’t have a clue sir,” Charlie answered. “One minute we’re broadcasting the usual programs just fine, and then the next minute everything shuts down. When we got the system back online all we got was this! We can’t get any of our other programs back on.”

“Have you tried rebooting the system?” Hiroaki asked.

“Yes sir,” Charlie nodded. “But it won’t shut down again. We are complexly locked out of our own station!”

“It’s not just us,” an intern by the name of Mishashi informed them. “I just got off the phone and according to other studios in the area, this is broadcasting all over Japan and they aren’t able to get into their systems either.”

Hiroaki sighed, running a hand down his tired face while he stared at the screens. He wasn’t at all surprised when his ex, Natsuko Takaishi, called him on his cell, sounding hysterical after having seen their sons on television. Once matters were handed over to his higher ups, he headed over to Natsuko’s apartment where he and the families of the other ten children were meeting. When he arrived he found that Miss Toshiko Takenouchi, the Inoue’s, the Hida’s, the Kamiya’s and the Tachikawa’s were the only families present so far. The only ones who were quite possibly even more hysterical than Natsuko over the sudden appearance of their children on TV were the Tachikawa’s. They had been visiting family in the area while their daughter, Mimi, met up with the other children at Odaiba Park. It was through them that Hiroaki learned the identities of the two
American boys on the TV, Michael Washington and Willace Globerman, who were friends of Mimi and the others from New York.

While they were waiting for the other families to arrive, Hiroaki set to work collecting as many television sets and computer monitors in the apartment, – most of them small portables – including a few monitors that had been in his van and some TV sets loaned to him from the Inoue and Hida families who lived on the floor above. He ended up with a total of fifteen viewing screens and organized them so that fourteen surrounded the biggest one they had. He connected them to the cable network and by the time everyone else had arrived, he had the fourteen children they knew the identities of on the fourteen outer screens, but left the large middle screen off.

“I can’t believe this is happening. I thought all of this nonsense had ended last year after what happened with that MaloMyotismon Digimon and those kids,” sobbed Yuko Kamiya when she saw Tai lying unconscious somewhere on the small screen in the upper left corner of Hiroaki’s arrangement while Kari continued to fall through space with TK and Matt on the two top center screens and the bottom left monitor.

Many other parents nodded in agreement.

Hiroaki was scanning the screens with a modified switchboard in his lap that he’d brought with him from the TV studio. Finally something was happening on one of the screens and he flipped a few switches to pull it up on the big middle screen.

“Hey!” he called out, hushing everyone else up. “Davis is awake.”

Everyone rushed over and watched Davis sit up with his Digimon partner Veemon crouching next to him. Hiroaki was about to turn on the volume when the middle screen whited out and a bright light flooded the room, blinding them all. When the light subsided a tall young man stood before them in front of the improvised wall of screens. He was tall with short brown hair on the front and sides of his head, but when he threw off his white hood they saw that the back was long and tied in a ponytail. There was a serious look on his face as he stood before them all wearing a black tunic underneath a white robe with tan trim, matching boots and a black belt tied around his waist. Hiroaki hadn’t personally met this man before, but he’d talked enough with his sons and the other children to know who he was.

“You’re called Gennai, aren’t you?” he asked.

The young man smiled grimly.

“I am.”

Gennai glanced around at the families of the DigiDestined gathered.

“I’m afraid that I have grave news for you all. In the past, my kind has tried to conceal the existence of the Digital World from yours, but now that has become impossible. Something far more powerful than us has taken control. Your children were called upon to help save the Digital world in the past, but now they have been summoned to a different Digital World for the same reason. I’m not sure if Izzi ever caught on after what happened with MaloMyotismon, but there are other alternate versions of the Digital World as well as your own world that exist. I have been in contact with these other worlds recently and it is my belief as well as the belief of many other guardian protectors and rulers of the Digital Worlds that your children have been summoned to what may have been the very first Digital World to come into existence. It is an old world, far older then our own Digital World, and it’s existence is being threatened. Two other groups of chosen children from different versions of your world have also been summoned. That is how grave the
“You mean to tell me that all of those other children are from different worlds?” Masami Izumi whispered.

“Yes,” Gennai nodded. “Not a different planet mind you, but a different version of Earth in a separate dimension, an alternate reality.”

“Like in the new Star Trek movie?” Yolei’s older brother Mantaro asked.

“I suppose that’s an accurate enough example,” Gennai smiled. “Each Earth is a different variation of another. On some Earths technology is more advanced, creating a more turbulent parallel Digital World. Some of them have primitive technology and therefore have an unstable and incomplete Digital World that is in need of constant maintenance. Every version of Earth has a digital shadow world except for those that have only just begun to develop life and some sort of technology. But every world is it’s own and there is no way to travel between your worlds.”

“Yet there is a way to travel between the alternate Digital worlds,” Hiroaki guessed. “That’s why you’re here; to tell us that our children are not only gone from this Earth but from it’s corresponding Digital World as well. They aren’t even in this dimension – or reality, as you called it – anymore are they?”

Everyone was looking around at each other wildly. They might as well have just been told that their children no longer existed.

“Calm down,” Gennai sighed. “Yes, it’s true, but there is a way to bring them back.”

“But,” Hiroaki pressed. “There is a condition that must be met before they can come home right?”

“Right again,” Gennai grimaced. “They must complete the task that they have been summoned for.”

The families looked around wildly at each other again.

“What can we do?” someone whispered.

“Can we do nothing but sit here?”

“Is there no way to help them? They are all just kids!”

“Weren’t a few of them toddlers?”

“Those poor kids!”

“Can you imagine how their parents must feel?”

“I can!”

“Hold it!” Gennai said, raising his voice. “I didn’t just come here to give you this information. You’re the DigiDestined’s families. You know more about them then I do. I came here for your help. I need you all to come with me. A good friend of mine is already in contact with Michael and Willace’s families. If you come with me not only can you help me find a way to bring them all safely home, you will be able to keep better track of them. In this world it is possible that your technology could fail if events were to escalate and then you’d loose track of your children. It is your choice to come or not of course, but I strongly recommend that you do.”
They all looked around at each other. Over the past few years their children had saved the world time and again. Very few of them had been able to really help their children at all, but here was someone who was telling them that they all had a chance to help this time. How could they say no when it meant that if they didn’t, it was highly likely that they’d never see their child, brother, or sister again? With out conferring with each other they all returned their gaze to Gennai, determination set in their eyes.

“Alright then” Gennai smiled. “Come with me and I’ll take you to this world’s digital parallel.”

He reached his hand out to Hiroaki who took it. Once everyone was holding hands in a clustered group, Gennai flipped a switch on Hiroaki’s switchboard and that blinding light appeared again. When the light faded, they found themselves in an observation room where there were screens on every wall containing the images of every child and their partner Digimon. There were other men hurrying around the place that all looked exactly like Gennai. There was another flash of light and suddenly four other adults appeared with their own “Gennai” escort.

“Harry,” Gennai nodded.

“Gennai,” the look-a-like nodded back.

“Families of the DigiDestined,” Gennai called out suddenly, making everyone jump. “Welcome to my people’s home in the Digital World! This world contains your children’s best dreams and their worst nightmares. Follow me and Harry and we will show you where you will be staying and how you can help.”

**The Human World – Frontier: Location: Himi Residence**

Yutaka felt like he was going insane. He couldn’t understand how his parents could just calmly return home after watching Tommy and his friends disappear. He wanted to go out and look for his brother, but he had no idea where to look. He had begun to pace his room restlessly but soon found himself in Tommy’s. He looked through Tommy’s bookshelf looking for anything that might give him a clue as to where his brother might have ended up or how to contact the families of the other children that had vanished as well. He found old yearbooks and address books, but there was no trace of Tommy’s older friends. There was a note and name in a yearbook from two years ago that caught his eye though.

*Have a good summer.*

*Your classmate,*

*Shinya Kanbara*

Kanbara… Now why did that name sound familiar to him? Yutaka racked his brain for the reason he recognized the name, but just couldn’t make the connection. Frustrated, he stormed out of the bedroom and into the living room where his mother was on the house phone and his father was on a cell. On the table between them were all the gifts that Tommy had gotten for his birthday. With nothing better to do, Yutaka took the gifts to his little brother’s room and put them on the bed. It was while doing this that he discovered a birthday card from that Takuya kid, the one that had been late to the party.
Happy Birthday Buddy!

Sorry about the poor wrapping job. Would you believe me if I told you that I had to do it without using my thumbs? That takes skill you know. Besides, what are a few poorly wrapped gifts between friends? We all know that the paper just gets ripped to shreds anyway. I hope you like your present and have a great birthday, buddy.

Takuya Kanbara

That was it! Yutaka snatched the yearbook back off the desk where he’d left it and tried to find a phone number or address of some kind for either of the Kanbaras. He had no luck so he tried the address books. Still no luck. Yutaka cursed under his breath, kicking the nearest thing, which happened to be Tommy’s school bag. Books and papers went flying everywhere, putting Yutaka in an even fouler mood. He gathered everything back up again, but paused when he came to Tommy’s school binder. It had fallen open and inside he spotted a school planner. Planners were becoming even more common for students to carry around even in the younger grades these days. Yutaka decided that it wouldn’t hurt if he flipped through the planner but he stopped on the first page. Lady Luck had finally decided to grace him with her cruel presence.

The first page was an information page stating that Tommy was the owner of the planner along with a list of contact information such as e-mails, phone numbers, and a list of emergency contacts. A Takuya Kanbara was the second contact listed just under Tommy and Yutaka’s parents and right above Yutaka’s own information. He couldn’t really rationalize it, but seeing Takuya’s contact info listed before his own for emergency situations made him upset. He was Tommy’s older brother after all, not Takuya. Not some brat he and his parents didn’t even know that well.

Reigning in his irrational anger towards an undeserving twelve year old, Yutaka took the planner out of the binder and made his way back into the living room. His mother and father were no longer on the phone so he began to dial the number listed as the one that would call Takuya’s place of residence, but he stopped. Just what was he going to say exactly? “Hi, my name is Yutaka Himi. I’m calling to let you know that your son vanished after a flash of lightening through an opening in the ground while attending my little brother’s birthday party?” Yeah, that would work out well.

“Yutaka!” his mother suddenly cried out. “Honey! Come here!”

Yutaka and his father rushed over to her side in front of the TV. On the screen they could see Tommy falling while unconscious against a black background.

In that moment all of their cell phones rang.

“Hello?” all three of them answered.

“It is time,” a woman’s voice answered them on the other end of all three phones. “Do you wish to see Tommy Himi again?”

“Who are you?” Yutaka’s father demanded. “What have you done with Tommy?”

“Take the 3:25 out bound train to Shibuya station,” was all she said to them before the phones went silent.

While his parents were trading bewildered looks, Yutaka looked at the time on his phone. It was
3:10. They only had fifteen minutes to make it to the train station. Yutaka shoved his phone into his pocket and dashed towards the door.

“Yutaka!” his mother called out. “Wait for us!”

Yutaka didn’t heed her words. He knew that his mother would grab her purse and his father would pull on his jacket, so while they were doing that he started the car, and would book no argument over him driving. His mother wordlessly climbed into the back seat while his father uneasily sat shotgun. Once they were in and barely buckled, Yutaka quickly backed out and drove the car to the train station that was luckily nearby. He knew that his driving frightened his parents, but he did get them there in record time only minutes before the train left. They paid for their tickets and boarded the train, sitting opposite a family with a little boy around Tommy’s age. Yutaka didn’t pay any attention to them at first until the parents’ phones rang at the same time his family’s did.

“Get on the elevator at Shibuya station. Press the button for the lowest level. There will be a train waiting for you there to get on,” the voice said out of all five phones.

“You got that call as well?” Yutaka heard his mother ask the family.

“Yes,” the mother said. “She said to take this train if we ever wanted to see our son Takuya again.”

“Takuya?” Yutaka repeated, “He was at my brothers birthday party. They and four others disappeared all of a sudden when the party ended.”

Both pairs of parents traded worried glances while their sons looked at each other. He now recognized the little boy who had to be the Shinya Kanbara from Tommy’s yearbook from two years ago. It was quite a coincidence that the very family he had considered calling where on the same train. Did they live nearby like he and his family did? That could explain why Shinya Kanbara had once been in Tommy’s class two years back.

When the train arrived at the station they got off and onto the elevator as instructed with a tired looking woman who had been sitting near them on the train. The elevator suddenly shook a little bit and they all realized that they were going below the actual train station. The door opened to an underground set of tracks where, as promised, a train waited for them. They boarded just before the doors closed and the train departed. They found three more pairs of parents all clutching cell phones. The woman who they had met in the elevator froze when she made eye contact with one man in particular and his wife. The man stiffened in his seat when she took a hesitant step towards him.

“Kosei,” Yutaka heard her whisper.

“Tomoko,” the man said sadly, his wife giving him a questioning look. “I didn’t think I’d be seeing you again.”

“Darling,” his wife said weakly. “Is this-?”

“Yes,” he sighed. “This is my ex, Tomoko Kimura. Tomoko, meet my wife, Satomi.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you,” Satomi smiled weakly.

“The pleasure is all mine,” Tomoko smiled back. “I’ve heard a lot about you from Koji.”

Kosei straightened up, a dark look appearing on his features.

“You’ve seen Koji?” he demanded. “When?”
Yutaka and the other parents looked at each other nervously. No one wanted to be in the middle of a former lovers spat when there were children at risk, but in the confines of the train car there was no avoiding it.

Tomoko looked shocked.

“Every weekend for the last six months,” she answered. “One day Koichi brought him over for a visit and ever since, the two of them meet up after school with some friends and sometimes come over for the afternoon until I come home from work. He didn’t tell you?”

“Who is Koichi?” Satomi asked.

“Koji’s twin brother,” Tomoko answered slowly. “Didn’t Kosei tell you that Koji was a twin? I admit that when we separated Kosei and I had agreed that it would be better if the boys didn’t know that they had a twin brother living with the other parent so that the divorce would be easier on them. But when Koichi brought Koji to see me I thought that you had decided to tell Koji about Koichi after all, and somehow got them to meet, but if you didn’t tell Koji about Koichi… how did they meet?”

Satomi was trading confused glances with her husband when the train came to a sudden stop.

“You have arrived,” the woman’s voice said over the train’s comm. system. “Please exit the train and go up the stairs to the floor above. I will meet you there.”

The spat forgotten, everyone was in such a hurry to get off the train and up the stairs the woman had talked about that no one noticed that the “train” was actually a living thing. Waiting for them up those stairs was an unusual sight. A woman with long blonde hair in green armor over a white dress with golden metal wings stood before them. The only part of her face that was visible under the helmet was her mouth and chin. Strange, perhaps, but she was still a beautiful sight to behold.

“Who are you?” an awed Shinya gaped. “Are you an angel?”

“More like an angel of war,” Yutaka muttered under his breath, but the woman smiled.

“My name is Ophanimon,” she said in the same voice they had all heard on their phones and on the train. “I am an angel type Digimon.”

“A Digimon?” the little boy repeated. “What is that?”

“Digimon is short for Digital Monster,” she explained. “I am not from your world, which is why I had to have you come here. Follow me, please.”

Mrs. Kanbara had to restrain her son from taking off after the strange digital monster woman.

“Wait!” she cried. “You said that we should come here if we wanted to see our children again! Where are they?”

Ophanimon paused.

“Gone,” she sighed. “They were summoned to a different Digital World. Come with me and my friends and I will try to explain to you what has happened.”

“Does that mean you know my brother?” Shinya and Yutaka asked in unison.

Ophanimon smiled.
“I do. Takuya Kanbara and Tommy Himi came to this world with Zoe Orimoto and JP Shibayama on a train very much like the one you all rode on to get here. Koji Minamoto arrived on a separate train but joined up with them later on. As for his twin brother, Koichi Kimura arrived here under… unusual circumstances. It was in this world in the midst of battle over the fate of this world that all of your children met and became friends. What were months for them here in this world were merely a few hours in your world. Come with me and I will explain everything in further detail as to what happened then and what is happening now.”

They all followed.

So it was then that the families of all thirty chosen children watched the events of the following week unfold, all fearing for the safety of every child. A total of six worlds, three human alongside their digital counter part, tuned in to watch the chosen children’s fate and that of the world they were trying to save. There wasn’t one single human or Digimon that didn’t cringe and hold their breath when they watched what events unfold in the white cylindrical chamber where TK lost consciousness in a fall and Koji attempted to save him; that didn’t wince when Joe reset Davis’ arm; that didn’t cheer Koichi on when he battled Duskmon in the dark chamber; that didn’t shed tears and mourn Takuya’s death after the long battle against the Zaigou of Lust and watch his channel’s screen black out; that didn’t cheer for JP, Stingmon, Guardromon and Cyberdramon in their fight against the Zaigou of Wrath; that didn’t cry when they thought JP was going to die only to sigh with relieve to find out that he survived.

Six worlds were watching the events that unfolded many dimensions and separate realities away. Their parents got to see sides of their child that they’d never seen before. Everyone watching, human and Digimon alike, have at least one favorite DigiDestined and Digimon that they continue to watch but all are wondering the same thing no matter who they follow. Will Koichi really give himself up to the Zaigou of Laziness? Six worlds are waiting with prayers and anticipation to see what happens next. What about you? Are you watching too?

~*~*~*~*~*~

Well? Are you? Who is your favorite DigiDestined and Digimon? What's going to happen to them? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for all the dramatics at the end. :P

So what did you think? This is definitely my longest chapter posted so far. In case you were all wondering, when Davis shut off the power in the computer room, the screens for all the DigiDestined blacked out in all worlds so when the power was turned back on, so were all the screens. When one of them dies, like Takuya, their channel will black out and all audio stops but the channel itself doesn't disappear. It remains as a blank channel that nothing ever plays on. It’s like when you have those extra channels like HBO that if you don't pay for them they are still there, but nothing ever plays on them until you pay your cable/satellite company to have that channel. As for someone who may be severely injured or dying, their channel will fuzz in and out, so when JP was injured his channel would have appeared as if it had bad reception to those
As a personal note/fun factoid on this chapter Willace's last name is actually his
english voice actor's last name, Bob Globerman. I also made up the first names for the
parents of the Kido, Motomiya, Inoue, Ichijoji, Akiyama, Shibayama, Orimoto, and
Himi families as well as Ai and Makio's parents entire name. You will see more of this
in Parent Worries. As for the other parents and sibling's names, if I couldn't find their
english versions, I used their japanese ones, like Hiroaki Ishida.

I also promised you all that I'd give you a list of the DigiDestined's ages. This is what I
use to keep the groups straight:

Fire - Takuya (12), Takato (11), Jeri (11), Tai (17), Sora (17)

Ice - Tommy (10), Kenta (11), Joe (18), Cody (12), Michael (17)

Wind/Earth - Zoe (12), Henry (11), Suzie (5), Yolei (15), Mimi (16)

Thunder - JP (13), Kazu (11), Izzi (16), Davis (14)

Light - Koji (12), Rika (11), Matt (17), Kari (14), TK (14)

Darkness - Koichi (12), Ryo (11), Ai & Mako (5 & 4), Ken (14), Willace (14)

(I had a table, but when i pasted it, then saved it, it went all wonky on me) Notice that
I have them all sorted by element. Some of you may have also realized that this is how
I grouped them in the beginning of the story when they were all separated in the caves.
This will give you an idea of who will be powered up by what medallion later on in
the story. For instance, the medallion that JP holds boosts all the digimon under
thunder, but it will also boost a few in a different category. Remember that this is
because there are only four medallions and I have them sorted into six elements.

Thank you for reading and sticking with me this far. Please send me a review! ^_^
Stranger Danger

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

TK and Koichi sneak out and spend the afternoon outside Himizu Palace. They talk a little more before Koichi senses the presence of a Digimon sent by Paressemon to abduct him. The two hurry back to the palace where they are confronted by Cody and Tai for sneaking out. Afterwards, TK, Cody, and their Digimon accompany Koichi down to the infirmary to see how JP is doing. JP is on the mend and healed for the most part, but his scarred left eye has become discolored and he can now see and sense energy flows. The Warriors are all surprised and a little confused to see the sudden friendship that's formed between Koichi, TK and Cody.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Digital World – Location: The Woman's Guest Tower

In the guest bedroom that she'd been given, Rika was reclining on the bed with her eyes shut, but was too still to be asleep. Renamon was leaning against the adjacent wall, staring out the window while her Tamer "slept." An hour and a half ago Rika had spotted TK and Koichi sneak out of the palace grounds while she had been checking out her "guest suite." Mimi, her assigned next door neighbor, had referred to their rooms as such. When the pink loving teen had invited Rika down to join her for tea in the tower's common room with Sora, Kari, Yolei and their Digimon, Rika had politely declined, saying that she was tired from their journey and only wanted to rest. When the other girls were gone Rika told Renamon what she'd seen. Now they were waiting.

"They have returned, Rika," Renamon reported when the fox Digimon saw the two figures of TK and Koichi race across the grounds with a couple Otokomon and enter a backdoor that was one floor directly below Rika's room.

"Good." Rika nodded. "We don't need idiots like them fooling around outside with that Zaigou on the loose, especially Koichi of all people. He's sure got guts for sneaking out when he's the one that the Zaigou are after."

Renamon smiled; amused that this was coming from her Tamer who used to sneak out on a regular basis before the relationship with her mother had improved.

"Is someone dealing with them?" Rika asked.

Renamon paused, straining her ears to see if she could pick up on any sounds from the floor below. At first there was nothing, but then she could hear a soft but admonishing voice speaking with TK and Koichi's louder voices. She tried to put a name to the voice but came up empty.

"Well?" Rika asked impatiently.

"I'm not sure," Renamon answered truthfully. "I don't recognize the voice talking to them. It sounds
human, so it could be one of the other DigiDestined, but I've never heard this person speak before."

"It could be that Cody kid," Rika said, shrugging. "I don't think I've heard that brat speak once."

"You could be right. He doesn't speak much, which could account for why I wouldn't recognize his voice, but- Wait…" Renamon paused.

The voices had suddenly shifted towards the hallway. Renamon took up a new position near the bedroom door so that she would have a better chance of listening. She couldn't make out what was being said, but a new voice had joined the other three. One that she recognized very well.

"Tai's found them," Renamon reported.

"Even better." Rika grinned. "He'll deal with them."

"Why are you so concerned about TK and Koichi, Rika?" Renamon asked.

Rika paused for a moment before she opened her eyes and sat up.

"You remember when that Takuya guy died right?" she whispered.

Renamon nodded slowly.

"I don't think any of us will be forgetting about that anytime soon."

"That's exactly the point," Rika muttered. "Remember when Jeri lost Leomon? It was like something had died within her. She was left vulnerable and the D-Reaper took advantage of that. Koji had a similar look in his eyes when Takuya died. His eyes didn't quite have that dead look in them, like Jeri's, but if Koichi, his twin brother, were to be killed by this Paressemon… And TK, he's got an older brother and that Kari girl… I just don't want to see that look in anyone else's eyes. It's too sad. When Takuya died, it made me realize that it wouldn't take much. We humans are pathetically fragile, Renamon. So fragile that we have to rely on you Digimon to fight our battles for us. Well, except those Warrior DigiDestined. They are stronger than normal, but they are still human. Still weak."

"Now stop that, Rika," Renamon admonished softly, but firmly. "You humans are very strong. If it weren't for you, none of us Digimon could Digivolve. None of us could fight. We Digimon can be weak creatures too. But together, you humans and we Digimon can form the strongest of bonds. Together there is nothing that can beat us. We can do anything we set out to do. I believe that we can beat these Zaigou. You've all allowed the death of Takuya to hinder your efforts. You've begun to doubt! Don't you see Rika? If you allow the Zaigou to fill your minds with doubt they will win! We have to believe in ourselves. Believe that we can win and we will."

Rika smiled at Renamon, but jumped when she heard someone clapping. Renamon whirled around and came face to face with Cyberdramon and Ryo who were standing in a now open doorway.

"Lovely speech, Renamon," Ryo said with a smile. "What did you think, Cyberdramon?"

Cyberdramon nodded mutely.

"What do you want, Ryo?" Rika growled.

"Nothing in particular, Princess of the Tower," Ryo said. "No one has seen you since the meeting so I just wanted to make sure you were alright."
"I have Renamon with me." Rika frowned. "Of course I'm alright."

"That's what Takato said." Ryo shrugged. "I just wanted to make sure for myself, but since you are apparently fine I suppose we should be leaving then."

Cyberdramon was already heading back down the hallway, uncomfortable with Rika's hostile stare, but Ryo hung back for a second.

"Renamon's right you know," he said with his back to her. "I can't tell you how many times I thought I was inadequate to be a real Tamer, but together there isn't anything I can't do with Cyberdramon at my side. The same goes for you and Renamon. Isn't that right?"

"Ryo…" Rika blinked in surprise.

"Food for thought," Ryo said, shrugging before following Cyberdramon back down stairs. "Don't stay up here by yourself for too long Rika. The others will start to worry too."

"Too?" Rika repeated, but he was gone.

"I think Ryo is rather fond of you, Rika," Renamon mused.

"Don't be stupid, Renamon," Rika muttered indignantly, but was unable to prevent the blush from creeping into her cheeks. "Anyways, the two idiots are back, so let's take that Mimi girl up on her offer for tea. I could use something to drink."

"If you wish," Renamon nodded, trying to hide her small smile.

**The Digital World – Location: Himizu Palace Halls**

Kenta and Kazu were exploring the many halls and corridors of the palace. Guardromon was marching obediently behind them while Marineangemon whizzed around their heads, sometimes flying ahead to inspect a painting or tapestry and the occasional odd-looking door.

"Why are we exploring the castle again?" Kenta asked as they paused before a rather funny looking painting of a sleeping Shogunmon.

"Because all old castles have at least one secret room and we're going to find it," Kazu stated matter of factly. "We've got nothing better to do anyways since we're stuck inside this place until we leave. Guardromon, are you getting any weird sort of readings? Like an odd hidden room?"

"Negative," the robot Digimon beeped.

Kenta sighed and then watched Marineangemon zoom around the hall. He remembered the time he’d first spent with the little Digimon. Kenta himself wasn't much of a fighter, but after the excitement of finally becoming a Tamer had worn off, he had been rather disappointed to get Marineangemon for a partner. The little guy may have been a mega, but he wasn't a fighter like Renamon or a powerhouse like Guilmon. Even Terriermon, who was cute-looking like Marineangemon, could at least fight, especially in his higher evolutions. As a mega, Marineangemon didn't have any higher form. At the time Kenta knew that he should be proud that he was the only Tamer to have a mega level Digimon for a partner, but Marineangemon was just so peaceful and wouldn't hurt a fly. It was much later during the D-Reaper incident that Marineangemon showed off his defensive-offensive abilities that had made Kenta begin to appreciate him more as a partner. In many ways they were well suited for each other.
Suddenly the little pink Digimon squealed, attracting both Tamers’ attention.

Kenta rushed to his Digimon and found himself staring at another odd looking doorway. It was slanted and looked like it was too warped to open.

"What's this?" Kazu asked, excitement lighting up his eyes.

The little Digimon squealed happily, zooming around Kenta's head. In the early days this had made Kenta dizzy, but he was used to it by now.

"Any unusual readings, Guardromon?" Kazu asked, casting a slightly annoyed look at the energetic puffball.

"…Most unusual," Guardromon exclaimed. "It is a door, but I am not getting any readings of a room beyond. It is as if this door was installed with no functional use at all."

"You mean it's a decorative art piece like the paintings?" Kazu asked looking put out.

While Kazu and Guardromon talked, Kenta ran a hand over the frame and it's weird angles. He soon realized that the door was not a door at all. It was actually an intricately carved part of the wall made to look like a door. Marineangemon was now inspecting the wall-door as well, humming a rather catchy song. Kenta soon found himself humming the song while they prodded and looked over the "door."

"Let's move on," Kazu sighed. "Maybe there is something further down the hall. What do you think, Guardromon?"

"I think we should cease this pointless search completely," Guardromon beeped. "My scans pick up no hidden rooms nor do I believe that they will detect any."

Just at that moment, Marineangemon prodded the "door handle" and the floor beneath them suddenly gave way. Marineangemon soared after his Tamer and actually sat in his lap to join the "ride," screaming happily with the terrified boys and robot. Kenta held onto him for dear life. They were quickly descending down an old musty tube slide that spat them out in a cold and dank room. Kenta had bounced off of Guardromon, but Kazu had done the same thing and landed on top of his friend. Marineangemon, who had abandoned his Tamer in the midst of landing, was laughing with delight as he whizzed in circles overhead.

"You were sure right about not detecting anything, Guardromon," Kazu gasped sarcastically. "Were you even searching the lower floors?"

Guardromon gave an indignant beep, protesting that he'd found nothing unusual about the scans and that the shaft they’d just fallen through shouldn't exist.

"Well it's looks pretty real to me," Kazu growled.

"Lights would be nice," Kenta groaned under Kazu.

"Yeah," Kazu agreed shakily. "Guardromon? Some light please? And Kenta, can't you get Marineangemon to shut it? He's giving me a headache."

Guardromon did what his Tamer had asked of him and turned his headlights on. Kenta grunted and after Kazu was off of him, he reached up and snatched his partner out of the air, holding him close. Rather than be offended and hurt by the action, Marineangemon snuggled in his Tamers arms and purred softly. Kazu sighed with exasperation when he got a look at them.
"You're partner's nuts, Chumley," he griped, calling Kenta by his nickname.

Kenta ignored him as Kazu continued with the usual witty and scathing comments. Kenta instead looked around the now illuminated space. There wasn't much to look at. The walls and ceiling appeared to be made of cinderblock, but the floor was damp earth. The air smelled musty like the tube slide, but not enough to make any of them sneeze. The space was empty and unused and looked to have been that way for a long time. Not one moldy box or crate occupied the space. There were torches mounted on the wall though, engraved with a mysterious insignia. Kenta walked over to one to get a better look, but ended up casting a shadow over it.

"Hey, Kazu!" he called over to his still ranting friend. "Come look at this!"

"What'd ya find?" Kazu asked, darting over.

"Don't know," Kenta admitted, "but could you have Guardromon aim his light here?"

With only a hand sign from Kazu, Guardromon wordlessly shined his light on the torch's housing. The insignia was elaborate, yet simple, and looked oddly familiar, but neither boy could remember where they'd seen it. They knew that they hadn't seen this exact symbol before, but the basic lines of the character in the middle stirred some memory. There were three even vertical parallel lines. The middle line continuing down a little bit until it branched off into two. Then the ends of these two lines were directly below the other two upper lines, they continued straight down as if they were a continuation of the ones above. It was Guardromon who was the first to figure it out.

"That character is the same symbol for 'fire' that was on Agunimon's belt and the forehead of his facemask below the center horn," he beeped.

"Oh yeah!" Kazu yelped. "Wow! I had totally forgotten about that."

Kenta gave him an incredulous look.

"I meant the symbol!" Kazu protested. "Of course I haven't forgotten the actual dude! That'd be insensitive and rude to the guy's memory!"

Kenta rolled his eyes behind his glasses and continued to inspect the symbol. A flame pattern and many other squiggly lines surrounded the 'fire' character, but none of it made any sense. If he squinted, it looked like fireworks or sparks were spurting out of the center top line. But what did it mean?

"Here's a thought," Kazu said, trying to recover from his blunder. "What's the Warrior's symbol for fire doing down here in the underground of a city in the middle of a frozen wasteland? Wouldn't that Tommy kid's symbol for ice be more appropriate?"

"That is a rather good question, Kazu," Guardromon stated.

"Don't act so surprised," Kazu grumbled.

"You wouldn't happen to have a lighter on you, would you Kazu?" Kenta asked.

"Do I look like that joker smoker Yamaki?" Kazu frowned.

Dimensions away, Yamaki was grumbling at the comment and shoving his Zippo lighter into his pocket, ignoring Riley's amused glance.

"Allow me," Guardromon sighed, using an arm flare to light the torch. The moment it made contact
with the torch's oiled fuel source, it and all the other torches flared to life.

"Wow," Kazu gasped. "No one is going to believe this."

"This isn't exactly one of the top ten weirdest things to happen in this world," Kenta whispered.

An excited Marineangemon began squirming in Kenta's arms.

Kenta and Kazu turned to their left and, sure enough, there was a large tunnel leading further down into the earth.

"Do we go?" Kenta asked nervously.

"Of course!" Kazu grinned. "This is exactly the sort of thing we've been looking for! We can't turn back now! Besides, what are you going to do? We slid down a freaking tube slide. Who knows how far down we've come? How are you going to get back up? Fly?"

Kenta was about to retort that Marineangemon would have no problem getting him out of there, but he let the retort die on his tongue. He wasn't going to leave Kazu down in the tunnel all by himself, so he followed his friend instead. The tunnel seemed endless, but then it eventually branched out in different directions.

"Aw man!" Kazu huffed with frustration. "Which way do we go? Any ideas Guardromon?"

"Negative," the robot sighed. "My readings and scans are malfunctioning. I cannot even track our previous steps. We are, as you say, winging it."

"So if we go any further we're lost," Kenta sighed.

Marineangemon whimpered a little as he looked at all the tunnels before them, but then suddenly shot out of Kenta's arms.

"What is it?" Kenta asked, alarmed by his Digimon's sudden behavior.

Marineangemon squeaked urgently.

"What?" Kenta gasped, all of them following the tiny Digimon's gaze.

Far off down the second tunnel to their left stood a person in reddish-brown robes that looked like the ones worn by the Jedi in Star Wars. The hood was drawn over the upper part of the person's face, but they appeared to be a boy. He was short in stature, but the robes masked any other outstanding physical features. Something was off about him, but no one could find a word to describe what that was. The strange boy suddenly bolted and ran out of sight.

Kazu instinctively ran after the stranger, leaving the others no choice but to follow him.

"Are you sure we should be following him?" Kenta panted.

"You got any better ideas?" Kazu yelled.

When they reached the end of the tunnel and saw that it branched out in three directions they spotted the boy again on the right. Every time they came to an intersection of tunnels, the boy was waiting for them at the end of one and would run off as soon as they spotted him. This went on for what seemed like hours, but when they finally reach one intersection, the boy didn't run away when they came after him. He allowed them to get closer, but before they could get near him he began to fade out and vanished completely. What was worse was that the tunnel he'd led them to
was a dead end and none of them could recall the way they'd come.

"Who was that guy?" Kenta huffed, leaning against a wall trying to catch his breath.

"Dunno," Kazu sighed, plopping down onto the floor. "Now we're lost even more than we were before. Do your scans still not work Guardromon?"


Marineangemon rested on top of his Tamer's head and began to whine softly. Kenta knew that he'd have to do something soon, or Kazu would get irritated again.

"That guy had to have led us here for some reason," he pointed out. "What was the point in waiting for us when he could have gotten away easily. He didn't even look out of breath."

"He wanted us to get lost," Kazu grumbled. "And that's exactly what we are. Lost."

"I'd like to know is how he vanished like that," Guardromon twittered.

Curious about how the strange boy had vanished, Kenta got up and looked at the ground in the general area he had disappeared. The dirt where the boy had stood was barely disturbed. This peaked Kenta's interest.

"What are you doing, Chumley?" Kazu sighed.

"Just wondering what would happen if I stood where he stood," Kenta mused. "Would I disappear like that boy did?"

Kazu cocked his head to the side and watched Kenta, with Marineangemon on his shoulder, as he placed his feet in the two indentations in the earth. A strange feeling surged throughout Kenta's body and when he looked down at his hands he found that he was fading just like the strange boy had. Kazu let out an alarmed cry, but when he reached out to grab his rapidly disappearing friend, his hand went right through him. Just like that, Kenta and Marineangemon were gone. Kazu stared at the spot for a moment before grabbing Guardromon's arm and stood in the same spot Kenta had just disappeared from. He too felt something weird going on with his body, making him tighten his grip on the confused Guardromon. One minute Tamer and Digimon were standing in the tunnels and the next they were in a strange room facing Kenta's back.

"Chumley!" Kazu sighed with relief. "Thank goodness. I thought you might have been a goner there, buddy."

When Kenta and Marineangemon didn't respond, Kazu looked past his friend and saw the strange boy that they had followed through the tunnels. He was no longer wearing his hood and was staring at them with golden eyes. Kazu and Guardromon gasped when they saw him but before they could cry out in alarm their minds suddenly went blank. Their faces became expressionless and if they could have turned to look, they'd see that Kenta and Marineangemon were wearing the same expression. They all forgot everything that had happened over the past couple of hours and when they snapped out of their daze, they found themselves in bed in their rooms. For all they knew, after the meeting they'd been shown to their rooms and fell asleep.

The Human World – Tamers: Location: Hypnos HQ

"Rewind that," Yamaki ordered Shibumi. "Rewind the footage to just before Kenta blacked out.
Riley, do the same for Kazu."

Both of them did as they were told and freeze-framed the feed from Kazu and Kenta's channels. Yamaki and his employees had been working on recording the system for days, and now they had finally figured it out. It was simple really. All they had to do was record it as if it were a regular program. They had hundreds of tapes used up already covering every child's channel.

"Got it, sir," Riley reported. "Pulling the images up onto the screen."

Yamaki watched them as the big screen flashed and two images appeared side by side. Both of them showed a figure with golden eyes, but they were poor shots of him at odd angles and only the eyes were in focus in either image, since the main focus of every shot was supposed to be the DigiDestined it covered.

"Can you clear them up?" Yamaki asked.

"Hold on," Shibumi muttered as he bent over his keyboard. "How's this?"

The image cleared, but not enough to see the rest of the figure's face clearly.

"The figure appears to be male with dark brown hair," Riley reported. "We can't get any more than that. I'm sorry, sir."

Yamaki growled, clicking his lighter in agitation.

"Pull up any other images of the boy we have and see if there is a clearer shot," he ordered.

Shibumi and Riley typed away, running over footage for fifteen minutes before Riley found a good shot of the strange boy. It was of him fading away, but in this image, his hood was raised slightly. She enhanced the grainy image as best as she could and the result was incredible. She couldn't believe what she was seeing, but she uploaded the image to the big screen for Yamaki and Shibumi to view.

"Is that-?" Shibumi gasped.

"It can't be," Yamaki whispered. "That's-!"

Who is the strange boy? Another of the Zaigou? What does his appearance mean for the DigiDestined? Find out next time on Digimon Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Cliff hanger! Mwa ha ha ha! Who is this strange boy? You'll just have to read the next chapter and find out! :P

Did you guys like this chapter? It was a filler and I'm still a little unsure about it, but the story is deffinatly going to pick up again in next chapter. I'm going to revert back to TK, Koji and Koichi's POV next time so bare with me for a little bit. Please leave a comment and thank you for reading! Look forward to the next chapter you guys!
Tunnels and Spooks

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Rika and Renamon retreat to the room they’ve been given in Himizu and see Koichi and TK sneak out. They wait until they see they sneak back in, speculate why they’d risk going out, and then leave to join the other DigiDestined girls for tea. Meanwhile, Kenta, Kazu and their Digimon are exploring Himizu Palace looking for hidden rooms. They find a door that’s not really a door and end up falling through a trapdoor in the floor and end up in an underground tunnel. Down there they chase after a robed boy who leads them to a dead end and disappears. After figuring out how he disappeared they confront him. They are shocked to see who it is, but for some reason they black out and wake up in their assigned room in the Palace. Back in the Tamer’s Human world, Yamaki and his team are trying to get a clear image of the boy Kazu and Kenta were chasing and discover who it is also.

Chapter Notes

Here's chapter 22! This one was a little hard to write, but I think it turned out OK. I'd just like to thank daira-strumer and Oscuridad en las estrellas for sending me my first spanish (essentially non-english that needed to be translated) reviews! You don't know how excited I am to hear from non-english speakers! All I can say is thank you two for taking the time to read my story and I thank God for Google Translator! ^w^

I hope you all enjoy chapter 22.

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World – Location: The Men’s Guest Tower

After everyone was shooed out of the infirmary by an Otokomon, Koji retired to the room he shared with Koichi and Tommy. It hadn’t been his intention to fall asleep, but one moment he was staring up at the ceiling and the next he found himself wandering in a maze of tunnels. He had no idea where he was or where he was headed, but his feet moved onward of their own accord, guiding him. He came to a dead end, but after he stopped the scene shifted and the tunnels disappeared. He was then standing in a room with curtained walls and coarse carpet, but there was no furniture occupying the space.

He wasn’t alone in the room. A figure that appeared to be a boy in brown robes stood before him with a hood drawn over his face. Something golden glinted at him underneath the cowl. The strange boy reached out a gloved hand, beckoning Koji to come with him. The figure seemed familiar to Koji so he instinctively reached out to take the hand, but a voice stopped him.
“Don’t,” it said. “Don’t touch him.”

Koji froze, his hand pulling back slightly.

“Takuya?” he gasped.

“Don’t let him touch you, Koji,” the voice warned him again.

Koji withdrew his hand completely and took a step back. The strange boy before him growled softly with irritation and began to reach for his hood.

“Turn away!” the voice said urgently. “Don’t look him in the eyes.”

Koji quickly turned away just as the hood was drawn back. The figure approached him and reached out for his hand again. Koji balled his hands into fists and shoved them into his pockets, taking another step back, careful not to look anywhere near its face. The figure let out a huff of frustration and reached out for him again, intending to grab him, but a barrier of fire erupted around Koji, shielding him. Koji’s eyes widened with surprise and the figure halted, arms raised to shield itself. The flames took on Takuya’s form, making him look like a flaming ghost that was both radiant and terrifying to behold.

Koji stared, shocked, when he saw his dead friend standing before him, but now he also saw the stranger he had been warned against seeing. The boy looked identical to Takuya himself only with golden eyes instead of amber brown. The two Takuyas glared at each other, flaming amber clashing against broiling gold. The solid Takuya growled at the flaming ghost Takuya, but he pulled his hood back up over his face and vanished. When he was gone, Takuya turned to face Koji, still nothing more than a blazing apparition. The way he looked reminded Koji of the way Takuya had appeared when he was trapped inside his own mind. The only difference was that his image now was more solid and stable instead of weak and faded.

“Who was that?” Koji asked shakily.

The image shrugged nonchalantly in a way that was so Takuya.

“Someone you wouldn’t want to meet in a dark alley?” he mused.

Koji smiled sadly. He knew he was dreaming, but it felt so real. Only the real Takuya would answer a serious question with a joke. The two of them looked at each other and shared an unreal moment.

“Who did he look like?” Takuya suddenly asked him.

“What?” Koji asked puzzled. “What do you mean, “Who did he look like?” He looked like you! Or were you too busy having a staring contest to notice?”

“He looked like me?” Takuya asked softly, a sad look entering his eyes.

“Shouldn’t he have?” Koji asked, confused by Takuya’s reaction.

“I suppose,” Takuya sighed, rubbing the back of his head the way he always did when he was nervous or embarrassed. “His appearance depends on who sees him. He usually looks different to every person because he takes on the form of whoever that person wants or expects to see. You saw me because you apparently wanted to, or you saw me because I was who you were thinking about at the time.”
“Who is he?” Koji asked.

“No clue,” Takuya shrugged. “I don’t know his name, but I do know that you shouldn’t get too close to him. He works for the Zaigou. Not sure which one though.”

“Why did he want me to go with him?” Koji asked. “And how do you know all of this?”

“Who knows?” Takuya mused. “This is your dream. Maybe it’s because you’re the Warrior of Light. It’s possible that you’re not the only one he’s after. Ever think of that? The whole world doesn’t revolve around you, ya know, Koji.”

Koji rolled his eyes, making Takuya chuckle. Suddenly Koji felt the whole room shake, but Takuya seemed unfazed by it.

“Looks like it’s time for you to wake up,” Takuya said, smiling ruefully. “Nap time is over, buddy.”

Koji’s heart ached as the scenery and the fiery apparition of Takuya started to fade. He didn’t want to wake. Not yet. Takuya hadn’t answered his other question and there was still so much he wanted to ask his friend, but he knew that this was only a dream and, like every dream, it had to end. Koji jolted upward reaching towards his friend, but he was back in his guest bedroom with Koichi, who had been kneeling at his bedside trying to wake him up. Koji’s sudden movement had startled Koichi.

“Are you alright?” Koichi said uncertainly. “Koji?”

“I’m fine,” Koji sighed, rubbing his eyes. “What’s up?”

“Dinner is ready,” Koichi answered. “Tai wants everyone there so that we can discuss what we should do next.”

Koji nodded and accompanied Koichi to the dining hall. On the way there they ran into Kenta, Kazu and their Digimon.

“Looks like we weren’t the only ones getting some shut eye,” Kazu yawned.

Koji frowned, unconsciously smoothing out his sleep wrinkled clothes.

“Don’t worry ‘bout it, tough guy,” Kazu grinned, clapping Koji on the shoulder. “It’s not uncommon to just nod off when you least expect it.”

Koji stiffened. It wasn’t because of Kazu’s hand on his shoulder or what the boy had said, but the moment Kazu’s hand came in contact with his shoulder Koji started seeing things. Kenta in front of an odd warped door, an empty chamber, a strange version of the warrior’s symbol for fire, the maze of tunnels, the strange robed boy, the strange boy disappearing, Kenta and Marineangemon disappearing, the empty curtained room, the strange boy without his hood… Takuya.

“Hey, Koji!” a voice – Kazu’s – echoed in his head. “Dude, what’s up?”

“Koji!” Koichi’s voice cried.

Koji finally snapped out of it. He realized that he must have collapsed or something because he was on the floor.

“Are you alright?” he heard Kenta asked.
“I’m fine,” Koji grunted and gave his head a shake to clear the sudden dizziness he was now experiencing. When he glanced up he jerked back a bit out of surprise. Marineangemon had been hovering just a few inches from his face.

“Sorry!” Kenta squeaked, snatching his Digimon partner back.

Koji stood slowly as he watched the pink fluff ball squirm and giggle in Kenta’s grasp. The little guy easily got free and decided to perch on Koji’s shoulder. It snuggled against his neck and purred.

“Marineangemon,” Kenta sighed.

“It’s no big deal,” Koji mumbled as he gently picked the little guy up and handed him back to his Tamer. “He must be a handful.”

Kenta nodded.

“So what happened to you?” Kazu asked. “You looked like you were having a fit or something.”

Koji frowned, but before he could give them any kind of answer Rika and Renamon stormed in on them.

“There you all are,” Rika glared. “We’re all waiting on you guys.”

“Sorry,” Koichi and Kenta apologized, but Kazu and Koji just snorted. Rika put her hands on her hips, gave Koichi a knowing, piercing look, but instead of saying anything she turned on her heel and left with Renamon. The four boys and two Digimon traded glances, chuckled, and followed the haughty Rika.

As they had been told, they were the last ones to arrive. Koji and Koichi quickly joined Tommy, Zoe and JP who’d been declared well enough to eat with everyone. Kenta and Kazu went to sit with Henry and Takato. Koji noticed that Tai sat at the head of the table with Genbumon. The two of them were deep in conversation and kept glancing at the medallion that the wizen Lord wore around his neck. The meal was immediately served now that everyone was present and afterwards they all settled back in their seats waiting for either Tai or Lord Genbumon to get down to business. Finally Tai stood up and addressed everyone.

“Before we ate, Lord Genbumon and I discussed what we should do next. Tonight he wishes to pass on his Medallion of Ice to the Warrior of Ice, Tommy.”

Koji had to hide his smile when the small boy next to him jumped and straightened up in his seat. Even though the youngest Warrior DigiDestined was the obvious candidate for ownership of the Ice Medallion, Tommy himself hadn’t felt it right that he should be allowed to hold such a heavy responsibility. Koji felt that there was no doubt that Tommy had thought that Joe, even though he was not a warrior, would have been the best candidate in holding the medallion. In some ways, Joe would have been a respectable choice, but he wasn’t a warrior and none of the other warriors were even close enough in attribute to take possession of the medallion. Maybe if they had a Warrior of Water, that would have been all right, but Tommy was the only real choice for this medallion.

“Please step forth, young man,” Lord Genbumon ordered in that soft yet firm voice of his.

Tommy slowly rose from his seat and, after a reassuring clap on the back from Zoe and JP, hurried up to the dais. Tommy stood at attention as Genbumon locked eyes with him much like Lord Byakkomon had done with JP. It was silent for a moment before Genbumon broke the staring contest and removed the medallion from around his neck.
“Warrior of Ice,” Genbumon said repeating the same words Byakkomon had spoken only a couple days ago. “I find you a worthy candidate and charge you with the care and the power of this medallion. May you lead your friends strongly into battle, and safely out of harm’s way. With this in your possession all water and ice type Digimon will have the power to Digivolve to their highest level and give you an advantage in any type of battle field, but you’ll always be at your strongest in any field with a water source.”

Tommy bowed and allowed the old Digimon Lord to place the medallion around his neck. When he returned to his seat Koji noticed that it was made out of some clear crystal with a turtle looking creature in its center.

“Now we have two of the four element medallions,” Tai stated, “so the question is which one do we go after next? Lord Genbumon wish to tell us the prophecy that Lord Byakkomon mentioned to us before we left Sekizou City.”

Genbumon sat down again before he spoke, his voice taking on the low rumble of an ancient and experienced storyteller.

“Back when this world was still young, a prophecy was presented to me by the first living being that existed on its soil. He was ancient and wise and could tell you what the weather would be like with just a glance at the sky or how your day would go with just a look in your eyes. Everyone revered this great being for ages. But he was dying and had one last prophecy to give. It was beside his deathbed back, in the days of my youth, that I kneeled and listened to what he had to say. He said:

“Hundreds of years from now, when this peaceful land is on the verge of falling into darkness, thirty youths will one day appear. Fourteen of the Chosen Ones will represent the virtues. Ten others will be holders of innocence and harmony. The final six will be warriors of the elements. They will be separated upon their arrival, but will be reunited into one gathering. Together they will set out to retrieve the four medallions of power, one for every corner gateway to this world. Once the four medallions are found, the path will be laid before them to find the fourteen Virtuous Crystals and the twelve Harmony Stones. The Harmony stones will keep this world in balance and the Virtuous Crystals will bring its people together to rise up against the great evil twelve. Only with all thirty items will the chosen ones succeed. It is with great urgency that I give you the three following prophecies. One foretelling the journey for the medallions, one foretelling the locations of the stones, and one foretelling the locations of the crystals.”

Lord Genbumon paused before continuing.

“I will only tell you the one that he told me for the medallions. When you have all four medallions return here for the other two. The first prophecy foretells your first encounters with the Zaigou. You may notice that some of it has already occurred. It goes:

“Shortly after their arrival before their adventure can even begin, a Warrior will fall in the face of the Lustful one’s destruction. May his ashes rise up to the heavens and the remaining twenty-nine mourn his passing. Thunder will come to claim the Medallion of the West and soon after face the great evil’s Wrath and survive, but will become marked with a vengeful symbol. Ice will claim the Medallion of the North next, during an uncertain time when the Sloth chooses how to play her deadly games. A shadow looms over the chosen as they decide to pursue the fire of the South or the wooden mountains of the East. Hope will give way to Darkness and the lazy one will be let loose, ultimately deciding their fate. During this critical time, a new Fire will ignite and take the place of the fallen warrior. The Greedy and Envious evils will rise up to stamp out the new flame, but if the Light shines true, their efforts will be for not. Young and strong, the new Warrior will
Everyone was silent as they let the prophecy sink in.

“I warn you not to get complacent,” Genbumon warned them. “Just because the prophecy says that you all will succeed in gaining all four medallions, doesn’t mean that none of you will avoid danger. There are four other Zaigou you have yet to meet and each one will be tougher than the last. It is essential that you get these medallions quickly.”

“What you said about Hope giving way to Darkness concerns me,” Matt said, glancing at his brother and Koichi. “Any idea what that could mean?”

Tai and Genbumon shook their heads.

“That’s the one uneasy part I find with this thing,” Tai sighed. “Watch yourselves you two.”

TK and Koichi nodded.

“The only thing to do is let things work themselves out,” Koji stated. “I’m more concerned about this new Warrior of Fire. I don’t like the idea of finding someone that will replace Takuya. No one can take his place.”

The room grew uneasily silent.

“But,” Koji sighed. “It does say that this new warrior will lead us to defeat the unknown Zaigou of Pride and fight off the Zaigou of Gluttony, right? So I suppose he can’t be that bad.”

Relief was evident as held in breaths were released around the table.

“So I take it we’re going south?” Zoe asked.

“That’s what I think we should do,” Tai said. “The prophecy said that Wind, you Zoe, would take up the final medallion, and that tells me that we go for that one last. Time to trade in ice for sand, guys. The only problem is that we’d have to go through the heart of the enemy’s territory just to get there.”

“Not necessarily,” Koji muttered, thinking back to his dream.

“What was that, Koji?” Matt asked.

“I said that that might not be the case,” Koji spoke louder. “I know this might sound crazy, Lord Genbumon, but is there a series of tunnels underneath the city heading south?”

Lord Genbumon’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Yes, there are tunnels going not only south, but in every other direction as well,” the old man rasped. “The tunnels themselves form an intricate maze that very few could navigate, but the passageway to get to them has long since been sealed. Any other entrance to the catacombs below is unknown to me, so how is it that you know about the tunnels?”

“Like I said,” Koji said, “it may sound crazy, but I was shown a maze of tunnels in a dream. There has to be an entrance to get down there that you remain unaware of. Maybe a secret entrance or trap door?”
“Ah!” Kazu and Kenta gasped, startling everyone.

“I remembered!” Kazu cried, glancing wildly at Kenta. “Remember what we did after the meeting this afternoon?”

“Yeah.” Kenta nodded. “You and I were looking for secret or hidden rooms in the castle.”

“Why would you idiots do something so stupid?” Rika scowled.

“Shush!” Kazu held up a hand, palm out, at her. “Guardromon’s scanners didn’t pick anything up, but on the fourth floor-!”

“That warped door carving,” Kenta picked up, “that Marineangemon found turned out to be a trapdoor that dropped us down a slide and into some dark room with a weird version of the Warrior of Fire’s symbol on the torches’ housings. There was a maze of tunnels, but they branched off in different directions.”

“We followed a guy wearing what looked like Jedi robes,” Kazu took over. “He led us down the tunnels to a dead end! He had just vanished! Kenta stood where he had and vanished too! I followed with Guardromon and we ended up in this weird room! My mind’s a blank as to what happened after that, but I remember seeing the guy without his hood!”

“I did too,” Kenta gasped.

“It was Takuya!” they cried in unison.

Several people exchanged bewildered looks.

“No it wasn’t,” Koji sighed, interrupting the sudden uproar that was breaking out.

“What do you mean?” Kazu exclaimed. “You weren’t there! You only saw it in a dream!”

“I saw it when you touched my shoulder earlier,” Koji stated.

“You mean when you had that fit?” Kazu asked, puzzled.

“Pretty much. Tell me, did Takuya have golden eyes?” Koji asked.

“Yes,” Kenta and Kazu said slowly, trading confused glances.

“Then it wasn’t the real Takuya,” Koji sighed, his expression sad and disappointed. “That boy you saw was merely using his form. Because you saw the warrior’s symbol for fire, you must have unconsciously expected the boy to be Takuya. This guy’s actually a spy for the Zaigou.”

“And how do you know all of this?” Tai asked.

Koji then proceeded to tell everyone about his strange dream and what Takuya had told him. By the end of his explanation everyone was silent.

“So apparently we can use the tunnels,” Matt mused, “but we’ll have to be careful down there if there’s a Zaigou’s lackey running about.”

Many others nodded in agreement.

“So you’re psychic now?” Koichi whispered, grinning at his twin.
Koji grimaced.

“Who knows,” he groaned. “First you gain a power, then JP, now me. I suppose Tommy is next and then it’s only a matter of time before Zoe gets one too.”

The five warriors traded amused glances and sighed. Things were sure getting stranger and stranger in this world.

“Well then,” Tai called out, gaining everyone’s attention again. “Get a good night’s rest tonight. You’re going to need it. We’ll set out first thing tomorrow. Kenta and Kazu, I want you to show me where this trap door to the tunnels is, and Koji, I’d appreciate it if you would tell me about any other dreams you have about upcoming events. Especially any that Takuya speaks to you in.”

Koji nodded and Kenta and Kazu left with Tai and their Digimon to show him where the trap door was.

“What now?” Zoe asked.

“Go to sleep,” Koji stated simply. “Especially you, JP. Do you think you’ll be up for a long journey?”

JP sighed. “I’ve got a few more treatments before we leave in the morning, but I should be good to go. Besides, I’ve gotta score to settle with Wrath.”

Koichi smiled.

“I’d hate to be in his shoes.”

JP’s expression became a mixture of a grin and a grimace.

“We’ll see. I’m in no condition for a scuffle at the moment.”

Everyone was soon settled down for the night, but Koji had a restless sleep. He couldn’t recall what he’d been dreaming about this time, but he remembered the vision he had just before he woke up. It was of Koichi and TK. TK was standing over Koichi’s prone figure, arms outstretched. There was a look of cold determination on his face before it suddenly broke out into one of excruciating pain. Koji could feel his pain. It was this pain that jolted him out of his sleep with a gasp. He glanced the sleeping bundled forms of Tommy and Koichi and let out a sigh of relief that he hadn’t woken either of them. He got up and went out onto the balcony connected to their room for some fresh air. It was freezing outside, but it swept away the terror and anxiety of the nightmare. He just couldn’t rid himself of the image of TK’s protective stance over his twin, however. He’d have to warn Matt about that.

“He’ll be fine,” a voice whispered in his ear. “Nothing bad will happen to TK.”

Koji whirled around. No one was there, but there was the just the slightest hint of fire in the air. Koji looked around the palace’s spires, but the closest chimney was downwind of him. He frowned; confused for a moment, but then remembered that the kitchens were a couple floors below him.

“It was just the stupid wind,” he muttered before returning to his bed to reclaim what little time for sleep he had left.

Was it really just Koji’s imagination at work? Or is T.K. and Koichi really in for some rough times
ahead? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Whew! That was a hard chapter to write. Be honest. How many of you thought that it was Takuya in the jedi robes? Well, you were half right, but you were also half wrong! Sorry. :P

So what did you think? I know many of you did, so I'm sorry that it wasn't the case, but the Warrior of Fire did make an appearance! I hoped you liked it and I'm sorry if these newer chapters are looking shorter then usual, but in my defense I was a college student when writing this and I had classes and tests that I needed to take so I was lucky enough to get two chapters out a week! I hope you guys are enjoying them. The plot is thickening and it is only a matter of time before something major happens. See you all in chapter 23!
Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

Koji has a dream about the same hooded boy that Kenta and Kazu met in the tunnels, but Takuya’s spirit warns Koji not to touch or look him in the eye. Takuya’s spirit manages to chase the Zaigou lackey away and after warning Koji that the guy might be after him and others, Koji wakes up and Koichi takes him to dinner. On the way they run into Kenta, Kazu, and their Digimon. When Kazu touches Koji on the shoulder, he sees a vision of their experience in the tunnels and the mysterious robed boy. Rika and Renamon show up and drag them all off to dinner. After dinner, Lord Genbumon gives his Ice Medallion to Tommy and tells them the first of three prophecies that Lord Byakkomon informed them of in Sekizou. While discussing plans for traveling south, Kenta and Kazu remember their adventure from that afternoon and the group decides to travel by the underground tunnels before turning in for bed.

Chapter Notes

Chapter 23~ ! Yay! This one came rather quickly to mind and I have a feeling the next one will too. Now enough of my blabberings. I'll save that for the end. For now enjoy the latest chapter of this ever growing fan fic! Please read and review! WARNING: we are getting a little graphic again, but what's a little gore? On that rather happy note, ENJOY!

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World – Location: Himizu City’s Tunnel Maze

It was midmorning and everyone had finally managed to get down the insane trapdoor and slide into the underground chamber that Kenta and Kazu had discovered the day before. The torches that lined the walls and continued into the tunnels were still lit and the entrance to the maze loomed ahead.

“What a dump,” Rika had scowled after she landed rather ungracefully on top of Ryo.

The two of them bickered for a moment, but got out of the way in time for the next person to come down the slide. Ryo headed off somewhere, fuming, with Cyberdramon while Rika complained to Takato and Henry.

“Hey, gogglehead!” Rika snarled at Takato when she realized that he wasn’t listening to her. He had been glancing around the chamber instead.
“Huh?” Takato blinked.

Terriermon giggled at him from Henry’s shoulder.

“Typical,” Rika huffed, turning on her heel and stormed off with Renamon to join Mimi and Yolei.

“Smooth, Takato,” Henry sighed. “Now she’s going to be in a foul mood for the rest of the morning.”

“When is Rika ever in a good mood?” Terriermon asked.

“That’s rude, Terriermon,” Henry scolded.

“Rude but true,” Terriermon said in singsong.

Takato and Guilmon chuckled, agreeing wholeheartedly, but Henry continued to frown.

“Was she talking about anything important?” Takato asked, trying to keep a straight face.

“Not really,” Henry admitted. “She was just complaining about Ryo again.”

“Can’t those two give it a rest?” Terriermon sighed. “All they seem to do lately is complain about each other.”

“Yeah!” Guilmon nodded. “It’s starting to hurt my ears.”

“You don’t have ears!” Terriermon laughed. “Unless you count those bat like wings on the top of your head!”

“Takato? I have ears, don’t I?” Guilmon asked, tilting his head to the side.

“Uh,” Takato gulped, not really sure how to answer him. He honestly hadn’t been thinking about ears when he’d created Guilmon.

“Sure you do,” Henry answered. “You wouldn’t be able to hear us otherwise.”

Takato threw him a grateful glance and Guilmon seemed to be more than satisfied with the answer. Terriermon jumped from Henry’s shoulder to sit on Guilmon’s back.

“When do you think Tai’s gonna get us going?” Takato asked.

Henry shrugged.

“As soon as everyone’s ready to go I guess,” was his reply.

“That could take a while,” Terriermon sighed.

Henry raised his eyes to the ceiling, wishing his partner was just a little more tactful and less blunt.

“Allright everyone!” Tai’s voice called out. “Let’s get a move on!”

“It’s about time,” the boys heard Rika sigh aloud.

“She really is in a bad mood today,” Henry sighed.

“Must have woken up on the wrong side of the bed,” Takato chuckled. “Either that or her collision with Ryo was worse than we thought.”
“She sure likes to hang out with the Mimi girl lately,” Terriermon noted as a moody Rika passed by with a giggling Mimi.

“I think she reminds Rika of her mother a little,” Henry observed. “Mimi is into fashion and all of that.”

“Yolei too,” Takato nodded as they started following some others through the tunnel-maze entrance. “Makes sense. I’ve also started to miss my parents. We’ve been here for roughly a week, right? Mom’s probably worried sick and Dad… well I’m sure he’s worried too, but he’s probably trying to reassure Mom that I’m alright.”

“My mom’s probably in pieces,” Henry sighed. “She knows that I can take care of myself well enough, but Suzie…”

Henry looked over to where Suzie was walking a little ways ahead of them with Ai and Mako under Jeri and Sora’s watchful eyes.

“Who are we kidding?” Takato laughed weakly. “Everyone’s parents must be freaking out. Oh…”

“What?” Henry asked.

“I was just thinking about Takuya’s family,” Takato said sadly. “He once told me about his little brother. How do you think the family will handle his death? My Mom would be devastated if I died here. My Dad once said that no parent should ever have to bury their own child, but I bet it’s worse to have no body to bury at all.”

Henry took on a somber look.

“I think that once they hear the story, they’ll be proud of him,” he finally said. “Takuya died protecting all of us and took out one of the Zaigou all on his own. We didn’t really do that much to help him. None of us are really strong enough to do what he did.”

“I think you’re giving the guy too much credit,” Terriermon said. “He got lucky if you ask me. He just happened to strike at the right time and used the element of surprise.”

“Terriermon,” Henry said warningly.

“What?” his partner asked innocently.

Takato sighed and Guilmon tilted his head to the side.

“I think that boy was brave,” Guilmon said with a nod.

“Brave, sure, but-!”

“Don’t say it, Terriermon,” Henry said threateningly while worriedly eyeing Koji and Koichi who were walking ahead of them near the front of the group.

“What do you think about the powers the Warrior DigiDestined are gaining?” Takato asked quickly in order to change the subject.

“Not sure,” Henry muttered, eager to shift gears. “You’d think that it would be enough to be the only humans able to independently change into Digimon without a partner Digimon to aid the process. Why should they get powers on top of everything else?”

“It kinda makes you feel a little inferior doesn’t it?” Takato sighed.
“Mmm,” Henry hummed. “At least it's not some sort of random thing. I’ve heard that JP can see energy flows with that scarred eye of his and everyone knows that Koichi’s got that power to see the darkness in a person. At least their powers are related to the elements that they represent.”

“Koichi’s new power sure didn’t improve his popularity though,” Terriermon mused. “Even before he had it, it was like he had the plague or something. Few of the Adventurer DigiDestined wanted to have anything to do with him because his element is Darkness. After he told us about his power, it really freaked some of them out even more. It all sounds kinda silly if you ask me. It’s not as if the guy ever gave them an excuse to hate him, so who cares if he represents Darkness? I like the dark.”

“Me to!” Guilmon smiled. “When it’s dark, you can see the stars in the sky.”

“At least he’s getting along with them better,” Takato said with a smile, watching TK and Cody chat with Koichi and a weary Koji.

“Yeah.” Henry smiled. “Now if only his twin would lighten up.”

“So do you think Koji is psychic now?” Takato asked in a low voice.

“Dunno,” Henry mused, watching the Warrior of Light’s back. “I hope not. That guy’s as taut as a bowstring. Any more pressure will make him snap. He’s already worried about what’s going on in the present and what’s happened in the past. He can’t afford to worry about the future. It’s no wonder that he’s having those weird dreams.”

“In other words,” Terriermon smiled, “the guy’s acting like he’s got a stick stuck up his butt.”

Takato choked back a laugh while Henry nearly stumbled over his own feet.

“Terriermon!” he cried.

“That’s what Matt said anyways.” The carefree Digimon shrugged his long ears. “He said that Koji is so serious that he acts as if he’s got a sick stuck up his butt.”

“I don’t care what Matt said,” Henry said through gritted teeth. “Don’t you ever repeat that again to anybody! It’s rude and inappropriate.”

Takato was still choking back laughter when Ryo decided to join them.

“What’s so funny, Takato?” he asked.

Takato cracked up again, but waved it off.

“What’s so funny, Takato?” he asked.

Takato cracked up again, but waved it off.

“Nothing,” Henry growled, shooting Terriermon a withering look that said he better not repeat what was said.

Ryo just shrugged it off anyways. He looked ahead and found himself locking eyes with Rika. She scowled before quickly turning away to studiously ignore him.

“Rika’s being a pain as usual this morning,” Ryo grumbled. “Even though she’s the one who landed on top of me.”

Henry groaned. He’d already sat through Rika’s complaints and was not looking forward to going through it again, but Ryo laughed when he saw his reaction.

“She gave you an earful earlier I take it,” he chuckled. “Figures. What’s her deal anyway?”
Henry and Takato shrugged.

“Who knows?” Henry sighed. “Rika’s always going off about something.”

“She just needs to learn how to relax,” Terriermon said, nodding knowingly.

“I suppose.” Ryo grinned. “But she wouldn’t be Rika if she didn’t complain about something.”

“You two sure have been fighting a lot,” Terriermon piped up, earning himself another glare from his Tamer.

“I suppose,” Ryo mused. “What do you think Cyberdramon?”

Neither Takato nor Henry had noticed that the large dragon Digimon had also joined them, so they jumped when he spoke.

“Often,” the tall Digimon grunted. “I’d say you two fight often.”

“Do we?” Ryo laughed. “Hadn’t noticed. I thought that all this time it was playful banter, seeing as Rika and I are both intellectuals and professional Tamers. Although she is too uptight when it comes to the intellectual part. Always thinks she is or has to be right.”

Takato and Henry exchanged uneasy glances, but couldn’t help agreeing with Ryo on that last point.

“So how do you guys feel about traveling through these tunnels?” Ryo asked, all humor gone.

“Alright I guess,” Takato shrugged, but Henry took his time before answering.

“I find it a little unsettling,” he finally stated. “We don’t know where we will end up – not that that’s anything new – and we are at a slight disadvantage down here. If we were attacked there’ll be very little room to maneuver around in and allow our Digimon to Digivolve to their higher levels. For example, I can’t see Growlmon, Greymon or Kabuterimon even fitting in here to fight.”

“That’s exactly what I’ve been thinking,” Ryo nodded. “It’s very risky. Not to mention that this area might be under a Zaigou’s control. If what Koji was saying is true then they’ve already got a spy down here.”

“You think Tai’s made a mistake in having us travel down here?” Takato asked, beginning to feel a little uneasy himself.

“It's possible,” Ryo said grimly.

Suddenly everyone stopped up ahead. At first they couldn’t figure out why, but then they heard someone say that they’d reached the first fork in the maze.

At the front of the group, Tai was looking uneasily around him. There were eight different tunnels to choose from.

“Any ideas Izzi?” he asked.

“No,” Izzi sighed, frustrated. “My laptop is as messed up as Guardromon’s sensors. Kenta and Kazu said that they couldn’t remember which turns they’d made when they were down here earlier because they’d been chasing that strange boy, but even if they did remember I wouldn’t want to
lead everyone to a dead end that would only result in us ending back up at the palace. I could give an educated guess on which tunnel we should take based on direction, but I don’t want to resort to that. We’d be better off traveling above ground.”

“Well then,” Tai sighed turning to look at the group behind him. “What do you think Koji? You’re a psychic now, right? Got any ideas?”

Koji frowned slightly, but he closed his eyes and remained silent for a moment in deep thought. Koichi did the same thing beside him, reaching out for any traces of darkness. He was the first to snap out of his reverie.

“We shouldn’t take any of the first three to our left or the second and fourth tunnels on our right,” Koichi told Tai.

“Well that certainly narrows it down,” Izzi mused, pulling up a chart on his laptop, marking the tunnels Koichi had mentioned with an X.

“What are you doing Izzi?” Tai asked.

“I’m making a map of the tunnels,” Izzi informed him. “That way if we need to backtrack we’ll have an idea of where we’ve been and how to get back. So now that we know that, for this first fork – counting from left to right – we need to take either the fourth, sixth, or eighth tunnel.”

“It’s the fourth,” Koji suddenly stated, opening his eyes. “The fourth tunnel is the one we should take.”

“Are you sure?” Tai asked.

“Positive,” Koji nodded.

Tai looked into Koji’s cobalt blue eyes. He saw no hesitation in them, but could he really afford to lead everyone in that direction without any solid reason other than Koji’s word?

“How do you know that’s the right tunnel?” Matt asked from his position beside Tai. Sometimes it was as if Matt could read his best friend’s mind.

Koji shrugged, but the look in his eyes did not waver.

“How come Koichi can detect the amount of darkness within a person? How can JP see and feel the flow of energy inside of things?” he asked reasonably. “All I can say is that I just know. Maybe there is a voice inside my head telling me where to go. Who really knows? But I am certain, for some reason, that the fourth tunnel is the one that we need to take. I’m afraid that all I can give you is my word on the matter.”

“I wouldn’t worry too much about it.” Tai smiled at Matt. “We’ve got Izzi drawing up a chart of the tunnels. If we meet a dead end we’ll just back track and choose another.”

Matt still looked uncertain, but he nodded and gestured for Tai to continue to lead them on ahead. Even he could see how sure Koji was in his assumption. After that, whenever they came to another fork in the maze of tunnels both Koji and Koichi tried to sense which tunnel would be the right one to take and which ones would be the wrong ones. Izzi was careful to make a note in his diagram that he marked whatever tunnels Koichi deemed a bad idea to travel down with an X and the ones that Koji told them to take with a circle. They continued on without too many delays or problems, but after an entire afternoon’s worth of traveling, the torches’ flames began to dim. It was as if the tunnels were informing them that they’d better bed down for the “night.” Tai had them make camp
in the next intersection that they came across and set up watches just like they would have if they were above ground and out in the open. Even though the torches continued to dim within the next couple hours, they never extinguished completely, giving the DigiDestined a small but comforting source of light.

Koichi had felt as if he’d just drifted off into sleep when he felt a hand clamp down over his mouth. His eyes flew open and he tried to sit up, but a hand pressed firmly down on his shoulder. Because he was the Warrior of Darkness, his eyes instantly adjusted to the dim lighting of the space, and could easily make out the figure crouched beside him.

“Relax,” a voice whispered into his ear. “It’s just me.”

Koichi let out a sigh of relief and frustration as the hand over his mouth slowly pulled back.

“TK,” he breathed softly. “What the heck was that about? You nearly gave me a heart attack! What if you’d woken up Koji?”

He quickly glanced beside him to make sure his twin was still fast asleep. Both he and TK remained silent and watched the dark form of Koji to make sure that the boy hadn’t awoken.

“Sorry,” TK whispered back. “It’s time to start our watch. Cody and Tommy are waiting to be relieved.”

“Alright,” Koichi sighed before standing.

The two of them carefully made their way around the sleeping bodies of their friends and took Cody and Tommy’s place for the new watch shift with Patamon. None of them spoke for the first hour of the watch, but that was simply because they had nothing they really wanted to talk about. It was a peaceful quiet that hung in the air between them as they listened to the sounds of their sleeping companions. Sometimes they could hear the occasional chuckle from the other side of the space where Ryo and Ken were standing guard with Cyberdramon and Wormmon.

“That’s odd,” Koichi suddenly whispered, almost to himself.

“What is?” TK yawned.

“I’m not sure,” Koichi muttered as he turned to face the tunnel that they had their backs to. “I sense a weird dark aura.”

“What?” TK gasped. “Could it be Paressemon?”

“I don’t think so.” Koichi shook his head. “The aura is too different from hers. It’s not all that dark actually. It could just be your average undergrounder like Drimogemon. I don’t sense anything particularly menacing about the aura.”

He felt TK relax slightly beside him.

“Should we check it out anyway?” asked Patamon.

“Maybe,” Koichi said. “But let’s let someone know where we’re off to first. Maybe tell Tai or Ken and Ryo.”

“That’s a good idea,” TK nodded.
They quickly, but quietly skirted the edge of the camp to Ken and Ryo’s position where they also found Tai, who wasn’t asleep yet since he’d recently gotten off the first shift. Koichi informed them all about the unusual aura.

“We’re just going to go check it out,” TK reassured them. “I’ll let you guys know what we find via the D-Terminal.”

“Alright.” Ken nodded.

“Be careful you two,” Ryo warned.

“We will,” Koichi said, smiling. “After all, we’ve got Patamon with us.”

“Leave it to me!” Patamon stated, thumping his chest.

“All the same, Patamon, I think Agumon and I’d better go with you three,” Tai sighed, turning to wake his Digimon. “Your brothers would kill me if anything happened to you two.”

Uneasy chuckles rose up softly in the air because no one wanted to see the wrath of an upset Koji or Matt. The three DigiDestined and two Digimon quickly entered the tunnel where Koichi could sense the source of the odd aura. They were growing a little uneasy because they were already a long ways away from the camp.

“It should be right around here,” Koichi muttered as they turned another bend in the tunnel. In front of them they could make out the shape of large mound. The torchlight was just too dim for Tai, TK, Agumon and Patamon to make out the shape clearly, but Koichi could and instantly realized that he’d been right.

“It’s just a Drimogemon,” he sighed, relieved.

“Are you sure about that?” a feminine voice giggled.

They were on their guard in an instant as the Drimogemon suddenly moved and stared at them with beady glossed over eyes. It was being controlled.

“Gotcha,” the voice giggled again and from behind the mole Digimon, Paressemon appeared out of thin air. “Time for you to take a little stroll with me my dear Warrior of Darkness.”

“I don’t think so,” Tai said grimly, placing himself between the Zaigou and Koichi. TK moved to do the same.

“Well I do,” Paressemon said darkly and reached out her hand towards Koichi. “Come with me Dark and I promise that your friends won’t get hurt. I’ll even give them the means to leave these tunnels unharmed and reach Netsusa without any detours or interference from the other Zaigou. I give you my word like I did back in the western forest.”

“What do you want with him?” TK demanded.

“That is none of your concern,” she said breezily.

“Sorry, but no,” Tai stated with finality.

“I’ll be fine, Tai,” Koichi said, placing a hand on the older boy’s shoulder. “She won’t hurt me.”

“I won’t,” Paressemon said, grinning. “I’ll promise you that too if you’d like.”
“I’m sorry, Koichi, but I can’t let you do that,” Tai said, ignoring the Zaigou. “We’ve already lost one member of the DigiDestined and I won’t stand by and let another one go without a fight. Think about Koji. He’s still distraught over losing Takuya. What do you think your disappearance will do to him even if she doesn’t hurt you?”

Koichi remained silent and Paressemon glared angrily at Tai.

“You said that you wouldn’t stand by and let him go, didn’t you?” she asked coldly.

“That’s right,” Tai nodded.

“Then how about you kneel!” she snarled and with a snap of her fingers Drimogemon lunged forward, its drill buzzing in the cold tunnel air.

Agumon and Patamon leaped into action. The tunnel was too small for Agumon to Digivolve but that didn’t stop Patamon from becoming Angemon. Agumon blinded the possessed Digimon with his Pepper Breath and Angemon parried its drill with his staff. But while the Digimon were taking on Drimogemon, Paressemon darted past them and with a swipe of her hand she sent Tai flying into the opposite wall. He slid to the floor winded and dazed.

“Tai!” TK cried out and found himself face to face with the adolescent Zaigou. He didn’t know what she’d done, but suddenly Koichi crumpled behind him and fell in a heap. Instinctively TK threw out his arms and stared angrily into Paressemon’s eyes. She seemed to be amused by the pathetic way he was shielding Koichi, but there was admiration in her analyzing gaze as well.

“TK!” he heard Angemon cry out, followed by the shrill cry of the Drimogemon.

There was a small gasp followed by a thud, but since TK could still hear Angemon fighting he knew that it had to have been Agumon. Things were not looking good, but that didn’t stop TK from keeping up his protective stance. He was finally beginning to understand Koichi and they were well on their way to becoming good friends.

“There is no way in hell that I’m going to leave Koichi alone with you or any of the other Zaigou,” TK swore aloud.

“TK!” Angemon cried out desperately again, unable to disengage from battle.

“Is that so?” Paressemon smiled sweetly. “Then you leave me no choice. I’ll have to take you as well.”

“No!” Tai’s voice cried out hoarsely in unison with Angemon’s.

TK stared determinedly at Paressemon, feet stubbornly planting him between her and Koichi. Her smile only widened as she reached out towards him and with a gentle pushing motion, a sonic wave pulsed from her hand, through the air and struck him. Pain racked through his body and he cried out loudly. The sound echoed throughout the tunnel and ended up waking many of the sleeping DigiDestined back at camp. Koji had actually felt it and rushed off to get Matt, already knowing who it was that was screaming. The two of them rushed off with Ken and Ryo and their Digimon before anyone else could stop them.

Back in the tunnel TK crumpled next to Koichi but before he lost consciousness, he gripped Koichi’s hand. He was in too much shock to feel Koichi return the grip reflexively, but he saw it.

“I won’t let anything happen to you… my friend,” TK promised under his breath before everything went black.

Tai forced himself up from the wall that he’d been thrown against and, despite still being a little winded, he took up the same defensive position as TK before the two fallen boys.


“Over my dead body,” Tai panted.

“Humans are such silly creatures,” she sighed. “But if you insist-!”

Paressemon lunged forward again, but instead of simply swatting him away like last time she drew a dagger from the folds of her dress and slashed him across the chest. Tai stumbled back, almost tripping over TK’s legs, leaving him no time to ward off her follow up attack. She slashed at him again in a series of swipes, grazing his right cheek, left temple and nicking his right shoulder before sliding the long blade home into the center of his chest deep enough in for the tip to protrude out his back. Time seemed to stop as Tai and Paressemon locked eyes. The fire seemed to dim slightly in his, but he was still alive and conscious… for the moment. She leaned in as if to kiss him, but her lips glided over sweat dewed skin to his right ear.

“I was careful to make clean cuts and pierce you just below your heart,” she whispered. “You should still be alive by the time the others reach you. I just hope your medic knows enough about crystal healing to save you. I’d hate to have you die by my hands, DigiDestined of Courage. It is an unfit death for one as noble as yourself. I do not relish in killing like all of the other Zaigou, so know that I do not take this action against you lightly. We both know that I wouldn’t have been able to take Dark and his friend with you in the way. I hope that one day you will come to forgive me.”

Tai stared incredulously over her shoulder, barely able to see Angemon fail in his attempts to disengage in his fight with Drimogemon in order to reach TK while protecting Agumon’s unconscious form at the same time. Tai’s vision was beginning to fade around the edges, but he held on to consciousness. The Zaigou of Laziness was now reaching into the folds of her dress again and withdrew a glowing golden sphere.

“I do promise you, young man, that no harm will befall these two boys. I swear on my life,” she stated firmly pulling away from him enough for him to see her slash a promise X over where her heart should be with a long fingernail, “that you will find them safely again in the desert city of Netsusa. Take this orb and it will not only guide you all safely there, but it will also warn you if any of the other Zaigou are nearby. It will glow whenever one is close like it is doing now with me here.”

She tucked the orb away in his pocket and gently set him down against the wall. She could hear the hurried footsteps of the other DigiDestined in the distance with her sharp hearing, but they were still a long way off. She glanced over her shoulder at the struggling Angemon and then back to Tai. She had left the dagger in his chest so that his blood wouldn’t spill out and cause him to bleed to death before help arrived, but she knew she’d have to take it back if she didn’t want the other Zaigou harassing her about taking care of the weapons that the Master had generously given her. It was a dagger specially made for her after all.

“I am sorry,” she told Tai before snapping her fingers, summoning another one of her servants. It was the lizard Digimon she’d sent into Himizu City to bring Koichi to her. It had failed in its mission, but she’d expected it to.

“My Lady?” it hissed.
“Take the boys,” she ordered with a wave of her hand.

“As you wish,” it bowed before gathering up the limp forms of TK and Koichi.

Angemon let out another anguished and desperate cry, but couldn’t get away from Drimogemon in order to stop the lizard Digimon from vanishing. Paressemon watched the distraught angel Digimon for a moment before returning her attention back to Tai and her dagger. She paused and stared deep into his clouding chocolate brown eyes. Despite the fact that he was dying, they glowed brightly with an inner fire. It unsettled her how sharp and aware those eyes were in spite of his condition, but they also drew her to him. This was the leader of the DigiDestined and he was certainly not about to go down without a fight.

“Farewell, DigiDestined of Courage,” she said softly. “I do hope we meet again under different circumstances.”

She kneeled down beside him and gently gripped the handle of her dagger. Those unnerving brown eyes had not stopped staring into her own once since she’d reestablished eye contact, and now they narrowed as she seemed to unconsciously lean in towards him. She could not explain it but those eyes simply drew her in. This time she did kiss him softly, gently, her lips pressed against his, and in that moment something sparked between them. Alarmed, Paressemon backed away from him quickly, the dagger sliding out of Tai’s chest with its owner in her retreat. He let out a cry of pain and blood flowed out of the wound. He clutched at his chest, trying to hold himself together as his life’s blood poured out of him. He somehow managed to look up at her with those damning eyes. They seemed to burn holes into her yet she could not bring herself to look away.

“I really am sorry,” she gasped, finally tearing her eyes away from his face. “Drimogemon! We are leaving.”

With another snap of her fingers she and the mole Digimon were gone. When she reappeared in her personal chambers far from the underground tunnels, she rubbed her temples and eyes. When she withdrew her hand she was surprised to find that on the back of her right index finger there was a single shed tear.

Wow. Are Zaigou’s really capable of crying? Paressemon seems to. What does she have planed for Koichi? And what about Tai? Will help reach him in time? Find out on next time on Digimon Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

Yikes! I totally returned to the dark side on this one. Like Paressemon, I am really sorry to Tai and all his fans. I hate leaving you all on such a depressing note, but I promise that the next chapter will go up real soon. Other than that I’m not gonna say much on the matter. The story is really starting to pick up again though and that makes me happy! Now we’re getting somewhere. There were a lot more chapters than I’d originally planed to happen between the last story arch with Aiyokumon (Lust) and this new one.

Have any of you figured out Paressemon yet? I don't think even I have, and I'm the
writer! O.O She's just strange, even for a Zaigou. I know what I want to happen concerning her, but this fic is really starting to write itself even more, so I don't know how much control I have over the outcome. Maybe it'll come out the way I want it, maybe it won't. Either way it's gonna be fantastic! :D
Greif, Guilt and Apologies

Chapter Summary

Previously on Digimon: Digital Monsters...

The DigiDestined begin their travels in the underground tunnels. Henry and Takato and many others are a little unsure about the decision to travel underground, especially when their directions are being determined by Koichi’s ability to sense dark forces and Koji’s new psychic abilities. The torches lighting the tunnels grow dim as the day become night above ground, so the group sets up camp for the night. During their watch shift, Koichi detects a dark aura and, after informing Ken and Ryo of their intentions, he leaves with TK, Tai and their Digimon partners. It turns out to be a Drimogemon controlled by Paressemon. After she knocks out Koichi and TK, she deals with Tai while Angemon and Agumon fight Drimogemon. She stabs Tai, but is careful to avoid internal organs and gives him an orb that is supposed to lead him and the DigiDestined out of the tunnels and help them detect the presence of Zaigou. Then she disappears with TK and Koichi.

Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN DIGIMON ADVENTURE 02, TAMERS, FRONTIER OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Digital World: Location: Somewhere in the Underground Tunnels

Angemon didn’t know what to do. TK and Koichi were gone, Agumon was out cold, Tai was bleeding to death, and he was exhausted from his battle with an unusually strong Drimogemon. He could feel his data crying out to allow itself to DeDigivolve back into Patamon, but he couldn’t allow himself to do that. Not yet. He needed to get Tai help first. After gathering what little strength he had left, Angemon tucked Agumon under his arm and gently gathered Tai in his other. He could feel the liquid substance of the human’s blood soak his side and that made him uneasy. He’d never seen a human bleed this badly before. He took off as fast as he could, soaring down the tunnel so fast that he almost didn’t see Matt, Koji, Ryo, Ken, and their Digimon until he was upon them. He halted his flight but in the dim light, figures were hard to make out.

“Angemon!” Matt cried out, recognizing the angle champion form of his brother’s Digimon. “Are you hurt?! You’re bleeding! Where’s TK?”

“It’s not my blood. I’m not even sure if Digimon can bleed,” Angemon gasped as he fell to his knees. He was careful not to disturb Tai too much, but he ended up dropping Agumon in the process. The small yellow dinosaur Digimon groaned and began to stir. Gabumon rushed over to his side friend’s side while Matt approached Angemon’s bleeding cargo for a better look, praying that it wasn’t his brother. When he saw who it was he was both relieved and horrified.
“Tai?” Matt gasped. “Oh God, what happened to him?!?”

He took Tai from Angemon and the moment he did, Angemon reverted back into Patamon and collapsed. Ken picked up the little Digimon and Ryo saw to Agumon. Koji remained beside Matt, looking down, shocked, at their injured leader. Tai’s breathing was shallow and he was wavering in and out of consciousness, but he had heard Matt’s voice.

“Matt,” he rasped.

“I’m here, Tai!” Matt cried, holding his best friend close. “I’m right here. Koji, Ken, and Ryo are here too. We’re going to get you to Joe. Everything is going to be alright, Tai, so stay with me, ok?”

“I’m… sorry,” Tai coughed. “I’m so… sorry. I… couldn’t …stop her. She…s got… them. TK and …Koichi.”

“Don’t talk,” Matt and Koji both ordered.

Tai had a round of wet sounding coughs and they knew that they didn’t have much time if they were going to save him. Koji took out his D-Tector and used his Beast Spirit to become KendoGarurumon. Since he had wheels on his heels that he could use to move, it would make a much smoother ride for Tai than actually bounding along using his legs.

“Let’s go,” he barked.

Matt wasted no time boarding KendoGarurumon’s back and with Ryo and Ken’s help, they got Tai up as quickly and smoothly as possible. While they did that, Matt had Gabumon digivolve to Garurumon for Ken, Agumon, and Wormmon to ride while Ryo just flew on Cyberdramon with Patamon. They all rushed down the tunnel as fast as they dared and when they got back to camp they found everyone awake and in an uproar over their sudden disappearance. As they rushed in, it became deathly quiet until Kari screamed when she saw Matt dismount KendoGarurumon with her brother.

“TAI!!!” she cried, but Sora and Yolei held her back as Joe rushed forward with his medical kit in hand and JP at his heels. Everyone cleared a space as Joe ordered them around for things like a spare blanket or bowls of water. Ryo and Ken dispersed with their Digimon, quietly informing everyone what they knew of what had happened. Once Joe set to work on Tai, everyone but Matt, JP and Koji stayed clear, so as not to disturb him. Kari was a wreck; constantly demanding Ken to tell her what had happened to her brother and where her boyfriend was. Sora, Mimi, and Yolei did their best to console her, and Ken, with Ryo’s help, told her everything he knew, but what he knew wasn’t much.

Long hours passed by and few went back to sleep. The torches began to brighten up again, letting them know it was daytime above ground. Joe was still at work using whatever means he had; bandages, crystals, anything. Tai looked pale and feverish, but his breathing was becoming more regular and normal, if not a little labored. He’d lost a lot of blood. The crystals Joe had used sped up the clotting process in order to stop the bleeding so the wound looks a few days old instead of a few hours. They also healed any internal damage that had been done. Bandages and salves were used to keep the wound from reopening and getting infected.

During all the time Joe worked on Tai, JP had used some of the crystals to heal the minor wounds on Patamon and Agumon. He’d seen the Otokomon show Joe how to use them a number of times in the infirmary and ever since he found out that he could see and feel the energy they gave off when used, he had learned how to do the process himself. He was a little nervous though since this
was the first time he’d actually applied that knowledge, but he was also confident that he could do it. Agumon only had a slight bruise on the back of his head, but he was otherwise fine and easily healed. Patamon was bruised in many places and had a few scrapes, but he was more fatigued than anything else. Agumon had woken up an hour after his treatment and moved to be by Tai’s side as closely as Joe allowed him to be.

While JP had been making his presence useful, Matt and Koji couldn’t help but feel the opposite. All they could do was station themselves nearby and send away anyone who came to see Tai. It wasn’t until Joe put down the last of his medical implements and washed his hands in a now murky bowl of water, that they dared to allow themselves to come closer.

“How is he?” Matt whispered.

“He’s fine for now,” Joe sighed. “He was pierced just below the heart, causing some internal bleeding, but nothing vitally important was damaged. The crystals healed all that up. Tai was lucky. However, I did find some tissue damage that suggests that whatever stabbed him remained in his chest for a period of time before it was removed rather forcefully.”

“He was tortured?” JP whispered, growling slightly. “Damned Zaigou.”

“I don’t think so. There wasn’t enough damage to suggest that. We might learn more when Patamon wakes up. Is he still out?” Joe asked.

“Yes,” JP said, nodding. “He’s exhausted.”

“You would be too if you were fighting against a Zaigou’s lackey,” Koji pointed out rather reasonably. “They’re no amateurs when it comes to fighting.”

Matt studied the boy next to him. Like himself, Koji had just lost his brother, but he looked cool and collected, the exact opposite of how he’d been when Takuya was taken near the beginning of this crazy adventure. The sudden calm manner unnerved Matt. Didn’t Koji care that their brothers were missing? Matt tried to reason with himself that Koji was either exhausted or that Koichi’s kidnapping just hadn’t sunk in yet. When Matt looked away from Koji, he found himself looking at JP. They stared at each other for a moment. Matt could feel that the Warrior of Thunder was having similar thoughts about the Warrior of Light. It was like waiting for a bomb to explode. The only question was, what would set it off?

Tai suddenly groaned, drawing their attention back to the more pressing matter at hand.

“Tai?” Matt said softly. “Can you hear me?”

“Matt,” Tai rasped. “Where… am I?”

“Back at camp,” Agumon stated, inching closer to his human partner.

Tai groaned again.

“Camp? Great. Kari is going to kill me, if Paressemon hasn’t done that already.”

Matt and Joe laughed softly, knowing that Tai was only trying to make light of his condition. Tai chuckled too, but it made him gasp.

“Does it hurt?” Joe asked, reaching for more healing crystals inside his bag.

through and through with a bloody dagger. I was also smashed into a wall before that.”

“Everything is going to be alright, Tai,” Joe sighed. “I’ve treated your wounds as best as I can at the moment. I’m letting the crystals recharge before I use them again, but don’t worry. I’ll have you feeling as good as new in no time.”

“Don’t worry?” Tai growled. “Everything is going to be alright?”

Matt and Joe traded uneasy glances. They knew that tone all too well.

“You know full well that nothing is alright and you don’t want me to worry!” Tai asked incredulously, his voice rising above the din of the chatter of the other DigiDestined. It echoed around the space, causing a hushed silence. Everyone was listening now.

“Of course I’m going to worry!” Tai exclaimed. “Forget the fact that I nearly bled to death and never mind the fact that mere seconds after that witch appeared, Paressemon sent me flying into the tunnel wall so hard that she winded me. She had a possessed Drimogemon knock Agumon out and kept Angemon locked in combat so that neither of them could help us fend her off. She knocked Koichi out, then shocked TK unconscious when he tried to stop her, while I could do nothing!”

Tai’s breathing was becoming erratic so Joe attempted to calm him down and Matt tried to help, but Tai suddenly sat up and looked at them both feverishly, each of his hands grabbing one of theirs, his grip surprisingly strong. A sob suddenly rose unbidden from his throbbing chest, making him groan again, but he pressed on with his rant.

“I couldn’t do anything and you don’t want me to worry.” Tai cried. “It was all I could do just to stand up and place myself between her, and TK and Koichi... TK was so brave, Matt. Angemon and I told him to run, but he stayed. He wouldn’t leave Koichi’s side. He stood there, with his arms stretched out, shielding him. When I saw her strike him down I tried... I tried to do the same for both of them, but-!”

Tai’s hand released Joe and gripped his chest as it throbbed painfully at the memory. Joe took the opportunity to gently settle Tai back down while Matt pried Tai’s other hand off his arm. Agumon watched all this and fidgeted nervously.

“Easy, Tai,” Joe said calmly. “You’ll reopen your wounds and ruin all that work I did to seal them. Please just rest.”

“Please, Tai,” Agumon begged.

Tai let out a gusty sigh before nodding, muttering an apology and lying back down. He looked mournfully at Matt and then Koji.

“I’m so sorry,” he whispered to them before Joe used a sedative crystal on him.

Tai was out in an instant.

“Poor, Tai,” JP sighed. “He’s had it rough.”

Agumon, Matt and Koji nodded mutely as Joe began to recheck Tai’s bandaged wounds to make sure none of them had reopened.

“You haven’t even heard half of it,” Patamon’s voice interrupted their quiet musings.
“Patamon!” Agumon cried, rushing to his newly conscious friend. “How are you feeling?”

“Hiya.” Patamon smiled weakly as he rose to his feet. “I feel like my wings are gonna fall off, but other than that I feel fine.”

“JP fixed you up,” Matt told him.

Patamon nodded his thanks at the Thunder Warrior and join them by Tai’s side.

“Will he be alright?” Patamon asked.

“He’ll be fine,” Koji answered. “He’ll be hurting for a couple days but he’ll be alright.”

Joe nodded, agreeing with Koji’s assessment, but Matt glanced nervously at him. He had to remind himself that there was a strong possibility that Koji was psychic now so instead of commenting he returned his attention to Patamon.

“You got him to us in time,” Matt said, smiling reassuringly. “Any later and Tai could well have been a goner. …Please don’t tell Kari I said that. She’s still very upset after all that’s happened.”

“At least I did something right.” Patamon smiled sadly. “I was just as helpless as Tai was at stopping Paressemon, but he had the hardest time. I got off easy fighting Drimogemon. …I’m sorry Matt. I’m TK’s Digimon, but I couldn’t save him.”

Patamon started to cry and Matt placed a sympathetic hand on the Digimon’s back. After a word from Joe they all left him alone with Tai and joined the others. Everyone quickly gathered around, wanting to hear what was going on. Kari held Patamon close, sighing with relief that Tai was going to be all right, but her worry for TK quickly took its place.

“What do you think she’s doing to him?” she cried.

“TK’s fine,” Koji stated.

“And how would you know that?!” Matt snapped, Koji’s cold calm finally getting to him, but he stopped when he saw the far off look in the boy’s eyes.

“Koichi is fine too,” Koji mused. “Paressemon hasn’t harmed either of them. I know that, Matt, because I can sense him. I can sense Koichi and he’s telling me that he and TK are alright.”

The Digital World: Location: Paressemon’s Palace

Koji was right. Miles away above ground somewhere in the north, Koichi was lying awake next to an unconscious TK. He didn’t know why TK was there, but wasn’t surprised and grateful that he was. He was surprised, however, when he saw where they were. He had been expecting a dungeon, but instead they were in a lavishly styled room on an enormous bed. He felt like he was dirty and covered in grim in such a clean space wearing clothes that needed to be washed after a week of traveling.

TK started to stir beside him and let out a low moan.

“Are you alright?” Koichi asked him.

“No,” TK groaned. “I feel like I was hit with a brick wall. Every part of me aches. …Where are we?”
“Not sure yet,” Koichi answered truthfully. “If I didn’t know any better, I’d say we were in a hotel suite, but…”

TK grunted as he managed to pull himself into a sitting position.

“Whoa,” he gaped. “Who checked us into the Plaza?”

“The Plaza?” Koichi repeated.

“It’s a famous luxury hotel in New York City. Mimi got Kari and I a room there when we went to visit her in America,” TK enlightened him.

The door at the end of the room suddenly opened and Koichi reached for his D-Tector but found it missing. TK pulled out his Digivice, but without Patamon it was virtually useless. A cheerful looking Swanmon came in with a tray and silently set it down somewhere out of their sight. Koichi assumed that there was a dinning area over there. The Swanmon quickly emerged, smiled, bowed, and left the room.

“That was odd,” TK muttered as he put away his digivice.

The smell of food wafted in from the unseen room, making their stomachs growl.

“Can you move?” Koichi asked TK

TK managed to adjust his sitting position so that he was sitting more erect, but even that simple action seemed to drain his energy. He frowned out of irritation, leaning against the bed’s headboard and pillows.

“I’ll get it,” Koichi offered and scooted off the bed.

The room was indeed grand. If it weren’t for the fact that they had been brought to this place by force, Koichi would have had a tough time believing that they were meant to be captives. When he turned the corner, he found that he was right about the suite having a dining area. The tray Swanmon and brought them sat steaming on a small red mahogany table that had matching chairs. Beyond the space he could see a hallway. He made a mental note to explore the rooms later, but for now his and TK’s stomachs needed filling. The tray held two bowls of some sort of herbal soup and a plate full of a dish that Koichi wasn’t familiar with, but it looked good. He carefully made his way back to TK and gave him his soup first before settling back on the bed with the rest of the food placed between them. The two ate in silence, appreciating the surprisingly good food.

“It’s so strange,” TK sighed when he was done eating. “We’re obviously prisoners, so why give us food and put us in a nice room? What’s Paressemon playing at?”

“Who knows?” Koichi shrugged. “I told you that she’s different from the other Zaigou. There has to be an ulterior motive for her to take the two of us.”

“Maybe, but it is you that she really wants,” TK shook his head. “She only took me because she had to. I told her that I wasn’t going to let her or any other Zaigou take you alone so she zapped me. I don’t know what she hit me with, but I sure felt it. I’m surprised she didn’t leave me behind with Tai.”

TK shuddered, and felt every bone in his body ache.

“Thank you,” Koichi said, smiling sadly. “That means a lot to me, TK. Not many people would do that.”
“Yeah well,” TK shrugged, “if this gets us killed, I’m gonna kick your butt in the afterlife.”

Koichi chuckled.

“I don’t think she means to do us any harm. If she did we wouldn’t be treated so well,” he reasoned. “And don’t sell yourself short, TK. Paressemon wouldn’t have brought you along with me if she didn’t want to. …You could be used as a hostage to get me to cooperate.”

“Great,” TK groaned. “Hadn’t thought of that. …How do you think Tai is?”

Koichi looked down guiltily.

“I don’t know,” he sighed. “I hope he’s alright. I hope neither of our brothers have beaten him up for losing us.”

TK bit his bottom lip nervously. Both of their brothers had the capability to react irrationally to their disappearance and blame it all on Tai.

There was a knock at their door and Swanmon reentered the room to take their empty food tray.

“My mistress wishes to speak to you,” she told Koichi. “Please follow me.”

TK tried to get up, but Swanmon stopped him.

“I’m afraid that she only wants the Warrior of Darkness,” she informed him gently.

“No way,” TK growled, struggling just to move, but Koichi rested a hand on his shoulder to hold him down.

“Yes way,” Koichi stated firmly. “You knew from the beginning that this was my intention. I’ll go see what Paressemon wants. I promise that I’ll come back, so just stay put and act like a good hostage.”

TK frowned, not liking the joke at all, but let out a sigh.

“You’re going to go whether I tell you, you can or not, aren’t you?”

“Yup!” Koichi smiled as he slipped off the bed and joined Swanmon by the door. “You just rest up and I’ll tell you everything when I get back.”

Koichi stepped out into the dark hallway. The place looked completely different from the rooms he’d just left. It was as if he’d stepped out of the modern day hotel and into a castle’s dungeon from the medieval times just by crossing over the door jam. Swanmon bowed at TK before shutting the door, but only she and Koichi could hear her slide a deadbolt lock into place with a resounding clang. Even if TK managed to get out of bed and move, he wouldn’t be going anywhere.

“This way, please,” she told Koichi in her musical voice.

He followed her without any resistance down the winding hallway, up a spiral staircase two floors and down another corridor before entering a rather large library. Paressemon was standing there waiting for him in front of a full-length mirror.

“Leave us,” she commanded and Swanmon bowed herself out.

It was quiet for a moment as the Zaigou continued to stare into the mirror, which struck Koichi as peculiar since Paressemon didn’t seem to be a vain kind of Digimon.
“Tell me,” she demanded, “what is it like to be touched by the light?”

“Excuse me?” Koichi stammered.

Paressemon whirled around and he saw her face. It looked as if she had been crying. Her mascara was unblemished and her eyes weren’t red from any tears she might have shed, but there was a look of utter misery etched into her features.

“I heard that you were once drowned in darkness like me and the other Zaigou, but threw it off when you were touched by Light,” she stated. “So I was merely wondering what it was like.”

“I’m not entirely sure what you are talking about.” Koichi shrugged helplessly. In that moment he felt nothing but pity for the Zaigou. Her dark aura was filled with sadness, confusion and despair, so he felt as if he should help her in any way he could. It wasn’t because of pity though. It was out of sympathy that he wished to help her. The pain she was feeling was all too familiar to his own in the past.

“It is true that I was once corrupted by a tainted and evil form of darkness, but my brother help me,” Koichi sighed, seating himself in one of the lush chairs before him. “I am still in darkness, but it is no longer a bad thing.”

“Explain,” she demanded.

“Not until you tell me how this is relevant to my presence here,” Koichi demanded back firmly.

She glared at him and he simply stared back. There was no hostility in his eyes, only the simple hint of curiosity. It was quiet while they held their staring contest, but finally Paressemon impatiently let out an exasperated huff, seeing that the boy just wouldn’t budge.

“Fine,” she pouted.

“You are not like any of the other Zaigou we have encountered.” Koichi smiled.

She frowned at him.

“No, I’m not. The others revel in this dark power that we have been given, but I do not. They enjoy deleting any pathetic Digimon careless enough to get in their way. They enjoy the kill,” she nearly whispered as a haunted look entered her suddenly skeletal features.

“But you don’t,” Koichi pressed kindly.

“No, I do not. Now explain yourself,” she growled. “How can you stand being one of darkness and yet avoid being consumed by it?”

“It isn’t easy,” Koichi admitted. “I’m not proud of many of my actions as an agent of evil. Some still haunt me to this day.”

“…But?” Paressemon pressed.

“But I no longer fear the darkness,” Koichi said softly. “The darkness alone is frightening. It’s so lonely and empty until you find something to fill that void. Hmm… Maybe this will help. Think of an empty night sky, an endless stretch of darkness. Then fill it with tiny points of light to become the stars. The darkness is still there, but it’s no longer unbearable. You have points of light to shine upon you and keep you company. Before, I was all alone and not even my brother knew about me yet. Then I met him and his friends, who later became my friends as well. Over time I’ve made
more and more friends and now my night sky is filled with points of light. Maybe that’s why God created the moon, sun and stars. They are all points of light that fill the expansive darkness.”

“Your logic is…interesting,” Paressemon mused. “But that still doesn’t answer my question. What did it feel like to be touched by light?”

“I felt,” Koichi paused, searching for the right word. “…Relieved.”

“Relieved?” she repeated.

“Yes.” Koichi nodded. “I wasn’t alone anymore. I was accepted and that meant that I could learn to forgive myself for what I had done and what had been troubling me for such a long time. It was liberating. Darkness is such a heavy thing to carry with you that it’s nearly suffocating. Some embrace it, but others get crushed under its weight. …Wouldn’t you agree, Paressemon?”

She gave the slightest hint of a nod, looking lost in thought.

“Now it’s you that hasn’t answered my question,” Koichi mused after a moment of speculative silence. “Why am I here?”

Paressemon snapped out of whatever train of thought she had been in.

“I need you to do something for me,” she stated. “It is something that only you can do.”

“And that would be?” Koichi asked.

“I want you to release me from my Zaigou form,” she stated. “I wish to be rid of its burden and the chains that bind me to the Master.”

Whoa! Paressemon wants out of the Zaigou? Can Koichi really help free her? Find out next time on Digimon: Digital Monsters!

Chapter End Notes

So how was that? We're getting deeper into Paressemon's character now. How many of you saw this coming? How many of you actually like her?

I really do enjoy writing these little scenes with TK and Koichi. They've become such good friends even if TK's taking the long road there. I think he might have picked up a little recklessness from Davis. As for Koichi, I think he likes playing the role of someone wiser beyond his years. He can't help but make a comical jab at TK though, who's so serious most of the time. Next chapter we'll see if he lightens up any. Doubt it, but who really knows? Yes, this does mean that Tai, Koji, Koichi, and TK will become the central focus for the next couple of chapters.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!