Magic Always Protects Itself

by justhobby

Summary

Almost magic-less, Harry finds himself in a strange world where people can literally burn with colored flames and animals can shape-shift. Why do these things always happen to him?
Rated M just in case
"Mm...Lucky...Mm~" a man in a grey trench coat and dusty brown hat crooned. The man was sitting by the counter of an old ramen shop. The waiter cleaning the counter looked up, his green eyes shining behind the circular lenses of his glasses.

"Thank you, Customer," Harry replied with an honest smile. He's always happy when people enjoy his adoptive grandpa's ramen. Not many people did, as the tiny shop in London didn't get much business. The store was dusty, cramped, old, and located near seediest part of London. While Harry was trying to fix what he could for the man who helped him, there was no helping the dismal location. Not without magic wards anyway, which he was unable to place without a wand.

"Harry! Prepare the soup base. Let the customer enjoy his food," his grandpa grumbled. He was a man with receding grey hair, a shirt splattered with oil stains, and a face that nearly never smiled. Still, for all he appeared to be, the elderly man's heart was in the right place.

Two years ago, he had saved Harry from the streets and easily welcomed him into his family. He let Harry have a guest room in his home until Harry was able to afford a rental not far from the shop. He gave Harry a salary as his waiter, even though Harry didn't have papers or a bank account. More importantly, Grandpa had given him a purpose and a reason to continue forward, despite his past. It was due to the man that Harry found peace and comfort in this small place, despite its less than stellar condition.

"I usually get served soggy ramen in this country, but your ramen is really something. And your waiter," the man looked him in the eyes for the first time, black eyes curiously inspecting him. In that instant Harry's whole body shivered. It was like looking a fierce dragon in the eye.

There was more behind the man's gaze as well, a sort of heavy pressure. It was something Harry had never felt before - no human had this sort of presence. Some sort of magic perhaps…no, but it was similar and it was POWERFUL. Then man smiled and closed his eyes. The pressure lifted and Harry collapsed, feeling breathless and lightheaded.

"HARRY! What's the matter?" Grandpa said while trying to help him stand up. Harry waved his help away and tried to get in between the customer and his grandpa. The customer was Dangerous… Harry wouldn't let his grandpa get hurt, not after everything the man had done for him. He willed his body to stand firm and stop shaking. He squared his shoulders as best he could and eyed the possible enemy suspiciously.

"Ah, don't be hasty. I was just getting a closer look," the man said with an easy smile. Silver hair fluttered in a non-existant wind as the man took off his hat and held it to his chest as he gave a small apologetic bow.

Harry just narrowed his eyes at him, his mind racing in circles. What kind of creature could have such a presence as that? Veela and vampires could project manipulative auras, but this felt nothing like those he'd met. Which was, perhaps, a relief. Both such beings would need a wand to defeat, which he didn't have.

But could he overcome this unknown person without the full might of his magic? He didn't know.
Hopefully, he could defuse the situation. Find out what the creature wanted and send him on his way.

"I don't think I understand" Harry said. He smiled weakly, trying not to seem confrontational.

"I usually don't get around much, you know. But I had this really interesting dream about ramen last night. Then…mm, you don't want to know. Do you?" the man said as he played with his hat. The man opened his mouth as if to continue, but didn't. The frightening man's eyes glazed over just slightly before he abruptly stood up and left, leaving Harry and his grandpa gaping at the closing door. It was strangely anti-climactic and Harry really wasn't sure how to feel about it.

"What a strange customer. Ah, he didn't pay!" his grandpa said, panicked.

"No, he did pay." Harry said quietly, looking at the money on counter. Money that had not been there before…and a ticket as well. He picked it up curiously, reading something about a luxury cruise before putting it aside so he could count the money and put it in the till.

"When did he put it there?" Grandpa wondered.

"I don't know," Harry mumbled.

'I didn't even see a flicker of movement. I didn't think magic existed in this world. And this ticket…what kind of game are you playing, whoever you are?'

"Let's clean up, Harry" Grandpa said.

"Okay," Harry said. He pocketed the ticket before his grandpa noticed it. It wouldn't do to have him curious about it. Whatever that creature was planning, he had to protect his grandpa from it.

Unnoticed, a figure stood on the roof of a building across the street, looking down at the tiny ramen shop.

"I thought I sensed a Sky somewhere. Perhaps it was a dream…oh well," the figure said with a careless shrug.

Soon, the Tri-ni-set Administrator forgot about the strange presence he'd sensed in London and how he'd carelessly left said curiosity a ticket to Mafia Land. He forgot all about his plans to manipulate the strongest Sky he'd ever felt into becoming the next Sky Arcobaleno. He simply...forgot.

Because no matter what world you lived in, Magic would always protect its Master.
Chapter 1-The Begining

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank you

Chapter 1

Why was it always him? Why couldn't he get a break? Harry was happy. Sure, this world didn't have magic and he had been separated from his friends - no smart Hermione to help him plan, no short-tempered but well-meaning Ron, no clumsy but brave Neville to have his back – but he had found a place and purpose and a new family.

And lost it all over again.

He didn't want to return to how it had been before his adoptive grandpa had taken him in from the streets. He didn't want to live on money he begged for or money he stole…

That was one thing that had really hit him hard when he first started in this new world. Without his friends, without even the Dursleys, and with only what he had on him at the time, it had been a great struggle to survive. He found himself sinking to new lows to see the next day.

He tried to live by pick-pocketing and succeeded, much to his displeasure. He almost would have preferred that his attempts using the summoning charm be as unsuccessful as literally everything else. Perhaps he would have chosen a different path…but Harry prevailed nonetheless.

But really, what else could he have done? He didn't have money, a place to stay or even a reputable name back then. Harry's constant companion was the magic that didn't work quite right in this world, and magic had no morals of its own.

Harry had made name for himself in London for his successes, but soon other gangs caught on to his little summoning trick. They ran him down, wanting his skill or the ability to deny it to others. He did everything he could to escape their "recruitment". The one time a gang actually caught and beat him up...well, the grumpy old man saved his life then. Harry wasn't exactly sure how – he was on the verge of unconsciousness – but he remembered the sound of his hero's voice.

After Harry had recovered from the incident, the old man taught him how to make ramen. He taught Harry how to live, not just survive. Harry was happy inside that little shop. He had been so happy.

So, why? Why did the old man have to die so soon after welcoming Harry into his life? He hadn't been that old! Grandpa was healthy for his age! But even so, a sudden heart attack managed to steal him away.

Harry wasn't sure what to do now. What reason does he have left to live? Harry couldn't live by himself. He doesn't want that loneliness again. And maybe, maybe he could have gone on if he had the shop to hold on to, but that good-for-nothing son had inherited it in one breath and closed it down in the next, leaving Harry with nothing. Harry is just street rat who old man picked up, after all.

The rat didn't even tell him where they were holding the funera—

The sound of an ambulance passing by made him wince, reminding him of the one that took his grandpa away before he had the chance to say goodbye. He shoved his hands in the pocket of his jacket and tried not to think about it.

He trudged along street aimlessly like that, keeping his eyes open for cheap motels. The sky above
him was dark and seemed to be on the verge of crying, like he was...like he is. It hurts. It hurts and it
won't stop hurting and he wonders if it ever will. He wants to forget. He wants it to stop. He takes a
breath, holds it, and is satisfied when it doesn't devolve into a sob. He wants to look at least a little
put together before he has to talk to anyone.

Many people pass by him without so much as a single glance, but some gave a wide breath.

'Probably how awesome I look,' Harry thought with a sarcastic grin before entering the motel
building he'd finally found. From the yellowing wallpaper to the lazy receptionist, the motel didn't
look like the most comfortable place. But that was fine. He'd probably had worse with the Dursleys.
He just needs an affordable roof over his head for the night.

"A room," Harry mumbled at receptionist. "Just me, for tonight."

"Can you pay?" the receptionist demanded rudely. Harry nodded, too tired to really care about being
offended. The man gave a price, which he thankfully could afford, so Harry grabbed and counted
what he needed from his pocket.

"Here," Harry said as he haphazardly put the pounds on the counter. He hid a yawn that nearly
cracked his jaw as the man suspiciously counted the amount and checked that they weren't
counterfeit. Harry closed his eyes and wobbled.

"Hey, key and take your ticket back. We don't do coupons," the receptionist said.

Harry looked back at the counter, confused. There, laying innocently, was a ticket.

'Oh, that. I almost forgot.'

"Thanks," Harry replied. He grabbed the ticket and the key and lumbered off to his room. He fell
gratefully into the soft bed and placed the ticket on the night table. That bloody ticket…

After the creature had left that strange day, Harry hadn't slept a blink. He took guard duty every
night. But, when after a week passed and the creature didn't come back, he thought it left and chose
easier targets for whatever it was plotting.

What kind idiot would believe in a free luxury cruise to a suspiciously named island?

'But, maybe I can find about that creature on that island.' At that moment Harry's eyes flashed
orange.

'It's not like I have anything left to lose...why not?'

xxxxxxx

"Thank you for your data." A green-haired man smiled wryly and turned away from the group left
gaping behind him. "But, sadly, I'm bored already. Bye."

"Wait! Even if you are the Da Vinci of our time, this kind of disrespect is unacceptable!" a panicked
voice said.

"Why? ..Electrico Thunder!" Green lighting flashed and the nearby group fell to the ground,
unconscious. The only thing left undamaged was a weapon case on table.

The remaining man snorted and then continued to walk away from the scene. "Ah, who would have
thought The Mafia Land would be so boring. What a disappointment."
"Please, this way Master," said a hostess as she led her guest to a table. According to the Ranking Prince, The Mafia Land's most calming restaurant is a place where many Maffioso seek a quiet and calm atmosphere. Only customers with a calm composure can enter so as not to disturb the others. This place is the only restaurant in The Mafia Land that has only five tables.

"Xie Xie," the customer bowed briefly, causing his long braid to sway a little as he went to take his seat.

"I hope you enjoy your meal at our humble restaurant. Jacob will be your server tonight," the hostess smiled and gestured to the young man heading their way.

"I will."

"Here," a robbed figure said as they tossed a bloody mass on the bar's counter.

"Ah, customer!" the bar tender exclaimed. "What would you like?"

"A bounty" robbed figure replied dryly.

"Hah?" bartender questioned.

"Poster behind you. Where can I get a reward?" the robbed figure said carelessly. The bloody body twitched little where it was laid.

"The Beccio family put that on, so you'll need to meet with one of their men. They only come around here later in the afternoon." Bar tender replied calmly, then hurried to say, "But that is not a reason to hunt bounties here! The Mafia Land bans violence on the island!"

"Hmm, tell the Beccio family to send money to Viper. I refuse to work for free," the robbed figure said as they drifted away.

"Hah? But you can't--"

"Lal! Why we are here? Kora." A blond haired man said.

"You stupid pupil," the woman said as she hit him on his head. "I told you pay attention. COMSUBIN don't need members who have the attention span of infant!"

"Hey, it hurts. Kora!" blond man cried.

"Of course it does; as your teacher, I have to discipline you properly!" the woman said with a sickly-sweet smile.

"Please, customers, don't cause violence on The Mafia Land," a nearby waitress begged.

"What a crazy bunch," a man with curly side burns said as the COMSUBIN members started to fight each other.
"I'm so sorry. We called security already," the waitress said with an apologetic bow.

"It's not something you should concern yourself with, senorita," the man purred.

"Ah, customer" the waitress said with a blush.
Chapter 2-The First Step

The cruise was wonderful. Luxury, richness, food. But all the people on the ship were human. None of them had the presence of that strange, frightening creature.

Harry had spent the first day of the cruise checking out all of the other residents, most of whom seemed to be rich, famous, or influential. Maybe some of them gave away a dangerous presence, but not on level of that strange, magical creature. If that frightening being was a star, the people around him were flickering candles in comparison. However, that didn't make them less dangerous to Harry's overall health; almost all of them were armed. Some of them even had a gun – a few had even more than one - but security didn't even pay attention to them. It was as if being armed wasn't a concern, or was expected.

After the end of the otherwise enjoyable cruise, Harry and the other guests started to leave and finally step foot on the strange island he had been invited to. Strangely enough, it looked like some sort of theme park and resort rolled into one. When Harry tried to leave the group and go to the colorful street of the park, the guard told him to check in at the information desk. He was supposed to provide his identification.

This was just his bloody luck. Why was there a need for identification on arrival? He had the bloody ticket, didn't he? They let him on the bloody boat! Why let him on the boat if there was the possibility of being denied at the gates?

"Now, how to get out of this situation without being shot?" Harry thought quickly seeing the security guard's weapon. Just moments ago the receptionist had asked for his family name and invitation. Doesn't the ticket count as the invitation? 'What to do? What to do?"

"Can you hear me, sir? Family name and invitation, please," the woman asked politely.

'I have to use that then. I really didn't want to use it on this kind of thing,' Harry thought despairingly.

"You know my name, don't you? As for the invitation, just a moment ago I did give it to you," Harry said while looking into the woman's eyes and willing his magic to work.

"Yes, yes. Ah, I'm sorry" the woman apologized. How could she forget that the guest gave his invitation and identification? He just gave it to her. 'Ah, this is so embarrassing!'

Harry politely waved away her apology and made his away to the street again. This place was big. And is that a roller coaster? But really, that was a close one. Sadly, he couldn't use that trick again too soon. Only once per day was Harry able to use his eyes to make people do or think certain things.

'Just like the Imperius Curse, but only weaker,' Harry thought darkly. The first time he found he could hypnotize people with his eyes was when he failed at summoning a wallet and was caught by the police. The officer looked at his eyes and at that moment Harry had desperately thought 'please release me'. Then the officer just released him from the handcuffs and walked away. From that time forward, Harry tried and experimented on using that ability in various situations. Just like its original spell, this new trick worked on a clear intent. Unlike the Imperius Curse, he couldn't leave things open to interpretation; you have to give a clear order with simple instructions. Also, people wouldn't
continue that order after a certain period of time if he didn't give it with all his power.

'And I use it for escaping from authorities. Ah, if Hermione was here she would take my head clean off. Now for information gathering.' Harry shook his head as his rumbling stomach reminded him of a pressing concern. 'No, I need to look for money first.'

There were a lot of people today who were enjoying their time relaxing and some had brought their family with kids. The sun was shining in the clear blue sky and a warm tropical breeze ruffled his hair. His black t-shirt and jeans were not suitable for the atmosphere of this island.

As he tugged at the collar of his shirt, he looked around for his next mark. The crowd dispersed slightly as Harry searched for a richer person in the crowd. He always tries to steal from people who can afford it. He doesn't need more guilt on his mind. Just stealing already made him feel guilty enough…

'There!' Harry thought while focusing on a group wearing fancy suits. The man in the most expensive looking get-up was surrounded by the others, as if they were body-guards. 'The guy's probably an office worker higher up on the corporate chain. Carrying about a heavy wallet in a crowded place like this would make body-guards a good idea.' It's not like it would be the first time Harry stole from a rich, guarded person. Bodyguards usually don't pay attention to the target himself. They usually look around for suspicious individuals. So, they shouldn't notice an invisible hand lifting a wallet and guiding it away, low to the ground.

Harry looked at the wallet that was almost falling the the black suited, fat man's pocket and maneuvered himself to be across from it in a clear line. In order to summon successfully, Harry had to find a spot where the object could come quickly and quietly without obstacles in between.

'Now then, green wallet come!' Harry summoned with his hand held forward. The green wallet sailed across the distance to his hand. But, at the last second one of the target's bodyguards – a man with a scar across his face - looked right at him and saw the distinctive wallet.

'Oh shit!' Harry started to run even as guy hollered "Thief!" and the group of guards started the chase.

"Thief!" - "To steal from Bochi family - do you want to die?!" voices shouted and footsteps loudly came Fon's way.

He had just finished his green tea and was idly walking across the a figure ran into him suddenly, Fon grabbed at the person's hand to stop them. With that first contact of skin, sky flames surged forward to his normally calm storm flames and forged a bond – a bond that Fon had searched and longed for his whole life and couldn't seem to find since he couldn't find a sky that he could work with.

Acceptance, recognition, belief…Harmonization. All these feelings surged forward with an enormous dose of sky flame and Fon became flame drunk at the sudden influx. His Sky shook off his hands when Fon fell on his knees, obviously panicking.

"Ah, sorry!" Fon's sky shouted a he ran away from him. Members of the Bochi family soon passed as they continued to give chase. Even though Fon tried to go after his sky – he needed to protect him, he couldn't let the Bochi catch him, he just couldn't - his limbs weren't listening and his vision started to blur. It's the first time Fon had ever felt this drunk.
It was also the worst possible timing.
Chapter 3-The Running Away

Beta'd by Ie-maru.

Chapter 3

"Where is he?"

"We lost him, Boss."

"You incompetent fools; none of you could catch a single thief?!"

"But ... Boss, he dropped your wallet."

"Stupid! It isn't about the wallet!" the Bochi boss yelled. "You thief!" he shouted as he shook his fist at the sky. Passersby quickly walked away.

As for Harry, he was hiding in a bar. After he shook off that drunken man's hand, Harry ran at an almost breakneck pace, accidently knocked over a few more people, and finally turned around the street's corner. Then he met the strangest man. He had green hair! Is he a creature? No, he didn't feel like one. Or is he like Tonks, a metamorphmagus? No, there was no magic to him. Was it hair dye, then? He didn't look the type, but what did Harry know?

'Gah, I don't have time for this!' he thought in frustration.

The green-haired man was sitting on a bench and reading a newspaper. His white lab coat was carelessly spread out over the bench and it look like a most convenient hiding place for Harry. Harry quickly rolled under the bench and hid, using the lab coat as a curtain. The suited men ran straight by him. They did not even give a second glance to the man who reading a newspaper.

"Stupid," Harry muttered with a sweat drop. He wiped his forehead and decided to hypocritically ignore how stupid he himself had been. Honestly, if they had rounded the corner even a little sooner, they would have seen him and Harry would've been stuck under the bench. What had he been thinking? Why had he suddenly felt the urge to hide here?

As he crawled out from his hiding place, the green-haired man looked at him flatly. "Hmm, you are the one who's causing all this ruckus. I don't really care for that."

Harry, not wanting the man to call back the men out of spite, smiled. "Thank you for your help. Here's your coat," he said as he tried to give the lab coat to man. However, when the man's hand brushed against Harry's, the man gasped sharply.

"Harmonization at first contact." The green haired man's cheeks started to get flushed and he clutched weakly at the bench.

"Hey, are you okay?" Harry worriedly grabbed the man by his shoulder to help steady him.

"Strange...ah...interesting!" the man shouted. "This is science! Exciting, mysterious...yes, science should be like this!"

"Eh..." Harry awkwardly lifted his hand and leaned back. "Good for you? I have to go now."
"Don't worry! I will take good care of you," the man said with excited eyes. The man began to laugh hystericallly and his previously calm aura darkened. Harry could almost see unimaginable pain in his future with that declaration.

"WE WILL EXPLORE THE DEPTHS OF SCIENCE!" The man raised his hands as if he was inviting him to join.

"Let's not!" Harry shouted and tried to run. 'I need to get away from this lunatic!'

"Oh, no!" the man said as he fixed his glasses, "I can't let you go, my valuable assistant!" and then it became hard to breath. Almost like the air itself began to harden and weigh down on him. It was a struggle just to fill his lungs, almost as if he were trying to breath water. Harry chocked as he dropped to his knees, his lungs burning and his vision starting to blur.

"Let him go," a calm voice interrupted. The heavy, hard atmosphere cleared out, as if the heavy aura was suddenly disintegrated by this new arrival. Harry breathed deeply, occasionally coughing, as his lungs greedily took the oxygen previously denied him.

"Ah...thank you," Harry said as he looked at the new voice. A black-haired man stood calmly beside Harry. His grey eyes were sharp as he carefully looked over Harry's body, inspecting him for injuries. Harry stood up quickly as the man scowled at the green-haired man.

"Verde, the mad scientist who sacrifices anything in the name of science," the man said. Harry could hear a threat in his tone and couldn't help but wonder if the man was protecting him. Surely not. They didn't know each-other at all. And Harry had bumped into him earlier; therefore, the man had probably been chasing Harry and only stopped because he saw the green-haired man as the greater enemy. Yes, that made much more sense!

He tried not to feel too disappointed. Really, what had he been expecting?

"Fon, thrice winner of the Goshu, where many assassins are born." The newly dubbed Verde grinned madly, "I will not let you have my assistant!"

"And I will not let you have my Sky!" Fon said, to Harry's utter confusion. "Please, stay away from this place," Fon warned him as Verde took something from his pocket. Harry didn't even think twice before running away from these mad men. Although, he couldn't help but re-think his earlier assumption. Why else would Fon tell Harry to go?

And that was why he was here now, sitting behind a counter with a glass of water. He had found quite the empty bar; only the bartender and himself were inside.

'That was close! I almost got experimented on!' Harry thought, shaken from the whole experience. Most fights he participated in this world included only a few gang members who tried to beat him up. It was the first time he felt as if his life was truly in danger since he came to this world. The men's auras had been so intense, filled with blood-lust and on the tip of violence. It was like the war all over again. Harry really didn't like thinking about that time. He shook his head sharply and decided to look over the inside of the bar he had taken shelter in.

'This place, it's almost like the Leaky Cauldron' Harry thought fondly. The bar's design theme was obvious from the start with rich brown wood, soft light, music and bounty posters… 'Wait! Bounty posters? It looks awfully like the real deal.' Harry peeked at the posters closely and shook his head. 'Nah, probably just a western theme decoration.'
"Thanks for the water, Mr..." Harry led with a smile.

"Carl, call me Carl," the nice bartender replied. "You looked like you really needed it! You looked seriously winded."

"Yeah, sun up there, you know," Harry said nervously.

"Ah, yes, I sometimes believe the island's weather is trying to kill us." Carl laughed.

Harry looked around for something to change the subject and found a suspicious red spot on counter beside him. It was a faint scarlet, like someone had tried to clean it, but couldn't do it thoroughly.

"Oh, don't mind it! You know how hard it is to clean this sort of thing." Carl laughed again as he tried to clean it.

'Well, wine can be rather hard to clean without magic,' Harry mused. 'I didn't know that bars served wine too. Then again, this island is already strange, so why not?'

"It's fine. So, did you decorate this bar?" Harry asked as he shoved red spot to the corner of his mind. There was little point on distracting himself with such a small thing. Harry needed to concentrate on his main goal.

He had to find that creature so he could ask it about possible gateways between worlds; after all, if that creature was the only magical creature here, it stood to reason that it came from another world like he did. It was much more likely than it being the only one of its kind born in this world. And to find such a strange person, he needed a network on this island. Surely he's not the only one to have noticed how odd the man was. He stood out a lot.

"Yes, I did my best. For a retrained man, this bar looks really homely, don't you say?"

"It sure looks nice. The theme is a good one for this bar. Are you recently retrained? You look like you're only in your forties!" Harry said, surprised. Carl's hair hadn't even greyed yet!

"Ah, you know, hair dye. You sure look young to be here, though. What are you, fifteen?" Carl put down his cloth and leaned closely to Harry. "First time, I'd say. On this Island, that is."

"Actually, I'm seventeen. How did you know this is my first time here?" Harry wondered. "Am I that much of an open book?"

"Nah, I've just been around a long time. You can see it in their eyes. They look around with such eagerness and wonder. This place is really one of a kind," Carl said as he took a different cloth from beneath the counter to clean glasses. He'd obviously given up on the spot. Harry didn't blame him.

"I guess with a luxury cruise and that huge roller coaster anyone can be a bit..." Harry cut himself off as the door opened with a bang.

"Hey owner, two beers! We are celebrating. Kora!" a blond-haired man shouted as he kicked the door open. Curiously, he wore military cargo clothes and a green hair band. His blue eyes shined with excitement as he claimed a seat at a booth.

"Yes, yes, two beers." Carl muttered.

With a lack of anything else to do, Harry shamelessly eavesdropped on the two. He ignored Carl's obvious amusement as he did.
"Stupid pupil! It's much too early for a beer!" His companion angrily shoved him aside as she took a seat. She also wore military clothes, but in a more feminine style. However, unlike her companion, she wore a hat and visor as well. Her blue hair swayed a little as she growled at her pupil. "And there is nothing to celebrate! It is your fault that we are in this predicament!"

"Don't be like that! We'll just catch that thief and all crime on the island will be clear. Kora." The golden haired man grinned impishly and squeezed her in a side-ways hug.

"Watch where you're touching," the woman growled and punched the man hard enough that he flew into wall.

'Awa, what a couple.' Harry sweat dropped. Then the topic of their conversation caught up to him. 'Didn't he say that "thief"?!' Harry started to panic. He can't get caught here. The creature, or information about him, had to be on this island. Harry started to look around for an escape route as subtly as he could.

"And you, there! From the moment we walked in, you spied on us." The woman marched up to Harry and leaned against the bar counter, glaring at him from behind her visor. Harry smiled at her, trying to hide his uneasiness and look as innocent as possible. The blue haired woman just looked at him, unimpressed. "And your reaction to that word, thief." She muttered with suspicious tone.

"When you look closely, doesn't he look like this?" the blond said as he held up a poster. A poster with his look-alike drawn on it. The man walked to Harry with an anticipatory grin.

"Oops, here!" Harry suddenly shoved the woman at her companion. The woman lost her footing and crashed into the blond when he tried to catch her. They both fell to the floor, which Harry was quick to take advantage of.

"Sorry, Carl!" Harry shouted as he ran away again.
Chapter 4-Bullets and Mist

Beta'd Ie-maru.

Thank you for all wonderful reviews. They really gave me reason to continue this story. And let's give special thank you 'applause' to Ie-maru who is Beta'ing these chapters.

Chapter 4

"Wow, he's really quick on his feet isn't he?" Colonello murmured as he and Lal tried to catch up with the thief. As for thief, he was running and dodging people as fast as lighting. People who unfortunately got in his way had no choice but to duck as thief sailed over them in one jump. It was almost graceful.

The thief was not beautiful. By all standards, he was rather average looking. A wiry teenager with untamable black hair and round black glasses that begs an upgrade in style. His eyes were the one thing that stood out to Colonello, even though he just got a glimpse before he got an armful of Lal. Those eerie green eyes glinted like emeralds on display...

'I am absolutely, 100% not attracted to him,' Colonello told himself. 'Nope. Not at all.'

"Colonello! Get to higher ground and shoot him," Lal commanded.

"On it, Commander." Colonello smiled as he started to climb a nearby building. He climbed to the roof and started to look around for a higher place. The thief had run into Main Street as he tried to lose Lal in crowd. Colonello soon found a perfect spot for sniping the thief in the crowd, but it would take a few jumps to get there. While a crowd was usually a problem for hunting criminals, Main Street was a large, open space. It was perfect for snipping. Colonello ran after them from roof to roof, glad to see that Lal was herding their thief into the optimum position.

"Colonello! Did you reach your spot? Over. " Lal's voice transmitted through their radio speaker.

"Hold your horses. Kora," Colonello said as he assembled his trusty rifle. The Mafia Land usually allows weapons on the island even though they ban all violence, but Colonello's rifle was too big to show it in public so casually, so he has to dismantle it to carry it around. "You are so unlucky, kid. I have never missed a shot in my life," Colonello muttered as he took aim through his rifle's scope lens. He aimed at the thief's right leg and waited, taking measure of the wind so he wouldn't miss.

"Stupid pupil! Shut your mouth and shoot him!" Lal shouted as the thief pushed a cart her way.

"Yeah, yeah. Here we go!" Colonello pulled the trigger, anticipating the thief's leg to give out, but the thief miraculously dodged it in the last second. "Woah! Impossible!"

"What are you doing there? Shoot him!" Lal angrily growled as another unfortunate stranger got in her way.

"But…okay, second one." Colonello shot at the thief again, this time aiming for his other leg. The second bullet stopped in midair like it encountered an invisible wall. "Huh," Colonello said, surprised. He tried again and again, but the bullets either stopped in midair or the thief dodged them in last second. Nothing Colonello shot hit and it didn't seem to matter where he aimed.

"Stay in one place. Kora!" Colonello yelled as thief dodged again. Colonello was so frustrated that he simply started shooting randomly at thief. The crowd dispersed as they try to seek shelter from the
rain of bullets. A stray bullet hit a potted flower that fell on Lal, who was still chasing the thief.

"Stupid pupil!" Lal’s voice echoed through speaker.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

'This whole running thing is starting to get old,' Harry thought as he dodged another bullet.

He ran through the crowd and dodged bullet after bullet until, seemingly fed up with missing, the shooter's bullets rained on and around him. Still, not even a single bullet hit Harry. It was probably his magic that stopped them because he could hear the telltale sounds of bullets hitting something and then dropping to the tarmac. Harry's magic always was sensitive to his emotions, and Harry's emotions were all over the place – primarily fear.

After he was transported to this world, Harry couldn't get a single spell to work due to his missing wand, but his magic would sometimes do things like this instinctually. Protecting him from bullets, from falling, and even from drowning that one time he'd rather forget. It was like his magic really had a mind of its own. But he knows he can't rely on magic's whim or his faulty luck. He had to get out of here before he became swiss cheese!

'That woman is surely the devil,' Harry thought tiredly. Even though Harry was throwing obstacle after obstacle in her path, she just continued chasing him like a wolf on the hunt. Harry suddenly tripped and the devil woman jumped at him, not unlike the predator he was thinking of. Just as she grasped his shirt, a potted plant dropped on her, causing her to let go. Harry quickly ran into a back street, hoping to escape the sniper and the she-wolf.

He ran through narrow streets until Harry found himself in an alley without an exit. If he didn't get out of here soon, they'd probably catch up and trap him here. Harry panicked and tried to run back, but footsteps rapidly closed on him. He'd run out of time.

"Now we got him!" The blond man's cheerful voice sounded from around the corner. But as cheerful as it might seem, Harry could hear frustration in his tone. That didn't bode well for his continued health. He was on the verge of hyperventilating and he frantically looked for a place to hide.

"Don't let him escape!" the devil woman yelled. Then they turned the corner and stopped. Harry stood still, fear holding him in place as he scrambled to think of a way out. After a few moments of them looking around and through him without reacting, he realized the most peculiar thing. It was like Harry was wearing his invisibility cloak again. They couldn't see him! He forcefully regulated his breathing to be safe, not knowing if it was only sight he was hidden from.

"Stupid pupil! You took the wrong path," the woman said as she slapped her companion.

"Sorry, sorry! We'll find him, I swear! And it's not like you said anything before," the blond man yelled as he tried to protect his head. The devil woman looked through the alley again, her eyes narrowed and scrutinizing. Harry held his breath. The woman was irritated when she confirmed he wasn't there and hit the man again before storming out of the alley. The man was quick to follow and continued to bicker over who took wrong path.

Harry dumbly stood there even as their voices faded away. He was right in front of them, but they didn't even realize he was there. Why? His magic should be exhausted from shielding from the raining bullets.

"Yare, yare. I thought they would never leave," a new voice said from the shadows. Harry jumped and slowly faced the new voice. A black robed figure stood behind him. The stranger's eyes were
obscured by hood, but purple fang-like tattoos were visible on the person's cheeks. "My name is Viper. I'm the one that hid you from them," Viper declared. "I can continue helping you out, if you'd like…"

Harry inwardly rejoiced. He could escape! Then Viper said, "It would cost you, of course."

"Why'd I even think I would have a chance?"

"Um, how did you hide me, anyway?" Harry asked nervously. He really doesn't have a cash with him, but he had the feeling he would have to come up with something if he didn't want Viper to call those hunters back.

"For a mist user, it's a simple thing to do. I'm the best there is, so even flame actives like them wouldn't see through it," Viper replied. "I'll even give you a discount since I'm in such a good mood. Hm, about half my usual will do."

"Half?" Harry asked. Maybe it wouldn't be too much then. He could steal it from passerby. If he was invisible, it'd be even easier to get away with it.

"Yes, half a million. Deal?"

"Let's not." Harry quickly turned away from Viper and started to walk, still tired from his run. Of course, that's when the alley decided it would rather be a long narrow road. Buildings got squashed together and an eerie atmosphere filled the so-called alley as a thick mist circled him.

"Yare, yare. You some sort of money pincher?" Viper raised his hand to Harry, as if demanding his due. "Even though I'm giving you a discount? Well, no matter. You can't get out my illusion. You'll have to pay me if you want to leave."

"So, we're both stuck here then?" Harry asked sarcastically. He tried to think of some other way he could escape. He couldn't apparate, nor could he make a port-key, so what else was there?

Was this an illusion? Was it a muggle trick or actual magic?

Could he just walk out of here?

Flashback

"Harry!" Hermione hissed as she slapped a newspaper on his desk. Her eyes flashed angrily at him.

"What?" Harry asked tiredly. He didn't have the energy to deal with her. First, Kingsley asked him to give a speech for the ministry ball, and then a controversial werewolf case landed on his desk needing his immediate input. He was starting to hate this job. He should have said he wanted to be a gardener when Professor McGonagall asked what he wanted to be after graduation. Being an auror was tiresome.

"This!" Hermione pointed at the paper she'd put on his desk. "The Champion of the Ministry of Magic Performed a Miracle as Muggle Illusionist Performed at Central Park" was the main headline.

"Ah, that."

"Don't just say 'Ah, that'. As the soon-to-be Head of the Auror Department, you can't look bad in the tabloids! This is the beginning of a scandal," Hermione said as she shook her head.

"Aw, don't be mean. They enjoyed it." Harry grinned as he remembered that afternoon. He went
there to search for a wizard who was performing magic freely in public as reported, but found a muggle performer who was just showing his tricks. Most of it was simply slight-of-hand, but one of them was a seriously impressive illusion. Harry liked the illusionist's tricks so much that he showed a few of his own magic tricks to him. Of course, it was real magic, but the muggle hadn't known that. How had those reporters caught his performance? Was he being stalked again?

"Listen here! You can't do these kinds of things. As the inspiring Head Auror..." Hermione started to lecture him. He mostly tuned it out, but a thought suddenly came to him. A flight of fancy from his childhood.

"Hermione, are illusions a type of magic?"

"Illusions? Ah, you mean muggle ones? No, muggle illusions use science as their base and magic ones use magic itself to alter the target's perception. So, magic illusions won't stop until the wizard, witch, or magic item stopped it. But one thing they have common is...

End of Flashback

"One thing they common is they use human perception," Harry muttered. "And if I change my perception..."

"What are you muttering there?" Viper asked with a frown. Harry didn't reply.

Harry just needed to believe this was not reality. He just had to refuse it. Unlike most magic, illusions can't warp reality itself. And so he walked directly into the illusion, doing his best to ignore it completely.

"What are you doing?" Viper suddenly appeared beside him.

"Isn't it obvious? I'm breaking away from your illusion." Harry replied with a confident walk.

"Stupid. No matter how much you walk, you can't escape from my illusion," Viper stated as the teen continued to walk inside his masterfully made illusion. He could keep the teen inside the illusion as long as he needed to, but its the first time someone actually thought they could break the illusion by walking.

Normally a person could break an illusion, provided that person knows it exists, without needing to move. But Viper's illusions are first class, sometimes even solid when they bothered to make "true illusions", and as long as Viper had flames left then their targets never escaped.

Regardless of their hubris, Viper's mist flames became unstable and began to fail holding the illusion. Viper tried to stabilize his flames and the illusion they made, but it began fraying faster than they could fix it. And the teen just kept walked determinedly forward.

"It can't be. My mist flame is the strongest in the world. No one can break my illusions without activating flames of equal strength!" Viper said as tentacles made of "true illusion" sprouted from Viper's sleeves and tried to seize the teen. The teen didn't even pay attention to Viper, but advanced forward even as tentacles started to loop around him. Just as the tentacles wrapped around him, orange flames surged out and stopped the tentacles in place.

"What!" Viper exclaimed as the orange flame started to absorb their own.

They quickly let go of their illusions and took a few steps back. Viper was nervous – afraid even for the first time in years. He has never seen sky flames act like this. And the owner of that flame didn't even glance at him, as if Viper wasn't a threat at all. The teen just stood there as orange flame
poured out of him without constraint. The orange flames poured and poured until the whole alley was coated with sky flame. When they couldn't reach further horizontally, they shot upward to the sky they were named for. The teen closed his eyes as if he was bathing in it.

"Impossible! I know every sky in the world." Viper croaked.

They had long prided themselves on their information gathering ability since information is money in the mafia. But they had never heard of this sky. No family would have been able to resist flaunting have a sky with such a pure flame. Viper watched quietly, in awe and fear, as sky flames dances around them both, as if it rejoicing in its new-found freedom. For seemingly no reason, the orange flame paused.

Viper thoughtfully looked at the flames. "Wha.." Before Viper could finish their question, the sky flame surged into Viper like a sentient wave of pure power. Viper's mist flame immediately welcomed the orange flame, almost merging at the edges. And then…

Viper's last coherent thought was that instant harmonization was impossible.
Chapter 5

Harry was determined to break the illusion, even if it was magical one. He could remember those moments like it was only yesterday. He could hear Hermione's voice as she lectured that you can even break a magical illusion depending on your perception and will power. For Harry, he always had enormous will power. If this bizarre illusion has the same properties as a magical one, he could just walk straight through it. He could break it. He doesn't need to do anything, like a finite charm, he just needed to believe it.

And Harry couldn't let himself get scared. When people got scared, they lost themselves. For normal people, a narrow path with bizarre misty air would probably get them pretty spooked, but Harry has met all sorts of horrors since he entered Wizarding world.

As if sensing his intention, the path started to get narrower as the stone walls closed in, threatening to crush him.

'It's not real, it's not real,' Harry thought as he advanced forward. He didn't even pay attention to Viper stalking behind him; he was pretty sure it would take all of his concentration to break out from this powerful illusion.

The only thing on his mind was the desire to break out. Whenever his mind threatened to stray, he reeled it back in to that one thought. His magic, tired and feeble, tried to act in accordance to his wishes, but he had too little left when compared to Viper's flames.

Harry didn't know this. He wasn't aware that his magic, knowing that it was not enough to help its master, turned to something else inside of him. It was something all people had, but which very few wizards ever manifested. It was something Harry had been using subconsciously all day in response to those with similar powers all around him.

It was something that felt familiar, like home and freedom and open skies.

So, when Harry started to feel it burn brighter, he embraced it. It surged out, fed by his will. 'I want to break out, I want to be free,' Harry wished as orange flames filled his vision. The flames eagerly ate away at the mist-based bindings that tried to restrain them and greedily followed them back to the source.

When the sky flames met the source of the mist, they forged a bond between them. It was a bond that would be tested by many trials in future.

"Ah, you let him escape." Verde grumbled as he looked in the direction his sky had run off to. He really wanted to experiment on their connection.

'That harmonization…that contentment.' Verde clenched his hand around the controller he brought out from his pocket when Fon showed up.

'Fon…what a tiresome opponent.' Verde mentally groaned as he pushed a red button on controller; immediately, a dozen small spiders sprung out from his shirt sleeves. These special spiders, of his
own invention, grew and grew until they reached to a dog's size. Their robotic eyes gleamed with an
unnatural red light from within their silver carapace.

One of spiders ran to Fon and struck out with its front leg. It only met air and cracked earth as Fon
simply stepped back. The spiders didn't give up; instead, they quickly surrounded Fon in a tight
circle. Only one spider, one with a green symbol and three glowing eyes, stayed near its creator.

"Please, meet my friends. Marvelous, aren't they?" Verde gestured to the spider in front of him him.
"Technology in the mafia world is far more advanced compared to the civilian world. Then again,
I'm in the mafia, so of course tech here would be better."

"You sure are a modest person, aren't you?" Fon smiled slightly, but Verde could hear the sarcasm in
his voice. "But why attack our sky? And hardening the air with lightning flames – you nearly
suffocated him. Why?"

"Our sky? I only see a new experiment," Verde said as he grinned madly. "Are you curious?
Instant harmonization! In order to harmonize with a sky, you have to be with them for quite some
time. Even then, it's not guaranteed. Some people just don't get along, so the bond doesn't grow.
There shouldn't be such a thing as instant harmonization. I don't even know the boy's name, never
mind his personality or goals in life."

"So, because you think there could be no such thing, you want to use him as an experiment?" Fon
said, perplexed. "I don't understand how you could think to do that to our own sky, but as his storm
 guardian, I will stop you." Fon took a battle stance and looked fiercely at Verde. "You won't touch
him so long as I draw breath."

"Attack him!" Verde commanded the spiders. Fon was assaulted by the spiders from all sides. Their
sharp legs sliced through the air as Fon expertly dodged their attacks. One of robotic spiders jumped
at his back, but Fon grabbed it and summoned his flames. With a flash of red, the spider became ash.
The next spider jumped and met a similar fate.

"Hmm," Verde observed the fight as Fon destroyed his spiders, and then suddenly noticed that -
"You're not in your top condition, are you?"

"…"

"Oh, why didn't I notice before? That sky flame… you are drunk on it." Verde laughed. "Of
course… the sky flame must have poured into you rapidly in order to harmonize so quickly… but how
does that translate into harmonization? It should have only harmed us… Well, no matter, I will find
out after your loss. You have no chance of stopping me."

"Even if I'm not at my best, I can easily destroy these toys," Fon said as he destroyed the last spider.
"And if it requires such a flood of sky flame, why aren't you drunk from it as well?"

"Ah," Verde grinned "I took an antidote."

"An antidote?" Fon asked as he tried to keep himself from swaying and showing weakness.

"Yes. You see, when you design weapons for someone, they always want to erase all information
about that weapon so there are no countermeasures. But, since I know the weapon's blueprints,
what's to stop me from giving them to someone else? The customer knows that, so I become a target
too. That way, they could deny their enemy both the weapon and the possibility that I would make
defenses for it. As poisoning is the most common of assassination methods, I always carry pills
augmented with sun flames."
"The pills helped you recover from the over-saturation of sky flames," Fon realized.

"Yes, though I will admit it took a little longer than expected to erase the flames from my system. Fortunately, my spiders kept you busy long enough for it to work," Verde said as he took out a notebook and began to write in it.

Fon took the given time to analyze his opponent, trying to find a way to take down the relatively fresh inventor before it was too late. Thankfully, it seemed that only the spider with the green symbol and three glowing eyes was left. It stood dutifully in front of the unworried scientist.

"But you," Verde said as he pointed at Fon with his pen, "Your time is really running out. You're using your storm flames to disintegrate the sky flames in your body, aren't you? That's why you can't move as quickly as you should be able to. But, if you don't stop soon, your body will destroy itself."

"Perhaps, but it must be done. I will protect my sky at all costs. And while I might not know him as I'd like, I know the strength of his will, which flows through me even now." Fon smiled proudly, even though it was his sky's flame that was hampering him. "I won't stop until I knock you out." Fon ran to Verde and aimed a high kick at his head. Just before it hit, the spider stopped his kick with a shield made of lightning flames.

"Did you think that I'd leave myself open to you?" Verde laughed. "I invented this spider to be my shield. No weapon I tested against it has ever managed to bypass its defenses," he boasted. The spider's green symbols glowed as the lighting flame shield disappeared from sight. As it did, one of spider's eyes flickered out.

"While your shields may be strong, it seems you have a limited amount of them," Fon said as he attacked again. The spider's second eye shut down.

"Well, it is a prototype," Verde said. He seemed unworried, even though his invention only had one shield left. He took a look at his watch and said, "Your time is about finished, isn't it?"

"Perhaps," Fon said as he started to cough blood. "I won't let it stop me."

"Even though you know that your storm flame is starting to eat away at your body?" Verde sounded impressed with his dedication.

"Then let's step up our game with my…" Verde paused when an enormous amount of sky flames surged into their namesake in the distance. It was a giant tower of orange fire that that would draw every flame active on the island, despite that fact that it died down as soon as it appeared.

"My sky!" Fon cried out.

"Yes, it does look like he's in trouble," Verde said as he stepped forward to Fon. At Fon's confused look, Verde threw a pill to him.

"What?" Fon asked as he eyed the yellow pill in his hand.

"The antidote contains sun flames, which enhances your metabolism so you won't get flame drunk. It should have no trouble healing your body's internal damage too, as you haven't gone too far yet."

"Xie xie." Fon swallowed the pill and felt its sun flames immediately begin to both help his storm flames overcome the sky flames and to repair the internal damage he'd caused himself.

"Now then, let's go. I don't want to lose my test subject," Verde said with a grin before he started to run in the direction the fire tower had appeared.
'Test subject? If it was only that, you won't be this worried,' Fon thought.

After all, if Verde hadn't been so distracted, he wouldn't have left his motionless invention behind.

As the illusion faded and orange flames surrounded Viper, the robed illusionist collapsed.

Worried and feeling slightly guilty, Harry quickly went to Viper and shook him – or was it her? – while asking: "Hey, are you okay? I didn't mean to…I…"

Viper was unconscious, but it wasn't due to magic, strangely enough. Harry couldn't feel any magic enveloping the illusionist; it was more than magic, whatever that warmth that embraced him was. Harry wasn't sure what it was or how he felt about it. In the moment Harry had been enveloped in it, his heart had soared with joy and freedom. But to think that the warmth had hurt Viper…It was almost like accidental magic that had gotten out of control.

Before Harry could figure out a way he could help the illusionist, loud footsteps began to converge on their location.

"Thief! I knew there was something within these alleys," a glee-filled voice announced.

The devil-duo had returned.

And this time, Harry was without an illusionist to send them away.
Chapter 6-The Sun

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank for reviews :) 

Poor Harry, I can't just leave him in peace. He will suffer more in future chapters. HA HA...I'm a bad person:(

Chapter 6

Lal was annoyed. No, she was absolutely furious! One thief. ONE THIEF! If it ever got out that members of COMSUBIN couldn't catch one little thief, she'd never hear the end of it. She'd be a laughingstock!

'I'll kill that damn thief before I let that happen!' she internally raged.

She shook her head and took a deep breath to calm herself – anger made mistakes more likely – and shifted her full focus back to the task at hand. They needed to catch the thief. Where could they have overlooked? They've searched almost everywhere in the resort…

"Come on, Lal. It's not the end of the world. We'll catch him," Colonello said as they walked through the crowd.

They were back to square one. The main street was crowded again, but with workers and shopkeepers fixing the main street to entice guests to return. They were doing a good job too; the street was almost back to its original look. Well, if you ignored the bullet holes and pieces of glasses and wood that were still laying around. You had to admit that the Mafia Land crew worked fast.

Lal could only hope the damage fees would be smaller than last time. That's why she always told Colonello to keep his head. He was just too impulsive! She was sure Colonello was the one who chose that path which led them to that alley – an alley without an exit, no less.

'It was a dead end-' Lal suddenly stopped, her mind racing a mile. How could they be stupid?

"Really, we visited some-Woah! Don't stop so suddenly like that," Colonello complained as he walked right into her. Really, she shouldn't let this get to her so much. Why was she so angry? The thief escaped, so what. They weren't given a dead line and it wasn't like the thief could go anywhere. They were on an island! The thief would have to wait for the ship to head out, same as everyone else.

Lal didn't move or even hit him. Usually she'd hit him with a 'stupid pupil' comment or two thrown in. Actually…was she crying!?

"Um, hey, we will definitely catch him. Please don't cry!" Colonello panicked. He couldn't deal with this. A woman trying to kill him, fine! Not so fine was when a woman was crying. It was even worse that it was Lal. Lal never cried, ever! What the hell?

He awkwardly tried to comfort her with a touch to the shoulder, but she turned around and crushed his hand with a fiery glare.

"WHO'S CRYING? STUPID PUPIL!" Lal shouted and punched him.

That was more like it!
Harry looked at newly arrived devil-duo.

'They sure looked pissed off as all hell, especially that woman,' Harry thought with dread.

The blond was already aiming his rifle at him with a smirk, but the woman—even without a weapon in hand, Harry could almost taste her bloodlust in air. He ignored the shiver crawling up his spine and tried to find a way out that didn't result in those twitching hands around his neck.

"You! You really led us around in a merry chase," the woman said. She spared a glance at the unconscious Viper. "Your mist is really talented. I didn't even notice it right away. It seems like it tired him out too much to do it again, though. Too bad for you."

"If you didn't pull that sky flame stunt, we couldn't have found you. Kora!" the blond man admitted with serious face. He shut up when the woman raised her hand in a threatening motion.

"I don't know what are you guys talking about," Harry said nervously. He really didn't know what that warmth was, but he knew he couldn't summon it here. What would happen if it hurt them like it hurt Viper? They only wanted to catch him, a thief. Harry was the one in the wrong here. He couldn't hurt them, like before when-No! He doesn't want to think about it.

Warmth shifted inside him as if that strange energy was sensing Harry's need. 'Not again,' Harry thought as his knees buckled. He tried to regulate his breathing and calm down so he could prevent an accident. It usually worked when his magic would act up.

"Hey, are you okay?" the blond man asked as he lowered his rifle and tried to reach for him.

"Colonello! Stop it right there. He is an opponent here," the woman commanded, "It's probably another trick."

"But Lal, he's a sky," the man – Colonello – whined.

"Yes, he is a sky. If you think that because he is sky, he has a right to escape punishment, then you're wrong," the newly dubbed Lal said. She suddenly ran at Harry and kicked him with enough force to throw him into the wall. "No one who breaks the rules here gets away with it!"

"Lal, what are you doing?!" Colonello yelled as he looked at his companion with bewildered eyes. The thief was a thief, true, but the teen was also a sky.

Sky flame users where the kings of the underworld. For flame users to hurt a sky like Lal was doing was a taboo. Especially when it was a young, weaponless sky who didn't even attack them first. As for breaking the rules? The thieving part was hardly serious, seeing as how the wallet was retrieved and nothing was missing.

The Bochi boss might have filed a false complaint or even made a mistake. Sure, the sky had the wallet, but the cameras only caught him picking it up off the ground. The sky could argue that he had picked it up and intended to return it and had only run when they began to chase him. Now Lal and he had the teen cornered and beaten up…that didn't look good on their parts.

It was like stirring up a hornet's nest. If this ever got out, every flame user in the world would be after them. Un-bonded flame users would try to attack them – perhaps even kill them - to seem worthy of harmony with the sky. As for the already bonded, well, Colonello didn't even want to think about the
bonded guardians the teen had. It was obvious that they were powerful, as even he could feel the signatures lingering in the sky's aura. Those monsters would definitely be out for revenge.

"Colonello, don't move from that spot," Lal said as she moved to approach the downed sky.

"But Lal, you can't…"

"That's an order," Lal said with a hard tone. When Lal ordered him like that, he knows there's no point in arguing with her. It was her resolve, which he had always respected in her. This, though, this was one time he really wanted to fight her. It almost like their roles were being reversed. She was being too impulsive and not seeing the big picture - the picture that involved them being corpses and the name of their organization being tarnished forever.

"Did you think this was a game, thief? Did you think that because you're a sky, you can escape the consequences?" Lal growled at the sky who was stubbornly trying to stand up. She hit the ground hard, causing the tarmac to crack and something metallic to clatter. It seems Lal wants to intimidate the sky so he would answer her questions willingly. "What is your famigila's name?"

The sky hacked up blood and stood up shakily. Did she really hit him hard? Colonello really hoped that was just from biting his tongue or something. This was already bad…

The sky wiped his mouth on his sleeve and said, "Sky? Famigila? I don't know what you're talking about."

"Brat! You think you can lie to me?" Lal said as she started to close in on the sky. She probably thought that hitting him again would get more answers.

Surprisingly, the teen started to run to Lal. 'Stupid,' Colonello thought. 'You can't defeat Lal in hand to hand combat.'

Lal snorted like she was thinking same thing. She took an attack stance and sneered, almost daring the teen to do something stupid.

Despite their uncharitable thoughts, the sky didn't stop. In fact, he surprised the both of them. Right before he ran into her attack range, the sky slid between Lal's legs and dropped into the sewer hole that had opened up when Lal kicked the ground.

Colonello and Lal stood there few seconds, staring blankly at the hole the sky escaped down. Then….

"THAT FUCKING BRAT!"

"Hey, Lal! Wait up!"

The World's Number One Hitman was enjoying his vacation at the Mafia Land. He flirted with waitresses, drank some well-aged whisky, harassed some people and was just generally enjoying his well-earned vacation. Then the most irritating thing to ever happen to him had to interrupt that.

"Please fight me!" a man with a red band begged as he bowed low.

"I know that Mr. Sinagra doesn't want to acknowledge such a lowly person's wishes, so I checked with the guild. Here is an official challenge agreement from the FHGN." The man presented a letter with a symbol of a gun. Its red wax gleamed in the light.
"Tch," Rene took the letter and carefully opened it. Unfortunately, it was legitimate, which meant there was no escaping the challenge.

Rene hate this aspect of his title as the World's Best. Freelance hitmen from all over the world tried to make names for themselves by challenging him. It was a constant annoyance.

After Rene had become fed up with all challenges, he had joined the Freelance Hitman Guild Network (FHGN) and had broadcast that he would only accept challenges through the FHGN; anyone else would be fatally shot, no exceptions.

It did help to halve his opponents, but some just wouldn't give up. The stubborn idiots occasionally managed to get permission from FHGN. However, The owner should have known that Rene was on vacation right now. He would have to have a talk with the man next time he saw him.

"Name?" Rene asked as he left his comfortable seat in the café. He sighed internally, upset at having to leave so soon. That cute waitress was one step away from accepting his offer for dinner and coffee.

"I'm John, from America." John replied with enthusiasm.

"I didn't ask your country," Rene said, irritated. He walked to the information desk quickly, eager to have this over with.

This John's small fry. Why did the owner give a letter of permission to him? Just to piss me off?"

"Really, I'd never thought I'd get the chance to fight you, Mr. Sinagra," the useless fly said as he followed. "I heard all of the stories. To fight against you, it's dream come true! But, why are we going to the information desk?"

"Subway. We can't fight inside the city." Rene sighed as the woman welcomed them at the information desk.

"Amazing! Thinking about other people's lives-"

"It's in the rules," Rene interrupted. "Are you coming or not?"

After that, they rode the subway down to the area known as Under Mafia Land and had their little fight. Rene won, of course. He sent the bloodied fly out on the first train back so he wouldn't have to listen to him anymore. Really, he'd have to have a nice long talk with the owner of his guild.

When the next train arrived, Rene cut off his complaints and stepped in. He frowned at the relatively grungy look it had compared to the first and decided against sitting down. The seats looked questionable. He wasn't going to dirty his suit with whatever fluid that was. The smell was bothersome too, so he opened the hatch. It made things at least a little easier to tolerate.

As the train continued along and Rene finally began to settle down, a man fell on him through the open hatch. More like a teenager, really; one with messy black hair and a wiry frame. He was probably another upstart who thought he could win a fight against the World's Number One Hitman.

"You have guts," Rene said with sarcastic grin as he looked into confused green eyes. "But I'm in a bad mood right now. Get off."

Green eyes looked at him confusedly and then looked around. "A subway? Why is there a subway here?"
"Why," Rene said with a tight voice, "are you still laying on me? Am I that comfortable? It's not from this end, I assure you."

"Ah, sorry!" Green-eyes apologized as he stood up. "Here, let me help you. I really didn't mean to fall on you." Green-eyes earnestly smiled at him and held out a hand to help him up.

'Strange. There's nothing besides an honest wish to help in his eyes. How many years has it been since I saw true kindness directed at me?'

Rene grabbed Green-eyes' hand. Abruptly, sky flames poured inside his body. Rene roused his sun flame to protect himself from a perceived threat, but his sun flames connected with the sky flame instead. It, it wasn't an attack. It was instant harmonization - Acceptance, recognition, home…relief filled his senses as the sky flames danced inside him. As wonderful as it was, however, it was making him tipsy. He used his own flames to counteract the effects of flame-drunkenness. This was not a good place, or time, to revel in it.

"I hope I didn't hurt you." Rene's new sky smiled. Then he looked at their hands which were still connected. "You can let go now."

"Ah," Rene coughed as he let go of his sky's hand. He truly didn't know where to go from here. Harmonization had never been something he'd thought he'd get to experience. When he was young, he had thought about it once or twice, but for a non-allied small fry like him, it was just a faraway dream. After he had made a name for himself, every sky in the mafia had reached for his flames, but none of them succeeded to harmonize.

"What's your name? It's the first time I've seen someone as cute as you." Rene purred as he pulled his sky to himself with a confident smirk. Granny always said that if you don't know what to do, you could always fall back on flirting.

"Um…thank you? I'd like it if you let go of me now." His sky fidgeted in his embrace, but seemed too tired to put much energy into it. Rene frowned slightly and scanned his sky with his sun flames. While Rene was not a professional doctor, he knew more than enough to earn a degree.

' Hmm, young, short, doesn't have much muscle, probably has malnutrition, tired – practically on his last leg – and has nasty bruises on his back and stomach. From the shape, it's likely that someone kicked him enough to hit a wall. The bruises are recent, too.'

"Why are you in such a hurry to leave? I thought we'd be together from now on," Rene purred as he used his sun flames to heal his sky's bruises. Unfortunately, he couldn't help heal his sky's other health problems since he needed to retain his flames for any possible enemies nearby. From the teen's sweat and exhausted muscles, this enemy must have been hunting his poor sky to the ground. They wouldn't give up so easily. They would first stop the train, and then…

"You..you..let go!" His sky spluttered as his confused eyes widened comically. Ah, he had such an adorable, innocent sky. Now wasn't the time for those sorts of thoughts, though. The doors were opening.

"You should listen to him. Kora!" a blond male said as he jumped inside.

"Rene Sinagra, we, COMSUBIN are here to take custody of that sky! Hand him over," a blue haired woman stated.

"Ah, Lal Mirch, the commander of COMSUBIN." Rene quickly maneuvered his tired sky behind him. "I'm afraid I can't let you do that. After all, you are talking about my sky here."
It was a cramped stand-off inside the subway's cab. The tension hung in the air like a physical thing. The law keepers were tense, facing off against Rene, who was protecting Harry for whatever reason. Rene, while appearing relaxed from behind, was clearly ready to act with the gun he'd pulled out.

Harry slumped against the wall and desperately tried to think of something to do or say that wouldn't end up with anyone shot. Rene was just a man trying to protect him and the others were law keepers just doing their jobs. It wouldn't be fair on either of their parts.

This whole mess was his fault. He didn't want any more innocent people hurt because of him.

He just didn't know what to do.
Chapter 7-The Sun vs Rain

Beta'd by Ie-maru

Chapter 7

When the devil-duo had arrived at the alley, Harry knew he wouldn't escape easily. As the woman began talking about skies and something about flames, Harry understood nothing from it. From what she was saying, he extrapolated that it was a position of privilege. That would have been really useful to know earlier and it was really frustrating that he still knew so little. These people were making assumptions about him and he was infuriatingly clueless. It was like entering the Leaky Cauldron for the first time and being swarmed by people who knew more about him than he did.

When he tried to tell them that he didn't know what they were talking about – more information would have been really appreciated – the woman ruthlessly kicked him in the gut. That had hurt far more than it should have. He would know, given his experience with Dudley. It had felt more like being trampled by a herd of hippogriffs than being kicked by a human.

After that kick, Harry couldn't even stand straight. His vision had blurred a little as pain traveled through his system. He could only manage to stand up again because of his high pain tolerance. Being tortured by the cruciatus curse tended to do that for you.

'But that kick. If I was normal, I'd have been knocked out,' Harry thought with sweat drop.

He wants to sleep now. Merlin, he was so tired and he hurt all over. The sweat was practically soaking his shirt and his legs could barely hold him up…but he couldn't give up here. The last thing he wanted to do was get thrown into prison. People like him were currency in there! He'd rather die, to be honest. Maybe if he pissed her off enough?

Without warning, the woman hit the ground with enough force that bricks and cement cracked. 'Woah, that's not normal. She's got to have some demon blood somewhere,' Harry thought, half amazed and half absolutely terrified. Now he understood why her kick had hurt so much. If she kicked him with that power, he'd have died. As it was, he could barely stand.

"What's your famiglia name?" the woman growled. Maybe she thought he would get scared and spill his guts. Well, she'd have to suck it up because he'd stood up against mightier foes than her. The only thing she did accomplish was create an escape path that opened when she hit the ground and lifted the sewer lid. Harry was never one to let go of a chance to escape.

He started to run at her like he wanted to attack her, fruitless as it would be. Judging by her snort, she knew it too. Luckily for him, she simply took him for a fool instead of thinking it could be a trick. When she took her fighting stance, he slid between her legs and dropped to the sewer hole.

Harry immediately started to run through the sewer system as if his life depended on it. It just might, considering the woman's angry shout and man's panicked voice. He had to find an exit quickly; judging by the echoes of their steps, they were quickly gaining on him. That was when he found the hole. Harry didn't even think twice before he jumped in it.

After he landed, he found himself laying on the biggest creep that he had the misfortune to meet. The man had no understanding of "personal space"!

'Still, he's far from the worst person I've ever met, and I really should consider myself lucky that I fell through the hole at just the right time, otherwise I'd be…' Harry shuddered as he thought about
falling before the train passed and getting run over by it. *Thank Merlin, I landed on someone instead of the rails; he might be an unabashed flirt, but it's better than dying.*

That didn't make it any less irritating when the flirt wouldn't keep his hands to himself. He wouldn't stop flirting either! Honestly, Harry knew he wasn't much to look at, but the creep didn't need to keep teasing him so much. Harry had apologized for falling on him!

There were more pressing issues than that, however. Just because he'd escaped for now didn't mean those two were going to stop chasing him. They might mistake the flirt for an accomplice if the man didn't put some distance between them.

Harry was preparing to let him know that, but the devil-duo arrived before he could and the flirt had moved in front of him. It was like the man was protecting him from them, which was absurd. They didn't know each-other at all, and Harry…He was not someone who deserved protection…

He had to convince the man to stop.

"…after all you are talking about my sky here," the man in the suit said with smirk, bringing Harry back to the present.

Lal snorted. "Don't be absurd, I know your file. If you'd harmonized, the whole world would know it."

"Oh," the flirt - Sinagra trailed as he grinned, "I assure you, he is mine. Are you the one who kicked him?"

"What of it? The brat deserves it after all trouble he gave us," Lal arched her brow, unconcerned by her action.

The man beside her looked panicked as she talked and was frantically trying to communicate wordlessly with his commander. Harry thought he could make out a mouthed 'bad idea', but his attention was drawn back to Sinagra, who suddenly seemed much more dangerous.

Strangely, Harry didn't feel scared as the heavy killing intent rolled off of the man; he was only concerned with the result of it.

"Then this talk is unnecessary," Sinagra said grimly as he drew a gun from seemingly no-where and pointed it at her.

*Wait, gun? Why is everyone here armed? Isn't this a resort?*’ Harry thought with a sweat drop.

Lal also drew her gun and aimed it at Sinagra without a word. They eyed each other for a moment. After examining each-other, Sinagra said "Let's adjourn this fight until we reach the training ground. After all, I'm pretty serious here" Sinagra touched his fedora slightly and hid his eyes. "It wouldn't do for a bullet to ricochet in the excitement."

"Colonello! Wire the train again, this time to training grounds," Lal commanded.

"On it," Colonello said. He looked hesitant to leave, but went to the train's control room regardless.

Harry looked at Sinagra and Lal, worried. 'Are they really going to fight? He's not someone that-this isn't his fight. He doesn't deserve this!'

"Please don't fight," Harry said desperately, lightly tugging at Sinagra's sleeve. "I'm the one who's in the wrong here. I...I'll give myself up, so...please don't. I don't want you to get hurt over me."
Sinagra and Lal both looked at him for a moment. Then, Sinagra smiled at him. "You won't convince me to stand aside on this, il mio cielo. This is my choice, my duty, my honor. They will not touch you."

Lal scowled and said, "What, you're giving up now? You should have given in the moment we came for you!"

Then the train started to move and the time for talking was done.

Fon and Verde finally tracked their sky's flame to where it had reached up in a tower and found themselves in an alley with no exit. While there was no trace of sky flame leaving the alley, their sky still wasn't here. However, they did find cracked bricks, an open manhole, and an unconscious body in the alley.

"Our sky was here," Fon said as he knelled beside the unconscious body. He touched the robed body briefly and found a pulse. Also, "A mist, bonded to our sky. Recently, too."

"Hmm, judging by the mist's black robe...this is Viper, the esper." Verde said as looked around the alley. There had been a small, but serious fight here. The cracked bricks, walls and dented sewer lid were evidence enough of that.

"Isn't Viper a she? I had heard that from some information brokers a while ago." Fon was confused. His Chinese information brokers were professionals. They didn't make mistakes lightly. No one wanted to be on the Triad's black list.

"I worked with him on a project some time ago. I don't usually ask about my customer's gender, but on this project I needed to." After glancing around again, Verde pointed at the sewer hole and said sarcastically, "As much as Viper's true gender is interesting, I've found where my test subject has gone."

Fon just grinned, but when Verde walked in the direction of the main street he asked, "Didn't you say he went into the sewer? Why aren't you going down?"

"Unlike you, I don't want to traverse through sewers. Besides, there are subways under the Mafia Land. Considering my test subject's luck, he's probably made his way there." Verde continued to the information desk where he could get access to information of the subway. He stopped when he heard Fon behind him; the martial artist was very good a being silent, so it made him curious. He turned and looked at Fon, only to see him carrying Viper like over his shoulder. "And why are you bringing him along?"

"He's our sky's mist. As a fellow guardian, we should not leave him behind."

"Of course, why did I even ask?" Verde muttered.

The devil-duo were the first ones to get out of the train. After them, Sinagra dragged him out. It wasn't really necessary. While Harry really didn't want to leave the train and see them fight, he
wasn't about to leave Sinagra on his own. It was bad enough leaving Fon behind, but at least the scientist hadn't been carrying a gun. Sinagra could die here and it would be all Harry's fault.

He really wanted to drag the man back into the train. Even though the tension inside the train was terrible, they were extremely reluctant to shoot each other inside it. Now that they're in the open, all the kid gloves would come off. With Harry's luck, he'd probably be the one shot too, and probably from the man so determined to protect him.

Harry eyed Sinagra's gun nervously as they trudged through woods. To Harry's dread, it didn't take much longer until they finally reached a clearing inside the wooded training area. It was a large, clear space. It was ideal for fight.

"Here," Sinagra said. "Poco cielo, stay here." He patted the stump near the edge of the clearing, an ideal place to watch. After a moment's hesitation, he added, "please."

"But…but," Harry struggled with words as he tried to convey his feelings, "I don't want you to get hurt. I'm not..." Harry looked Sinagra in the eyes, hoping to convey what he couldn't with words - that this thing was unnecessary, that he didn't want Sinagra to get hurt or die for him, that...that Harry wasn't worth that at all.

But the words got stuck in his throat when Sinagra looked at him with such tenderness that made Harry want to believe him. He wanted to believe that he was worth it. He wanted to believe that this man would be fine, would win, and that everything would be all right. Harry's luck didn't work that way, but he so desperately wanted to believe it.

"Don't worry, I'm not the weak one here," the man said as he touched his cheek with his rough hand. 'Maybe he's not such bad guy,' Harry thought inwardly. Then, of course, Sinagra ruined the moment with his next words.

"Of course, if you'd like to give me a good-luck kiss, I wouldn't refuse."

'He really is a flirt!' Harry sat on the stump with an irritated expression. The face he made must have been amusing because the man just chuckled and smirked at him.

"If you two are done with your little display, then let's begin!" Lal looked ready to end this already. She stood in center of the clearing with her gun out and looked a second away from firing it strait at Sinagra's smug face.

"Don't be hasty. I do have to warn you before we begin," Sinagra said as he walked over to her, "I usually go easy on women, but after what you done, well, I won't let you off that easily."

"Then I will be also your opponent. Kora!" Colonello shouted as he jumped beside Lal. He looked very nervous to be there, but also very determined.

"Colonello! This is my fight. You stand back." Lal yelled at Colonello.

"Sorry, I can't follow your orders this time," Colonello replied with sheepish expression. "This is the World's Number One Hitman, after all."

"Oh, it's okay. I can take you both. You will need all help in the world," Sinagra said with a sardonic smile.

"Are you shiting me? I'm the commander of COMSUBIN! If you don't fight seriously with me, you'll be the one who'll need help," Lal growled at him.
"Well, if you're so confident, then let's begin," Sinagra said.

He jumped back as bullets flew at him from Colonello. Lal ran to him and tried to sweep kick him. Sinagra jumped over her kick, but Colonello took the opportunity and jumped at him with a punch. He shot the ground and dodged Colonello by flying over him with his gun.

"Wait! Can guns can help fly in this dimension?" Harry eyed Sinagra's flying gun, which was emitting something yellow. It almost looked like his orange flames, that warmth that had surrounded and exploded from him earlier.

Lal jumped again with punch and followed with kick when the first one missed. When Sinagra dodged her again, Colonello would try to punch or shoot him, which Sinagra blocked with his own bullets. This pattern repeated again and again.

Colonello and Lal worked together like well-oiled machine, but the man who promised to protect him did a good job at dodging them. He wasn't having as much luck at hitting them, though. Harry gnawed at his lips as he watched Sinagra being bombarded with their teamwork. All it would take was a single mistake for the two to get him. Sinagra had no one watching his back, whereas the other two could come at him from multiple sides and cover each other's weaknesses.

He wished he could help in some way, but he didn't know how. He had no magic and the weird shifting warmth was both purring like a satisfied cat and being absolutely unhelpful. Harry definitely couldn't move like them without some boost and he had no equal skill to their guns or martial arts without his magic. If he even tried, he would only get in the way and make it even more dangerous for Sinagra. All of them were just so much faster than him.

It almost like those movies Dudley liked to watch. Their crazy-fast movement was coordinated, almost like a graceful dance, and Sinagra's skill with his gun... he didn't even know you could actually use a gun like that in real life. It was crazy!

Sinagra kicked Colonello and succeeded in hitting him hard enough that Colonello flew away. Sinagra then shot him with yellow bullet after he yelled "chaos shot". The yellow bullet shot at Colonello with deadly accuracy, but Lal fired her own gun and redirected Sinagra's yellow one. The ground actually shook as the yellow bullet hit the ground.

"Colonello! Get your head in the game," Lal yelled as she dodged Sinagra's high kick.

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"He really is the best in the world," Colonello murmured as he ran to Sinagra. "Fighting with him is really an eye opening experience. It's like he knows my moves! Kora"

"Tch." Lal growled and then smirked when she spotted Harry. "But one thing he doesn't know is..." Lal trailed as she aimed at Harry, "You have to watch your partner's back!"

A blue bullet filled Harry's vision following Sinagra's desperate yell.

Harry smiled bitterly. The woman was right. If you were fighting to protect someone, the first thing you had to make sure of was that the person was far away from the enemies' range. To do otherwise was make them a target.

Harry closed his eyes, ready to die, when suddenly there was a clank and a familiar voice coming from in front of him, where no-one had been previously.

"Mixing a bystander in your conflict? What an awful way to fight," the familiar black-haired man
said with a serene smile. He was carrying someone over his shoulder carelessly, and after a moment Harry realized that it was the illusionist – Viper – that was draped over Fon's shoulder.

"Nice entrance. A little too much dramatic for my tastes, though." Another familiar, bored voice came from behind Harry. Harry whirled around and looked at the new arrival, who had green hair and a familiar coat. It was Verde, the scientist, as Fon had called him.

"Ah, you!" Harry gawked at them. "What are you doing here?"

Fon chuckled and said "well, we couldn't let you leave us behind when you seem to get into so much trouble, now could we?". As he was speaking, he dropped Viper carelessly to the ground. There was a muffled "I won't forgive you for that" from the illusionist, but the man didn't move otherwise.

'Maybe he has a concussion?' Harry thought in concern. Then the rest of what Fon said caught up with him; he was prepared to responded indignantly to that, but an enraged snarl and the sound of someone hitting the ground quickly distracted him.

Sinagra was pinning Lal to the ground, holding her in place by her hair with one hand. His other hand was holding his gun to her head.

While frozen at first, Colonello quickly snapped out of it and yelled "Maximum Burst". Harry saw a blue sparrow fly from Colonello's rifle toward Sinagra. It looked so much like a patronus that Harry almost cried. As it was, the danger his protector was in killed any nostalgia that might have distracted him.

"Tch." Sinagra released his target unwillingly in order to dodge the sparrow, but the sparrow flew after him. Sinagra jumped and shot it with one of his own Chaos Shots. There was a disproportionate boom as the yellow bullet collided with the blue sparrow. Sinagra lightly touched the ground on the balls of his feet, clearly prepared to continue his quest to murder the one who shot at his sky. He took aim and fired.

"Colonello! You're too slow!" Lal said as she dodged. Colonello jumped over beside her to help cover her from the enraged guardian's attacks.

"I shot as fast as I could. Kora!" Colonello complained.

He shut up and desperately dodged out of the way as a series of sun-enhanced bullets sought to end their lives, once and for all.

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"So this is to be a battle royale," Fon mused as he took a defensive position in front of their sky. It wouldn't do for the enemy to try to take another dirty shot. On the other hand, if he teamed up with Sinagra, they could finish this quicker and get their sky somewhere safe where he could be cleaned up and fed.

Fon grinned and told Sinagra, "leave the woman to me."

"Don't order me around," Sinagra growled at him. His eyes were nearly bleeding yellow and he was visibly on edge. The fact that the martial artist was trying to steal the target he wanted to shoot the most just pissed him off even more. Unfortunately, it was also the pairing that made the most sense, due to their fighting styles.

"We will be staying over there," Verde stated nonchalantly. Before Harry could argue, the scientist was dragging him off to a supposedly safer location. Well, safer than being out in the open.
When he saw that they were leaving Viper behind, Harry pointed and asked "what about him?". After they reached a little ways away, Verde stopped and looked back. Harry took a moment to wonder whether they were actually any safer there, as they weren't even that far away from the battle waging furiously in the clearing.

"I'm a scientist, not a thug who carries things from one place to another." Verde said with frown. Regardless, he activated a newly grown robot to drag Viper over by his robe and drop him at Harry's feet. The man groaned unhappily at the treatment, causing Harry to wince and move to make him more comfortable.

Harry looked up after he re-positioned the illusionist and watched breathlessly as the fighters took a momentary pause in their fight to eye each-other.

This was crazy. This whole thing was messed up. He wished he knew what to do or say to stop this, but he didn't.

How was this his life?
Sky flame vs Others

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank you Ie-maru for braving my chapters and making it better:

Chapter 8

Verde watched as the battle raged. Bullets and fists were exchanged as Sinagra and Fon each fought their respective opponents. One only had to see it to believe that these fighters were the world's best. It truly was a magnificent fight.

Verde wasn't one for fighting, himself. He was the greatest scientist of the current age; for Verde, it is much smarter to not fight. That's what his inventions and hirelings are for. Just because he didn't like to involve himself in a fight didn't mean he couldn't appreciate watching one, however. There was a lot you could learn from observing others.

His test subject might have understood that as well, considering how closely he was watching the fight. However, considering his awe-filled expression, he likely wasn't as removed as an observer should be. Something about that made his insides twist.

Verde wasn't the type to get jealous. It was a fact that Verde was a genius, one of the greatest in his generation, and so there was nothing to be jealous of. Verde was more than competent and had much to be proud of in his work. Yet, as he spared a glance to the sky who was watching the fight with shining eyes, Verde wished he was fighter for a moment.

He narrowed his eyes and cut that trail of thought quickly as he saw Colonello give them a quick glance. He could not afford to be distracted. If one of the COMSUBIN members moved to attack, he needed to be aware. Verde went back to watching the fight go on with the detached air of a proper scientist.

He might be more of a scientist than a fighter, but he could clearly see that Fon and Sinagra lacked teamwork. He could see the missteps and uncoordinated attacks when Sinagra got in the way of Fon and when Fon broke Sinagra's line of sight. The COMSUBIN pair, on the other hand, showed their experience by covering each-other. It seemed to be a stalemate, for now.

"That storm, I'll never forgive him," Viper mumbled, distracting him.

"Oh, you're awake." Verde looked at Viper who's head was settled on his test subject's lap. His chest twisted uncomfortably again. If he were a lesser man, he would have thought he was jealous of Viper; however, he was of a higher mind and realized that he simply didn't want to lose his test subject. Viper would see his test subject's value and take him for his own, even if only to sell him later.

He looked back at the fight and wondered absently how he might manage to get away with his test subject without attracting attention from the others. Fon and Sinagra would be a problem, and Viper too when he recovered. Maybe a good time to grab and run would be after they tired themselves out
with this fight. Viper would probably take a while to recover yet, and the fight would likely finish by then.

"I thought you would sleep more," Verde said. Neither his face or tone betrayed his plans.

"Yes, I should sleep more, but with all this ruckus..." Viper muttered, then looked at his test subject. "You suck. You owe me so much money for this."

"Sorry, I didn't mean for that to happen," his test subject apologized. "Are you okay?"

"He's just drunk," Verde said sharply, irritated by his test subject's concern.

"Drunk?" the teen looked confused, which was strange. Didn't he know that he's the one who caused it?

"Verde, what's the situation?" Viper asked tiredly. "I can't move or see anything from down here."

"The muscle heads are fighting with each other, as they tend to do," Verde said. Just as he finished saying it, Colonello shot his Maximum Burst into Fon's Exploding Lotus Kempo. The two attacks collided and destroyed each-other.

"Mu, don't you have sun pills?" Viper asked after a moment.

"No, I used them all," Verde lied.

"I will...pay you," Viper trailed.

"I don't have one," he insisted. Honestly, couldn't the illusionist just go back to sleep?

"What are you guys talking about? What is that sparrow?" The test subject panicked and pointed at Colonello's Maximum Burst, which was sent in their direction. Verde's heart almost stopped at the sight and he found himself moving in front of his test subject automatically. He didn't know why he did it, he just did. He was standing in between a fatal shot and the sky it was meant for. It was insane.

He panicked a little as the full powered shot flew toward them. Neither Fon nor Sinagra would be able to stop it, and that's likely just what the two COMSUBIN members intended.

'This is why I don't like muscle heads,' Verde thought harshly, 'They never plan ahead.'

Verde threw his lightning flames into the air, trying to harden it enough to block the rain-flame user's attack. He really wished that he brought his shield-spider here because none of his other gadgets could be used that way. Fortunately, Verde was the strongest lightning user the world over. Verde's lightning flames formed shields in the air in record time, in the form of a layered net.

The Maximum Burst flew through the hardened air. When it hit each layer, the attack burned more and more of its energy and slowed its forward acceleration. His flames stopped it just inches from Verde's face. As the attack dissipated, Verde kneeled as flame exhaustion hit him hard. The COMSUBIN member must have had some sort of conduit on him because it had cost so much more energy to stop it than it seemed to cost for Colonello to fire it. Verde knew they had roughly equal flame levels, so it had to be a strong one.

His test subject quickly came to his side, breaking him from his internal analysis. "Are you okay?" the teen asked with concern. His green eyes were shining with something and it looked so much like Verde's flame color it nearly took his breath away.
'Maybe being a hero is not so bad after all,' he mused.

The fight stopped momentarily when Fon and Sinagra realized the COMSUBIN had attacked their sky again.

"This is the second time," Fon said as his expression tightened. "I guess I'll have to use my special technique."

"Hoo," Sinagra said with a bloodthirsty grin, "You guys really want to die."

Harry was amazed and scared in equal measure. He's never seen people move like these people were. It almost distracted him from the fact that Verde - the mad man from before - was with him and Viper. He really didn't know what to make of him. He had thought that Fon was fighting him earlier. Did Verde apologize and change his mind? What had happened to bring them here?

"That storm, I will never forgive him," Viper mumbled from Harry's lap, which Harry had offered as a pillow.

Harry didn't know why he had done it, but he had the oddest urge to care for Viper. It wasn't because he felt indebted for when Viper saved him and it wasn't because Harry felt guilty for having hurt him. Harry just had the strange desire, almost need, to take care of everyone here. The weird warmth inside him shifted as if it agreed with his thoughts.

Ever since he broke out of Viper's illusion, it seemed the warmth was constantly moving inside him. He could occasionally feel something like contentment coming from it, even though Harry saw nothing to be happy about. It was all very off-putting.

Verde replied with something to Viper, bringing Harry attention back to the present. He was upset when he couldn't understand a single thing about what they were talking about. It was very frustrating and was happening too often at this weird resort. Tired of being confused and wanting answers, Harry asked about Viper's condition. Verde replied that Viper was drunk.

"Drunk?" Harry said, confused. Viper didn't seem to be drunk in the alley when he last saw him. Did Viper drink before they met up again? That didn't seem like enough time to get as unsteady as the illusionist currently was. He didn't smell like alcohol either. He would know, considering how sloshed Vernon liked to get on Saturday nights.

The two looked at him like he was the biggest idiot here and started to talk to each-other about some sort of pills. Harry sighed as he was ignored. It seemed like no one listened to him – except for Carl, but that was part of his job – and he was getting really sick of it.

Suddenly, one of the blue sparrows that the blond law keeper used flew towards them. Harry panicked and pointed at it. Verde blocked his sight of it as he stepped in front of him like a living shield. Green flames covered Verde and formed a series of green crackling nets that layered over each-other. The sparrow flew through each shield and, just when he was sure it was going to hit them, the sparrow stopped and fell apart. After that, Verde dropped to his knees and began gasping for air. Harry carefully moved Viper aside and kneeled beside Verde, his hands held out hesitantly in concern.

"Are you okay?" Harry asked. Verde gave a sharp nod and fixed his sight ahead. Harry followed his line of sight and looked at the four who had momentarily paused in their to fight.

"This is the second time" Fon said with a hard tone. "I guess I'll have to use my special technique."
"Hoo," Sinagra said with a bloodthirsty grin, "You guys really want to die."

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Fon was angry – no, not just angry, but enraged. He couldn't even remember ever having been this furious before. His years practicing martial arts had long since helped him find his center, calming his inner being from the natural chaos of his storm flames. He had learned then that going with the flow and remaining level-headed gave him the advantage.

Using the skills that earned him the title "Eye of the Storm", Fon had nearly everything that the world had to offer. He had prestige, money, respect...but he couldn't find the one thing he's dreamed since he had learned about flames. He had never found a sky of his own. He had met many skies, and even worked with few, but none of them harmonized with him. All of them already had storm guardians and weren't looking for more. While some skies were powerful enough to hold two guardians in the same position, they didn't usually look for a second. It tied up their own flames and meant they had less to use for themselves.

When he went to the Mafia Land, he had never dreamed that his wish would come true. It was like a fairy tale. His sky, while just a teen, was powerful and kind and needed him. There was a sky who needed him, who accepted him and all he was, who had joined in harmony with him...he finally had it, as unreal as it seemed.

Fon was a storm guardian now.

As a storm guardian, he would be the one who obliterated the enemies in his sky's path. With the enemy before him, it was a duty he would take pleasure in.

"Bakuren Shippuuen!" Fon took his invisible attack's pose and the whole world slowed down from his point of view.

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Rene prepared his Chaos Shot at Colonello when a blur moved and hit his target.

"Agh," Colonello gasped as he flew backwards and fell on the ground. Colonello stood up with difficulty, but was pushed back as the blur attacked him again. He protected himself as best as he could, but was hit hard as the blur attacked him without pause.

Rene looked closely at the blur with his sun-enhanced eyes and saw a topless Fon at the center of the storm. Realizing the change in strategies, he switched his target.

"Colonello!" Lal screamed as she tried to go to help him. She was cut off as Rene shot at her. Lal was forced to dodge it by jumping aside.

"It looks like we're switching targets," Rene said as he shot at her again. "That's rather unfortunate for you," he finished smugly as his bullet caught her shoulder.

Lal scowled and deflected his next bullet with her own. She fired shot after shot as he ran to her, hoping to either hit him or force him to disengage; neither goal was met. Lal was forced to dodge it by jumping aside.

"Burst!" Colonello shot rapid shots to get away from Fon, desperate to put distance between them.
His half shots blew up in the air and caused Fon's movement to slow. "Now I can see your moves, Kora!"

"What a clever way to use rain flames," Fon smiled mockingly. "But alas, I have to finish this fight quickly. My sky is waiting for me."

"Don't be so arrogant! I'm a member of COMSUBIN!"

"It's not arrogance. I will defeat you with my next attack. Bakuryuu Enbu!" Fon glowed with an aura of red storm flames. The flames coalesced into a storm dragon that sprang from him and raced toward his enemy.

"Wha!? Double Maximum Burst!" Colonello's sparrow became an eagle. "Now Kora!" The blue eagle flew forward to meet the red, raging dragon that rushed to devour him.

"Colonello!" Lal shouted as she prepared to join him. Rene stopped her with a hard punch to her side.

"Concentrate on your fight," Rene growled. He jumped backwards and shot at her again. This time his Chaos Shot split into a dozen thin, sun flamed arrows which homed on Lal. Lal froze as the arrows came at her. Rene smiled as he peripherally noticed his fellow guardian's storm dragon destroy the rain eagle and fly to Colonello. The battle was nearly won. Soon, the rains would be dead and-

"STOP!" his sky shouted. Not a second later, sky flames blasted the whole clearing, stopping everyone and their flames in place. It froze and absorbed Fon's dragon and his arrows without any apparent effort. The flames filled Rene's senses as it surged into his body. It started to make him drunk again, but Rene blocked its effect with his sun flames. The others were not so lucky, but he hardly cared for them. Fon, Verde, and Viper all fell unconscious when it became too much.

He didn't even want to think about how Lal and Colonello fit in this situation. They were unconscious too, which made them vulnerable, but he just knew that at least one of the undeserving b*** had bonded to his sky. The problem was that he didn't know which one; therefore, he was unable to kill either or he would risk the mental and physical health of his sky. Speaking of his sky…

As if satisfied with their work, the sky flames gladly drew back. Rene looked at his Sky who was kneeling on the ground. His eyes, previously such a brilliant green, were tinted orange. He would have said his sky's eyes looked beautiful like that, but seeing them filled with tears tainted it. There was nothing beautiful in knowing his sky was in pain.

Apparently enough pain to faint, too. Not good!

Rene rushed to his sky's side and quickly used his flames to scan him for injuries. Thankfully, he found none. His breath rushed from his lungs and he almost laughed in relief. His sleepy sky had simply exhausted himself and would recover in time. All Rene had to do now was find a safe place for that time to pass and get there before any other flame actives arrived…

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Harry watched as Fon moved so fast that he became a blur, too fast for even his seeker-trained eyes to follow. That blur proceeded to bombard Colonello with fierce attacks, one right after another. Sinagra switched targets to attack Lal without hesitation, landing some shots of his own.

Harry didn't want this. He didn't want any of this! Why were they fighting? Was it to protect him? The warmth purred as if it agreed with his line of thought.
'It's wrong. I don't deserve this. It's just like back then!'

Flashback

"Hurry, Harry!" Neville urged as he dragged Harry through the ministry corridors.

"But Neville, they'll kill you!" Harry said desperately as they dodged spells. "You don't need to protect me. I don't want to lose you!"

Neville smiled and shoved Harry through the door. The last thing Harry heard before the explosion was "Sorry, but it's my decision."

Flashback ended

The warmth brought Harry back from his painful memories. It rolled and shifted like an impatient cat. Harry touched his chest briefly and the warmth eagerly greeted him, brushing against the edges of his core. It wanted out. Harry could feel it, the warmth's impatience and eagerness.

No! He couldn't release it here. What would happen if it hurt them, like it had hurt Viper? The warmth angrily clawed at his insides as if it was disagreeing with him.

'No,' Harry thought stubbornly.

Harry won't release it outside his core, not when he didn't have control over it. He remembered all too well how badly accidental magic could hurt people. He worked many cases where uncontrolled magic hurt people nearby. But unlike magic, this weird warmth had its own will and instincts to follow. Harry doesn't know what the warmth would do if it was let free.

The warmth demanded his attention, pressing harder against his core as Harry doubled down his efforts to contain it. Harry choked as it clawed and surged like a trapped animal. He was afraid. Harry was afraid he had a monster inside him again, but unlike the horcrux, it really did have freewill and some form of agency.

'Why do these things always happen to me? Haven't I suffered enough? Now I get some new monster inside of me to deal with? Will I have to die for this, too?' Harry's ears rang with the warmth's indignant shriek. Then it suddenly stilled, like it was focusing its attention on something.

A red dragon rushed from Fon. The dragon's whole body crackled with red flames as it flew at Colonello. Colonello seemed shocked for a moment, but then shot and summoned a blue eagle to protect him.

Harry looked at the creatures with awe, but came back to himself as the dragon destroyed the eagle and continued its flight to Colonello without pause. From other side of the battlefield, Sinagra shot a dozen yellow arrows at Lal, who seemed unable to dodge.

Harry started to run to them even as he knew he couldn't make in time. In his mind images of Lal and Colonello's dead bodies flew by, and were then replaced by different people from his past. Harry's mind snapped and he shouted "Stop!" The warmth happily sprung from him and filled the whole the clearing, freezing everyone and their attacks in place.

Harry kneeled as tears filled his eyes. The orange energy danced through the clearing before it suddenly grabbed all of the others with hand-shaped flames. Harry felt the strange power's happy exclamation as it poured itself into all of them.
The last thing Harry felt before he fell unconscious was tranquility.

"You are really troublesome," Rene sighed. He lifted his sky bridal style and looked around at the fallen guardians around him. Rene knew that the sky flames would draw others here like moths to a flame. He has to get out of here with his sky since he doesn't want to bring attention to his sky yet. But what about the others?

Rene doesn't want to carry them around, and couldn't even if he did. Yes, they were follow guardians but they were also strangers. Each one of them is a famous and deadly person in the Mafia. Rene doesn't have to do anything for them. He especially didn't care for the rain duo, since he couldn't sense which one of them was bonded and thus "safe". He couldn't let either of them near his sky.

Besides, Rene is not some errand boy.

"Oh, it was you," he heard from the woods. The young Timoteo – the new ninth boss of Vongola – stepped into the clearing with his guardians. "We saw the sky flames. The Mafia Land is in an uproar," he chuckled as if he heard the funniest joke in the world. Timoteo looked from the fallen bodies to the unconscious person in Rene's arms. "Oh, is that the sky we felt?"

Rene tightened his arms slightly around his sky, but otherwise stayed quiet.

"This is the person who is causing all the ruckus over the Mafia Land? He's just a kid," Coyote Nougat said with a snort.

"We're also considered kids by others' standards," Visconti murmured.

"How much will your silence cost?" Rene asked resignedly. He knew he couldn't hide his sky from rest of the world forever, but he didn't want to spread the news this way, or so soon. They were caged in by water on all sides, trapped, and surrounded by possible enemies. There weren't many places to run on such a small island.

Besides, the Vongola famiglia was covetous with sky users. They were like dogs with a bone. If they felt there was a possibility for alliance with another sky, they would take it. It not only increased the power of both parties, but it paid in dividends concerning reputation.

"One favor, and an alliance." Timoteo looked at Rene with a calm expression and said, "I'll forget all about seeing your sky. To sweeten the deal, I won't make any plans for him."

"Or against him?" Rene drawled as he glared at Timoteo.

"Why you!" Coyote angrily shouted, but Timoteo waved away his indignant yell.

"It's a deal?" Timoteo asked. Rene nodded and Timoteo flared his sky flame to show his vow to keep to terms. "With that nasty business aside, what do you need?"

"Ah, maybe a few mules to carry the others." Rene said with a grin. His fedora tilted and hid his suspicious black eyes in its shadow.
Chapter 9

Lal woke up with a start. She looked around with panicked eyes for a moment and confirmed that she was in an unfamiliar room. She tried to stand and found herself tied to a chair. Lal tried to move, but she couldn't get up from the chair. As she struggled, the chair knocked against something hard behind her. The wall perhaps? Then her training kicked in and Lal regulated her breathing as she assessed the situation.

She was in a luxurious room, tied to a chair, and her head was killing her. Luckily, whoever kidnapped her was not present. Lal eyed the room with critical eyes, despite the headache threatening to split her head open. The room had a large, dark wooden dinner table, several chairs, portraits and rich carpet.

It's not the first time she'd found herself abducted, but it's the first time her abductor left her in such a luxurious room. Warehouses were the more common choice for this sort of thing.

"Ugh," Colonello's voice sounded behind her. Colonello? Behind her? Then it was not the wall, but another chair. How had she missed that? This headache was really messing with her. It was like the worst hangover she'd ever had.

"Colonello! Are you alright?" Lal asked. Her voice sounded scratchy and dry. That hangover theory was beginning to sound right. It didn't make much sense, though, considering she hadn't had time to drink when Colonello and she were at the bar. The last thing she remembered was…

"Please, be quiet Lal. My head is killing me here," Colonello groaned. His voice also sounded dry.

"You feel hangover too?" Lal asked. She really wished she could massage her temples and get some water.

"Yes, it's Colombia all over again," Colonello cried pitifully.

"Shut up, idiot! Someone might hear you," Lal shushed him.

"Let them hear! I hope they end me," Colonello said as he cried louder.

"Stupid!" Lal angrily swung her head backwards, but quickly regretted it as her head and Colonello's connected. "Shit! What's your head made of? Steel?"

"Ow, ow my head, my head," Colonello's pain filled voice whined.

"Annoying! What do you remember last?" Lal demanded.

"Ow…well, you and I were fighting with Sinagra and Fon because we hurt their sky." Colonello took a fortifying breath before continuing. "Which was very stupid, by the way."
"I was teaching the brat. He can take a punch or two, considering the strength of his flames." Lal snorted. If you asked her, they were all being stupid. Skies weren't weak. They were the kings of the underworld for a damn good reason! Like royalty from the early ages, skies were trained by the best their famiglia could afford. The more powerful their sky flame, the more they were trained. For a normal sky who'd been trained from such an early age, a punch or two was hardly an issue.

'But that sky certainly seemed weaker than other mafia skies, despite having a more powerful sky flames.' Lal snorted again, shaking her doubts away. 'He was probably faking it, that spoiled brat.'

"And then there was a huge explosion of sky flames," Colonello continued. "I can't remember anything after that."


"What happened is that one of you bonded with my sky," Sinagra said as he entered with a scowl. "And I want to know which one of you did."

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If there was any silver lining to being caught by the Vongola, it was being able to see the Ninth's guardians drag along his own fellow guardians like pack mules. From the occasional bumps and thuds, it was very likely his new co-workers would wake up to some extra bruises. Just imagining their irritation made him cackle internally. That sadistic glee lasted him all the way to the hotel, where he had to put such musings aside in order to focus solely on his sky.

After they had checked into the Vongola Hotel, Rene carefully cleaned and changed his sky into some clean clothes. After he was certain there would be no risk of infection or illness, he put his sky in a healing sleep with his sun flames. Rene then settled in to rest beside his sky.

Being a light sleeper, it didn't take long until the ruckus in the dining room woke him up. Rene checked his sky's condition once more before getting up. Thankfully, his little sky was sleeping soundly and no health issues had cropped up while he'd been resting.

Satisfied with his sky's health, Rene prowled down the hall. He paused momentarily at the doorway to the dining room, observing the two suffering rains pitilessly as they moaned. Once he was sure they were still tightly bound and weaponless, he made himself known.

"What happened is that one of you bonded with my sky." Rene scowled at them and continued with, "And I want to know which one of you did."

Not knowing which one had harmonized really irked him. He had initially laid beside his sky to get a better sense of which one it might have been, but all he got was rain and rain. Rene couldn't distinguish between them. It was as if both of them had bonded, but such a thing was highly unlikely. No, it was more likely due to how much time the two rains spent together.

The two COMSUBIN members' eyes widened after his demand and then yelled together. "What!"

Rene sighed and walked to the nearby table. He took his seat to the right of the head and glared impatiently at the two. They quieted down and closed their eyes as if they were trying to feel the bond. A bond that should be obvious, but hey, not everyone was as smart as him.

Then Colonello suddenly opened his eyes and shouted, "I'm bonded!!"

Rene looked at the confused blond and then drew his gun to shoot Lal, but stopped when Lal too opened her eyes and said, "Me too."
Fon woke up with the worst headache. He looked around blearily and found himself in a lavish living room with most of his fellow guardians. It took a moment before he recognized the Vongola emblem on the wall. Fon has been in Vongola hotels before, and the one thing Vongola was famous for was their boastful emblem. Vongola hotels put their emblem in the living room of every suite.

He took a few deep breaths and rubbed his temples. Fon had gotten drunk on his sky's flames again. It was so embarrassing. He was a martial artist, a warrior! Fon should be the one to bring his sky to safety, but he fell unconscious in a dangerous situation. He was weak. From this day on, he would train his resistance against flame drunkenness. Fon nodded gently to himself as he made decision.

Not a minute later, shouting from the next room over stole his attention.

There was a ruckus inside the dining room. Fon stood up carefully and opened the door to find a peculiar sight.

Sinagra was shaking Lal and shouting, "What do you mean by 'me too'?!"

Colonello was tied to a chair and enthusiastically crowing about being bonded. Beside him there was a fallen chair wrapped with scorched rope. It was likely where Lal had been before Sinagra's frustrations got the better of him.

Before Fon could voice his presence, Verde rudely shoved him aside and entered the room. He looked at the trio before taking a seat at the table with a heavy sigh. Fon followed Verde and sat beside him.

"Ah, my head," Verde groaned as he rubbed his head and fixed his crooked glasses. He looked horrible. "What are you guys shouting about this early?"

Sinagra let Lal fall dizzily to the floor and took to his seat. "They're saying that they're bonded to our sky. Both of them," Sinagra hissed as he angrily pointed at Lal, who was releasing Colonello from his bindings.

"Bonded?" Fon voiced his doubt. He didn't want either of them as fellow guardians. True, they were both powerful rain users, but they were also enemies. They hurt his sky and tried to kill him twice! Not only that, but it was very unlikely that the both of them had harmonized. It was incredibly rare, nearly unheard of.

Lal and Colonello looked as confused as rest of them. They sat awkwardly at the far end of the table, shifting under the furious glares shot in their direction.

"Really? There's never been a recorded case where two guardians of the same flame type bonded with the same sky," Verde said with suspicion.

"What are you implying?! We're not lying! Kora!" Colonello angrily shouted, causing them to wince at a volume.

"Colonello, calm down. Your voice is not helping my headache," Lal muttered as she rubbed her head. She looked into the eyes of the other guardians and said, "I can feel a bond with that sky, as clear as Colonello. This can't be faked."

Fon could only see honesty in her eyes. He sighed and said, "Even though you say so, it's hard to accept."
"Two guardians at the same time, two guardians of the same flame…" Verde murmured with a shocked expression. His previous zombie appearance changed instantly to an excited expression. "And instant harmonization. My test subject is the best in the world." He would have stood up and danced too, but Sinagra shot at him. Fon angled his head as the bullet glazed Verde's cheek and almost hit him.

"Don't talk about my sky like that!" Rene snapped furiously.

"Your sky? He's mine, too. Kora!"

"Don't shout, stupid pupil!"

"Yare yare, you guys are a really animated bunch." Viper slowly walked in from the kitchen with floating steaming cups of coffee. "Here. There's pain killers as well. You can pay me later," Viper muttered as he placed the cups in front of each of them.

They looked at Viper as he sat opposite of Verde and drank his coffee. After that they took their own offered coffee and swallowed down the provided pain pills. Sinagra pointedly did not reach for the pill, but took the coffee with a sharp grin.

Fon immediately felt the medicine take effect. He smiled to Viper with thanks, but Viper looked the other way with a huff. What did he do for Viper to give him such a cold shoulder?

"Where did you get these?" Verde asked as he drank more.

"From the room service. Unlike you morons, I know how to use a phone." Viper snorted and angrily muttered, "But those sky flames really got me. Twice. He so owes me money!"

"Aw, can't handle some flame drunkenness?" Sinagra said with smirk.

"Why aren't you affected? Kora!" Colonello demanded from Sinagra.

"Sun flames," Sinagra said smugly.

The rest of them threw a glare at him. He just grinned wider.

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The slight levity of the moment was destroyed as Rene's grin died in favor of a dark, heavy aura that weighed down on all of them. "But what to do with you?" Rene drawled. He glared at the COMSUBIN duo over the rim of his cup.

He couldn't let them have access to his sky, but he couldn't kill them either - not without hurting his sky. Maybe he could put a great distance between them. His sky would probably disagree with him though, seeing as his sky saved them. He valued them in some unfathomable way. That was still something that Rene couldn't figure out. Why them? The two rains were trying to kill him! They'd hunted his sky to the ground! He ground his teeth in frustration and glared harder.

"What do you mean? We're guardians too now! We'll work together to keep our sky safe," Colonello said. His tone clearly communicated that he felt this should be obvious.

"Stupid!" Lal smacked the back of Colonello's head. "They'd be idiots if they didn't hesitate to trust us. We were their enemy," Lal said with a serious expression. Then she turned her focus on Verde, carefully pushing down the instinctual terror that the sun guardian was filling her with. She was very proud to note that she didn't stutter when she asked, "What's with this instant harmonization? I've
"Naturally, since until now it was considered impossible," Verde said. He pushed his glasses back up and grabbed some papers from his lab pocket. He started to write with his right hand while his left kept a firm, almost desperate, hold on his coffee. "The interesting thing is that his sky flames didn't even burn us. We should have been incinerated considering the amount of flames we were hit with. Instead, it harmonized with us. It's a strong bond too, from what I feel. It won't be broken easily. Considering what an anomaly he is, I wouldn't be too surprised if it couldn't be broken at all."

"So, possibly a permanent bond then." Viper said. His even tone made it hard to distinguish what he felt about it.

"Well, in theory, we could try to break it," Verde trailed. "It would—"

"Instant harmonization or not, we still don't know what to do with you," Rene interrupted. A sharp smirk curved his lips. "And Granny always said that if you can't trust them, shoot them!"

"Hah?!" all of them exclaimed with shocked expressions.

"G-granny?" Colonello spluttered. "What kind of granny says that?!!"

"Do you even have a granny?" Lal asked suspiciously. "She isn't listed in our files. You're just fucking with us, aren't you?"

"Granny also said that only bad girls doubt Granny's words," Rene sniped. He sipped his coffee as the others looked at him with shocked expressions.

'I'd really like an espresso,' Rene thought wistfully in the silence. This coffee barely rates as "meh"."

"Don't joke with me!" Lal shouted as she punched the table, "It isn't like we wanted this bond. If we can break it without hurting the sky…"

Breaking harmony? Were they crazy? Harmony was the best thing that could ever happen to a flame active. It was certainly the best thing that had ever happened to Rene.

'Well, they can try, but if they harm even a hair on my sky in the process, I'll end them. I'm sure I could find a way to do it without hurting my sky in the process, especially if these idiots actually want to break the bond. Besides, less guardians to deal with just means I'll have more of my sky's attention.'

"I could make an experiment of it. Why not start with you?" Verde said to Lal with a mad grin. He rubbed his hands as if wanting to start right way.

"Aren't you getting ahead of yourself?" Lal bristled and ignored Colonello's indignant yell. "Whether we accept it or not, our sky will decide in the end!"

"Um, hello" a sleepy voice said from the hall. Their sky entered the dining room hesitantly. All of them were quite surprised when they heard him and quickly angled themselves to see him better.

They were some of the greatest in their fields, yet no one had noticed him until he'd spoken up.

Their sky really was full of surprises.
just wallowing in it. A large part of him just didn't want to get up. He'd never slept in a bed as nice as this before.

The Dursleys didn't even give him a real bed until his Hogwarts letter came. The Hogwarts beds were so ancient the cushioning spells were fraying at the edges. Even in Grimmauld Place, after the war and renovations, he didn't buy a luxurious bed. He hadn't felt the need.

Still, as much as he didn't want to get up, his bladder was killing him. Harry stretched and reluctantly slid out from the covers. He was a little weirded out to find himself dressed in sleep clothes, but forcibly put it aside in favor of finding his glasses. He was happy to find them on the bedside table; he'd be nearly blind without them and he didn't have the money to replace them.

Now that he could finally see, he curiously looked around.

The room was decorated with a red, rich carpet; a golden chandelier; an oak desk with a small lamp; a king's bed; a reclining chair; and various expensive-looking decorations. It was expensively tasteful without being over-done. He couldn't help but think that Malfoy would have loved it.

After his short search, Harry found the door to the bathroom and hurried to it. Unlike the bedroom, the bathroom was decorated in all gold. After he finished attending himself, Harry changed into some spare clothes that had been laid out on the recliner.

The slacks were blue while the soft shirt was white with an orange streak on its collar. They were just as comfortable as the bed, making Harry wonder where they came from and who had left them here for him. The clothes had to be expensive. Harry ran his hands over the shirt and gave a silent thank you to whoever had taken him in.

As thankful as he was, he couldn't help but wonder why they had. The last thing he remembered was the warmth that spread through him in the clearing. It had done something, but Harry wasn't sure what. His memory was a little fuzzy on that. Did it hurt the others? He hoped not. At least two of them had been fighting in his defense.

He had to go find them and make sure they were okay. Decided, Harry made his way to the last door, which he assumed would lead out of the bedroom.

Before he reached it, Harry heard shouts and yells. He opened the door and hurried down the hall to find himself in the living room. He absently took in how expensively it was decorated and found himself wondering again just who had taken him in.

'Whoever lives here must be rich,' Harry thought as he quietly crossed the room. The shouts were coming from behind the next door, which was already opened and slightly ajar. He peeked through the gap and sighed with relief. Everyone from the clearing was in what looked like the dining room. They all looked relatively healthy and were arguing with words instead of fists – or guns, for that matter.

Maybe now he could finally get some bloody answers. Such as what they meant when they kept calling him a "sky".

He wanted to go inside right away and start getting some bloody explanations, but Harry was also scared to do so. He saw what they could do. He didn't know their motivations at all. He wouldn't stand a chance against any of them if they started a fight.

'Come on, aren't you a Gryffindor?' Harry thought to himself. 'We'll never get answers if we don't ask. Open the bloody door. The only way out is past them, anyway.'
He slowly opened the door and entered with hesitant steps. "Um...hello?"

Everyone shut up and turned sharply to look at him. Harry almost wished he hadn't opened the door after all. It's like the wizarding world all over again. Their stares were filled with curiosity and something which Harry couldn't identify.

'Too late to turn back now,' he thought. 'Might as well go forward.'

He walked over to their table, but was unsure where to sit. At the end were the two law keepers who had taken their jobs a little too seriously. The middle had the scientist who creeped him out. The flirt was near the head. Still, Harry didn't want to be the only one standing. It almost felt like he was before the wizengamot. Harry was about to go around the table to be across the scientist, but was stopped by Sinagra's strange greeting.

"Chaos, my name is Rene Sinagra. Please, sit here." Sinagra smiled charmingly and gestured to the head seat, which would put him in between Sinagra and Fon. While they were the ones who protected him, he wasn't quite comfortable being so close to the handsy, gun toting "hitman".

"Um, no thank you. I'll just sit here," he replied nervously.

"I insist," Sinagra said. He walked over to him and led him over with a hand on his back. "Why don't you take a seat while I order us some breakfast."

Harry sat with some trepidation. After Sinagra left, it was impossible to ignore how they all were looking at him. Even the devil duo were looking at him with those same emotions Harry couldn't name. He really didn't want to stay here, but he wanted his answers more. If only he knew how to start. Eventually – thankfully – the awkward silence was broken by his Asian protector.

"You might already know, but my name is Fon," Fon introduced himself.

"Verde," followed the scientist.

"I'm Colonello," the blonde law keeper said cheerfully.

"Lal," the other stated.

"Viper Mammon." Viper said grumpily. Then he sniped, "You owe me money."

Harry don't know what to say to that. He didn't take that deal with Viper earlier. Maybe Viper thought they made deal or was demanding money for the first illusion. Harry would have to straighten that out. It wasn't like he'd asked for the illusionist's help, after all. He prepared to introduce himself and say so, but Sinagra came back in with several waitresses and food.

Harry was suddenly very, very aware of how long it'd been since he last ate.

"Vongola room service at it's finest." Sinagra grinned as the waitresses put the food on the table. He took his earlier seat to the right of Harry's. "Let's dig in."

That sounded like a fantastic idea. Answers could wait until after he'd eaten.

"So, what's your name?" Sinagra asked suddenly.

Harry looked up from his plate and was about to answer, but was distracted when he saw the blooming bruise across Fon's face.

"Wait, what happened to them?" Harry asked worriedly. Everyone but Sinagra had new bruises
coloring them. Judging by their reaction, they too hadn't noticed until then.

"Ah, that! There was a problem in shipment." Sinagra hid his face with his fedora, but it wasn't enough to hide his smirk. The others glared at him, but the smirk didn't abate. "Anyway, what's your name?"

"Sorry. It's Harry." They continued giving him expecting looks, so he said his last name too.

"Harry Potter? I have never heard of a sky with that name," Viper said as he ate his toast.

"Me neither." Verde shook his head and wrote something down on his notebook before continuing to eat.

"COMSUBIN doesn't have data on that name." Lal looked at Colonello with a grimace when he slurped up the remainder of his egg.

"True, true. COMSUBIN has every sky's data," Colonello agreed.

"I also haven't heard about a Potter famiglia." Fon looked thoughtfully at Harry, then asked Sinagra, "Have you?"

"No, I haven't heard about a sky or famiglia with that name." Sinagra smiled and said, "But, it's not strange that a sky has different surname than their famiglia name. What is your famiglia's name, Harry?"

"Yes, that is must be it," Verde muttered.

"True, some famiglias are like that, Kora!"

"Stupid pupil, don't talk with your mouth full."

"What are you guys talking about?" Harry shouted impatiently. He couldn't take it anymore. They were always talking about skies, storms or other weather patterns. Now they were talking about some "famiglia name"? How was that different from a surname?

"Your famiglia name," Sinagra repeated. "What is your famiglia? I'd like to know who I work for now."

"I need to know so I can tell COMSUBIN why I'm retiring. Kora!"

"I have to meet your famiglia's don to get permission." Fon smiled assuredly at Harry and continued, "Since our bonding is not traditional. This is all rather sudden."

"This information is necessary for my experiment."

"Yes, that is must be it," Verde muttered.

"True, some famiglias are like that, Kora!"

Harry was even more confused now. Don, famiglia? "What are guys talking about? Famiglias and weather patterns? Is this some new cult? I really don't understand anything you've been going on about."

They looked confused now too. Lal arched her brow at him like she didn't believe him.

And that was another thing he didn't understand. Why were the law keepers here and why so
peacefully? He would have thought she'd try to attack him one more time. They'd chased him all over the resort earlier. Was he entrapped in this suite?

"Oya oya, what do you mean by that?" Sinagra asked. His tone was a little odd and his smile was faltering.

"…Do you know what kind of place this island is?" Verde asked suspiciously.

"Of course, he knows. Everybody knows it. Kora!" Colonello said with a snort. He rolled his eyes and started to drink more coffee.

"It's just a resort," Harry replied. From the looks on their faces, he was starting to doubt it a little now.

"Just a resort?" Colonello spluttered.

"You know, a normal resort that people go to when they want a holiday…?" Harry trailed as he tilted his head slightly to one side.

"Wha..WHAT!?" Lal screamed incredulously.

"A regular resort?" Viper muttered into his hand.

"You…Don't know anything?" Fon muttered.

"I was suspicious earlier," Verde thoughtfully said. "This confirms it."

"Don't joke around," Sinagra said. He tilted his fedora up and looked Harry dead in the eye. After a minute, his shoulders began shaking and the smile crept up his face again.

"At least tell me you know about the mafia!" Colonello suddenly ran to him and grabbed Harry by his shoulders.

"Ah! The mafia," Harry exclaimed. The others sighed as if they were relieved, much to Harry's confusion.

"Thank goodness for that mercy," Colonello said as he let go of Harry's shoulders.

"Isn't that the criminal body that operates in Italy?" Harry asked. With a crack of their necks they suddenly looked back at him.

"Wha… aren't you in the mafia? What about your theft?" Lal asked desperately.

"Oh! You thought I was in the mafia?" Harry knocked his hands like he found the reason they'd supposedly tried to kill him. "Nope, I'm not. I just needed money."

They all stilled like stone statues. Harry could almost see a stone like texture on their skin.

Harry looked at them worriedly. Was it such a shock that he wasn't in the mafia? They weren't even blinking. Isn't that bad for your body?

"Hey! Are you guys okay?" Harry waved his hands and snapped his fingers.

Like a puppet whose strings had been cut, they fell from their chairs. Harry looked down at them in concern, hoping he hadn't accidentally killed them all with shock. Then, all of sudden, there were yells.
"A civilian! Ha-ha!" Sinagra laughed uncontrollably. He looked at Harry again and laughed harder. Harry was starting to get really put out by his laughter.

"No way! Kora!" Colonello yelled. He went suddenly quiet and Harry leaned over to look at him in concern. The man had fallen unconscious. That couldn't be good. Especially after hitting his head on the floor.

"Just a normal person?" Fon said incredulously.

"Doesn't know about sky flames?!" Verde almost shined with happiness. Harry would be happy for him if he hadn’t looked at him with almost lustful eyes. Harry just knew it wasn't the sexual kind of lust too.

"Not in the mafia!" Lal shouted. She murmured something under her breath and then slapped herself.

"No..no money!" Viper's horror stricken tone would be forever etched in his mind. Harry hadn't ever heard that level of despair, even during the war. Viper slumped on table and continuously muttered "no money, no money".

Was Viper really that obsessed over money?

Really, Harry didn't get it. He didn't understand any of this. He wanted answers and he wanted them now!

The fact that Sinagra was still laughing wasn't helping his mood any.
Chapter 10

Rene laughed and laughed. They'd been chasing after a civilian sky! No wonder he'd been so skittish! Even his name screamed civilian. Harry, such boring name for a powerful sky.

Although, Rene couldn't help but wonder how he'd activated his sky flames. Dying will flames don't just active themselves – it was called "dying will" for a reason. While everyone in the world has that power, few know of it and even fewer people could safely activate it. Those few people were mostly mafia and started training in their early teens.

Yet, despite all of that, here is a civilian with no connection to the mafia and no prior knowledge who managed to activate his dying will flames! Harry had activated sky flames – the world's rarest and most respected type – and they were the most ridiculously pure flames he'd ever felt. The odds of all of this coming together in one package were astronomically low.

"Colonello!" Lal yelled suddenly.

Colonello woke up with jerk and stood at attention. "YES!"

'She's conditioned him well,' Rene thought. He looked at his sky who was looking at Colonello with an incredulous expression.

Colonello followed Lal's pointed stare to see Harry sitting across from them, looking entirely at odds with what was going on. Upon seeing their sky, Colonello looked bemused. "Civilian?"

"Yes, he's a civilian," Lal confirmed. "Now, Colonello!"

"Yes?" Colonello looked back at Lal.

"Shoot me," she said bluntly.

"Wah? No!" Colonello spluttered.

"Nobody is shooting anyone!" Their sky slapped the table and glared, daring them to say otherwise. Rene smiled as the others quickly quieted.

'He's definitely a sky,' Rene thought. He looked into his sky's flashing eyes. Those eyes held a
strength and will to them; perhaps there was a touch of vulnerability there as well, but Rene could see the potential in Harry. Under his tutorage, Harry would shine.

"And why do you keep calling me a civilian? Aren't you guys also civilians? Well, aside from those two." His sky gestured to the duo in obvious military uniforms.

Rene looked at the others and sighed when not one of them had the courage to explain their situation. "We use civilian to refer to normal people."

"So you're not normal?" Harry asked sarcastically.

"Nope! We're in the mafia." Rene grinned. The others froze in shock, which surprised him. What? Did they think he'd skirt around it? Besides, it needed to be said. They'd get nothing by lying or stalling about this.

"You're mafia?" Harry titled his head slightly with his brows furrowed.

"Mafia," Rene agreed.

"You mean criminals with guns and other things," Harry said hesitantly.

"Yes, among other things," Rene said, amused.

"You're all mafia?" Harry looked at others, specifically on the two in military uniforms.

"Yes. Actually, you could say that everyone on this whole island is mafia," Rene finished.

"WHAT?" Harry's shout rang through room.

'Really, the mafia?!' Harry internally groaned.

He had just wanted to learn more about that creature, maybe meet and talk with him again, but NO! The bloody Potter Luck strikes again! The whole island is mafia!

"So, you are all in the mafia." Harry sighed resignedly when they all nodded. No wonder they had guns and… "Wait! What is up with those weird lights? Are you magic?" He said as he remembered the patronus-like attacks, assisted-flying guns, and colorful flames.

'If they have magic, then maybe the magical world does exist in this dimension!' Harry was excited and hopeful despite himself. This could finally be some good news!

The group exchanged meaningful glances with each other. Then Verde cleared his throat as if a decision was made. "Ahem. No, it's not magic. Listen well, because I will only tell you once." He seriously warned Harry. Harry nodded slowly, his excitement flagging. He felt quite stupid, actually. He hadn't felt a single shred of magic from them earlier.

"All people have this power inside them. Some might call it fantastical due to the almost supernatural abilities it provides. You ever heard about that woman who rescued her child from underneath her car? It's like that, but more." Verde paused, then said, "We call this power 'dying will flames'. It's high density energy that originates from your inner soul. Like its name implies, it looks like flames."

"And what about the color?" Harry asked with trepidation. They were using power from the soul? That sounded too much like soul magic to be comfortable.
"Well, there are seven different kinds of 'flames'. Each flame has their own characteristic. For example, I have lightning flames." Verde pulled his crackling lightning flames over his hands as an example. "It's green in color and has the 'hardening' attribute. It's usually used defensively, but some can concentrate it into electrical attacks."

Fon continued from there. "I have storm flames," Fon said. He held his hand up, showing Harry the red flames he held there. "Their attribute is 'disintegration'."

"I'm a rain." Colonello grinned at him and pointed at Lal, "She is too. Our flames are blue and are used for 'tranquility'. It's not just calming people's tempers though! Rain flames can affect things physically by slowing them down."

"And I have sun flames. Its characteristic is 'activation', which is a short way of saying 'make it work better'. For example, I never get drunk because sun flames help burn the alcohol from my system," Sinagra explained with a smirk. For some reason, all of the rest glared at him. It almost looked like they were jealous. Harry put it out of mind and looked at Viper.

"Mist," Viper sighed. "It's indigo and covers 'construction'."

Verde cleared his throat to get Harry's attention and said, "And you have sky flames. Sky flames are an orange color—"

"Orange? So, I did use sky flames earlier then. Did I hurt you?" Harry looked at his hands where orange flames began to burn. "What's the sky characteristic?"

"Sky flames can 'harmonize' with other flames," Verde said shortly. He didn't appreciate being interrupted. "And no, you didn't hurt us."

"What do you mean by 'harmonizing' with other flames?" Harry said, confused. Harmony means unity, right? So, maybe Verde was telling the truth and Harry hadn't hurt them. That was a relief if it was true.

"Ah, harmonizing…how should I put it?" Verde was about to continue, but Sinagra interrupted.

"Skies can form bonds with other flame users. You bonded with us."

"Bonded? What do you mean bonded?" Harry demanded.

"The bond is a connection between our flames, our souls. In other words, your flames allow us to be in Harmony. You are our central point because of this. You are the home, the all-encompassing sky, we return to. Skies are always the center. Because of this, the sky is held in higher regard and is protected by the other elements, who become 'guardians' once they've bonded."

"When a sky reaches their flame potential, they instinctively search for other flame users for protection and balance. Once the sky and element come to an understanding, they harmonize with each other," Sinagra explained.

"But we didn't reach an understanding! We just met yesterday!" Harry glared at them.

"That's why you are an interesting subject." Verde fixed his glasses. "It was instant harmonization. It should be impossible to harmonize like that, but here we are."

An impossible, instant harmonization? Harry chuckled helplessly at the irony. The impossible always happened to him. Surviving the killing curse and being a living hocrux were just two that immediately popped into mind. Now he was instantly, forcibly binding his souls to others'. He ruined
their chance to find a sky of their own choice, one who would suit them best. "Can we break it? The bond, I mean." Harry muttered, looking down.

For some reason this made Colonello growl. "You don't want us?!

"Don't tell me you want to be stuck with me!" Harry snapped. "I'm a civilian, a nobody, with no knowledge of the mafia or flames or who you are. And doesn't 'instant harmonization' mean I stole you guys from your rightful sky?"

"No! I'm—" Colonello tried continue, but Harry kept talking right over him.

"I don't want to hurt you," Harry said firmly. "What happens if this is bad for you? Like Verde said, this shouldn't be possible! We have to break it."

Colonello looked like he wanted to say something again, but Harry sharply shook his head and left to return to his room. He needed time and space to make a plan. He needed to escape and find a way to cut the bonds without hurting anyone.

Harry was tired of hurting people.

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Rene sighed as Harry stormed out of the room. They were all uneasy. At first he'd thought that another sky was rejecting him – one that had already harmonized with him at that – but then Harry started talking about not hurting them and everything came together. While he was still worried over what his sky might do, Rene was also happy. How many years had it been since someone cared for his well-being? He couldn't remember one person who gave a shit about him, aside from his long-dead grandmother. Although that is debatable.

"Damn it!" Colonello shouted and punched the table hard enough that it shook their dinnerware.

"Shouldn't we go after him?" Fon asked in concern.

"No need," Rene said. "I gave strict instructions to the staff that they weren't to let him out of the suite unless one of us was with him. Let's just give him some space and time to cool down. Besides, we need to decide on a critical topic before we bring him back into this."

"Decide on what?" Viper asked.

"Our sky is a civilian that has no prior knowledge about the mafia as it is, or our situation in it." Rene proceeded to tell them about deal that he made with Vongola Nono in exchange for the man's silence. They all quietly listened. Good. "As much as I want to believe in the ninth, it's Vongola, and Vongola never leave a sky alone. Aside from them, there will be other famiglie after him when it inevitably gets out."

"What are you trying to say?" Verde demanded impatiently.

"I'm talking about politics. Harry's a civilian sky who has no debt, alliance, or enemies. It's an ideal clean slate for all of us. Unfortunately, this also means he has no power base and is extremely vulnerable. He only has us to protect him. We need to work together without missteps to keep him safe; defiance could cost our sky his life. So, we need to decide on who will be second in command and be temporary boss until Harry can learn to lead us." Rene grinned and said, "And I think it should be me."

"What! Why should I follow you?" Colonello glared at him. "I'd make a better second-hand than you
"You didn't even win that fight against me," Rene drawled. "What makes you think you're better?"

"We were interrupted! I would definitely win against you if we fought alone," Colonello insisted.

"Ah, then let's decide it this way... whoever wins the fight will be the temporary boss." Rene smirked. "But, someone will have to be with our sky while we fight. We can't leave him without protection."

"I'll stay with Harry," Verde volunteered.

"I don't trust you alone with him," Rene replied bluntly.

"I won't participate in the fight," Lal said as she looked down. "I can stay behind."

"You don't want to be second-in-command?" Rene said, amused.

"I don't have the right," Lal stated.

"Lal?" Colonello looked sadly at her, but she kept her eyes glued to the floor.

"You're right to think so, but I trust you even less than I trust him," Rene said as he gestured to the scientist.

"I would stay here, but I worry about having someone like you as boss, no matter the duration." Fon said.

"Aw, I thought we were friends," Rene replied in mock-sadness. "Whatever changed?"

"You are too impulsive. I think it's better if we have a calm and focused leader," Fon said. He pointedly looked at Lal before turning back to him. "It showed when she shot at Harry. You were so fixated on fighting that you couldn't protect him when it counted."

"Oh, direct hit there. Why don't you just say you want to be boss?" Rene said as he glared at Fon.

"Unlike you, I don't have that ambition; however, I will not stand aside for you, as you are not suited for role," Fon calmly replied.

"It's not like I want to actually be the boss. If I wanted to be a boss, I would have already founded a new famiglia of my own," Rene growled at Fon.

Rene had never wanted to be a boss of a famiglia. What he had always wanted was to find his perfect sky, which he now had. Still, while Harry was perfect for him, Harry was also very vulnerable. Rene would do his best to protect him and teach him until Harry could lead them himself. The others couldn't be trusted to do that. Fon was of the Triads, the rains were from COMSUBIN, and Verde was a scientist. None of them understood this as well as he did.

"I will stay with Verde and Lal to look after the sky," Viper said.

"You?" Rene looked at Viper with suspicion. While it was true that Viper didn't have any reason to harm or abduct Harry, Rene didn't know enough about Viper personally to be sure.

"I still need to get my money from him. We'll have to arrange some form of alternate payment," Viper grumbled.
'Ah, there's that infamous greed. I'll believe him for now,' Rene thought. He looked at Verde and Lal. 'He's better than those two, that's for sure.'

"Right, let's go! The sooner we get started the sooner we can plan," Rene said as he left the dining room. Fon and Colonello followed after him shortly.

As Rene walked down the hall, he looked briefly at the closed door of Harry's bedroom.

'Don't worry, Harry. I'll take care of everything.'

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Harry shut the door to the bedroom after he stormed off. He quietly thanked Merlin when they didn't come after him. He needed time and space to think and plan. His sky flames angrily burned and roiled inside of him as if it was reading his mind. Maybe it was.

He had to leave. What would happen if he lost control of his sky flames again? Sure, Harry had bonded to his 'guardians', but he couldn't say for sure that that's all it would or could do. What if it could actually set fire to things? He could end up burning the whole hotel down.

He took a deep breath and focused. First, he had to find out where he was. Harry looked out the room's window and saw the street below. He recognized it as the main street, which was something to be glad for. Now he had a sense of direction. Unfortunately, his room was too far up to dare a jump. Harry didn't think his magic could help him with that.

Wait, his magic! Harry closed his eyes and searched for his magic beneath the flames. The sky flames happily tried to get his attention as he meditated, but Harry pushed them away. He tried to search deeper, but the sky flames continuously got in the way, like a stubborn cat wanting attention. Harry didn't know how much time passed since he first began – maybe an hour or two – but…Ah, there it was. The relief he felt almost dropped him to the floor. For second he had thought he might have actually lost his magic!

"I wanted to talk with you," Lal's voice said from behind the door. "Can I enter?"

"Okay," Harry replied reluctantly.

Lal entered the room and paused as if unsure of what to do. Harry wanted offer a seat, but the chairs were beside him and he was still a little afraid of her. She did try to catch and maybe even kill him. So, they both just awkwardly stood there.

"I wanted to apologize," Lal said after the silence dragged on. "It was impulsive of me to attack you. I…I don't know what came over me. Well, I do know. I thought I was teaching you a lesson. I thought you were a sky who had already been trained, since you have such strong flames. I thought…never mind. I'm sorry. I hope you will forgive me," she said.

"Um…It's okay. You are not the first person who's attacked me," Harry replied with a wry smile. Of course, he'd forgive her. She didn't know that he wasn't trained, or that he wasn't mafia. Besides, he's the one who started it by breaking the law. Anyway, he didn't get banged up too hard. He'd gained a few bruises, but they were all are healed. Now that he thought about it, it was strange that they healed so quickly. Maybe it was related to flames.

Lal looked even more guilty, so Harry tried to change subject. "Where are the others?"

"They're out." Lal snorted. "Don't worry about them. They'll probably come back in a few hours."
"Oh." Harry's mind whirled. This was his chance. It was maybe the only chance that he'd get for a long time. Only Lal was in his way right now. He just had to work a little magic. "Lal, I'm sorry. You have to forget about me. So…" Harry tried to use his hypnosis, but it didn't seem to take hold.

"Forget? Why would I forget about you?" Lal replied.

Damn it. He needed to be more specific in his wording. "Sleep!" Lal fell asleep where she stood and thankfully tipped in the bed's direction. Harry almost thought his hypnosis didn't work since it has a limit. But thankfully his magic seems to be cooperating with him for now.

'Right, now that she's down, it's time to go,' Harry thought. He opened the door and found himself faced with Viper.

Viper stared at the unconscious Lal and Harry could almost feel the arched brow. Harry quickly said "She fell asleep!" and hoped it didn't make him sound as guilty as he thought it did.

Then, Harry noticed an unconscious Verde behind Viper. He looked back and stared at the illusionist.

"Ah, he fell asleep too," Viper said with a smirk.
Chapter 11-Harrynapping?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru(thank you )

Chapter 11

Viper was shocked. He had never dreamed about harmonizing with a sky, not like other flame users. For him, harmonization was something to avoid. The only thing that he wished for was money. Money means power, money means freedom. Anything can be bought if you have enough to spend. That was a lesson he learned in his childhood.

Harmonizing with someone and being kept under his or her thumb was not something Viper saw as an ideal future. Despite that, it seems he's harmonized anyway. He could have, perhaps, learned to live with it under different circumstances; however, this sky had no money and no power. He lacked in nearly every aspect that Viper desired. This was an unmitigated disaster.

"—would have already founded a new famiglia of my own," Sinagra growled at Fon.

"I will stay with Verde and Lal to look after the sky," Viper said. He didn't know why he agreed to stay behind, but after Sinagra nodded Viper remembered a deal that he made.

'Now will be the best chance I have,' Viper thought as Sinagra, Colonello, and Fon left. 'Now that the main fighters of the group are gone, all I have to do is take out Verde and Lal.'

Viper looked over towards a brooding Lal and grinning Verde and said, "They're all being stupid."

"Oh, you think it's not wise to choose a second in command?" Verde fixed his glasses and stared at Viper.

"Do you really think we'd follow someone without question? We're all extremely independent individuals. I doubt that we could work well together, unless it's under extreme circumstances. Especially under that clueless sky," Viper said in a bored tone.

"Yes, it would be a stretch to assume so much out of a civilian sky," Verde agreed with a wan smile. Lal, who was still looking down, clenched her hand and hunched her shoulders further in.

"He couldn't even handle a single kick from a flame user. It must have hurt a lot too. I felt sun flames all over him. Sinagra must have healed him," Viper continued casually.

At his last sentence, Lal muttered about apologizing under her breath and stormed out of the room.

"Bravo, you succeed to chase her out." Verde smirked. "What's your plan?"

"Plan? I assure you that I don't have one, but you must have something." Viper sighed and shook his head minutely as he stared down the hall Lal had gone in. "It was much too easy to rile her. I thought
it would be hard to fool a COMSUBIN member, especially so when she's their commander."

"I'm sure that if it wasn't for her guilt over her sky, she would've been more observant. Anyway, let's make a deal." Verde's smile slid off his face and he took up a more serious air. "I'll pay you two million dollars to help me kidnap Harry and escape from the others unnoticed."

"Harry? What happened to test subject?" Viper said, careful to hide his shock. Verde was a scientist who was known to sacrifice anything in the name of science. But now…he seemed to want to spend more time with his sky than experiment on him.

Viper was more determined than ever to finish his previous deal. He won't let himself be trapped like them.

Verde looked away and sighed. "Deal or no deal?"

"Three million, no less. It's possible, but I will be going against Sinagra and those other brutes. Let's check on Lal and the sky," Viper said as they went to the living room. Verde followed him with hands in his pockets. When they entered the living room and neared to the bedroom, Verde stalled.

"So, no deal? It's so sad, we would have worked together well." Verde suddenly attacked with his Electrico Thunder. His thunder shock appeared to hit Viper, but Viper's image distorted and eventually disappeared. Verde looked around and dodged to the side when he saw Viper's shadow extend behind him. Viper was there, unharmed. Still, he couldn't be sure if this was the real Viper or not. "It was an illusion, then."

"A good illusionist always prepares for all possible outcomes," Viper said. "Unfortunately, I can't stay and fight with you. Time is money and I have a reward to claim."

"Wah," Verde's whole body relaxed and fell to the floor. "Wha-aaat d-did…y-you d…ooo?" Verde glared at Viper tiredly.

"I just put something extra into the coffee. What's with that look? Ah, you're wondering what poisons work that fast. It's not poison, more like a muscle relaxant. A small dose, at that. I'm just using my mist flame to trick your body's system to accelerate the effects, otherwise you wouldn't even notice it. Your body is thinking that it had a much larger dose than its original amount. Don't worry, it won't kill you; it will just help you to sleep. After all, Vongola won't give a poison to customers, but something that helps them sleep…" Viper smirked.

From the moment he woke up, Viper had planned escaping from the sky's clutch. He asked for coffee, pain killers, and sleeping pills from the swift Vongola staff. Then he dosed the coffee with a meager amount of crushed sleeping pills. Viper would have liked to have more sleeping pills for a heavier dose, but the Vongola hotel doesn't give customers more than a certain amount. Something about giving killers a weapon and residents' homicide/suicide being bad for their hotel.

Viper wasn't really one for poison, but this time he was against a group consisting of the top-most experts in their field. Honestly, he was lucky that the fighters had left already. It would take a much more powerful illusion from Viper to take out all of them together, despite the aid of the crushed pills.

"Th…r…ee mi..l" Verde groaned.

'*What a persistent guy,*' Viper thought and used more of his mist to trick Verde's body. He needs to work quickly, so he could put more distance between the others and himself once things were underway. As it was, he was pushing things. Due to the small amount of pills, Verde would only
sleep about an hour after Viper left, since Viper needed to be near and constantly inject his mist flame to keep the illusion running.

"Three million? Stupid! This isn't about money, not really," Viper said as Verde struggled to stay conscious. "I've already made a deal and I don't break deals. It's bad for business."

Viper started to walk away from Verde, but stopped when he grabbed the bottom of Viper's robe.

"H...r...y" Verde's glazed eyes looked at Viper.

"Annoying." Viper freed his robe from Verde's desperate clutch. "You became soft Verde. Don't worry, you'll thank me later."

Verde finally succumbed to Viper's illusion. Viper looked at Verde's unconscious body and muttered, "I'm saving you, all of you, from a prison of your own making."

'Now the only obstacle left is Lal.' Viper went to open the door to the bedroom, but it was swung open by the sky first. Viper looked at the unconscious Lal and arched a brow. The sky's face instantly shifted from panic to guilt as he quickly said "She fell asleep". Then Harry noticed Verde's unconscious body behind Viper.

Viper smirked. "Ah, he fell asleep too."

'What a curious sky we have here,' Viper thought as Harry threw an incredulous look at him.

Two hours later

"Why don't you guys just give up?" Rene smirked as he dodged Fon's projected storm dragon. A blue bullet shot from out the left, but Rene expertly dodged it as well.

"Give up? No way, Kora!" Colonello's voice echoed from the trees.

"And stroke your ego? I don't think so," Fon said calmly as his dragon roared.

"Then let's see if you..." Rene grinned as he cocked his gun, but suddenly Lal's voice shouted through Colonello's radio, "COLONELLO, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!"

"Aw, we were just getting to good part!" Colonello groaned.

"Well, excuse me, I thought you'd be concerned if Harry were missing!" Lal said sarcastically.

"Wait! He's missing?" Colonello said. Rene and Fon quickly went to Colonello, who was walking out from his previous cover.

"It was Viper, he–Hey! Give it back Verde!" Verde and Lal's voices overlapped as they argued. Rene snatched the radio from Colonello and ignored the man's protests.

"What happened?" Rene growled.

"It was Viper. He kidnapped Harry " Verde said with a sigh.

"We're on the way." Rene tossed the radio back to Colonello and hurried to go back. Fon and Colonello ran after him.
"What's going on there?" Rene thought angrily.

One Hour Before

"You want to escape?" Viper asked. It seemed evident, considering the sky had somehow managed to knock Lal unconscious.

Harry fidgeted a little before he straightened up with a determined look and answered "Yes. Don't tell me that you actually want me here."

"I don't." Viper replied.

Viper never thought he'd be this lucky. A civilian sky had knocked out Lal Mirch! 'Maybe it would be – no, don't think about that. You're falling into the same trap as the others.' Viper shook his head.

"Don't get in my way, then!" Harry shouldered his way through the door and headed toward the exit. He was stopped by two smiling women.

"Can I help you, sir? Would you like room service?"

"I…no, I need to go." Harry tried to step around them, but they stopped him with that same, plastic smile.

"There is no need to go yourself. We will bring anything that you want straight to your room for you."

Harry looked at them with suspicion and tried to leave again. "No thank you."

One of them stopped him again and said, "You can't go without…"

"Leave him be, I am with him." Viper sighed as he noticed Harry's tenseness. Harry was going to run. Viper couldn't let him go without him.

"But…" one of them protested.

"Sinagra gave order that you can't let him out unless he's with one of us. So, here I am. Leave him be." Viper said with a touch of annoyance.

"Yes, sir." They bowed as Harry and Viper left the suit. Harry looked at them and then to Viper.

"Did Sinagra really give that order?"

Viper nodded and left to the lift. Harry quietly followed him. Viper pushed the lift's button and, as usual, the VIP lift door opened immediately. Viper and Harry stepped in and started to descend.

Harry took the chance to side-eye the illusionist. "I thought you only helped for money?"

"Yes," Viper said.

"So why are you helping me then? I don't have any."

"You don't like me, do you?" Harry said seriously.

"No, I don't. You're weak and I don't want to be bound to you," Viper said as he looked at his new
sky. He eyed the space between them almost nervously. He couldn't get close to him. Viper won't fall for that trap.

The lift finally reached the lobby after a minute or so of awkward silence. Harry looked around the lobby in awe. The Vongola hotel was the finest hotel on the island and its lobby was enriched with golden pillars and famous arts. Viper mournfully looked at the expensive chairs put out for visitors to sit in. He wouldn't have used such expensive chairs for the lobby.

"They are spending too much on decoration," Viper grumbled as some kid with sticky hands smeared ice cream on one of the chairs. Harry nodded, which Viper ignored. He won't get close to him. "Let's go. You want to escape, don't you?"

"Yeah, but you don't." Harry followed Viper to the main street with a slight frown. Viper didn't reply, he just continued to lead the sky down to the docks. They walked through the shopping district on the way there. Harry seemed afraid at first. He tensed and looked back several times, but then he started to relax when the others didn't suddenly jump around the corner to chase after them. The street's lively atmosphere probably helped the sky relax even more, considering his civilian background.

Harry started to smile and give his attention to the shops and people they were passing. Viper quietly observed Harry as he smiled at kids and fluttered from one place to another. His— no, not his! –Harry looked curiously at stalls and various mafiosi. He was such a curious, innocent sky, but sometimes Viper saw a darkness in his eyes. There was a history behind those eyes, a reason for that strange dissonance.

'I wonder, is it a result of living on the streets? Of his life as a thief?' Viper thought, then shook his head. 'No! He's not here for me to study him, he's here to...

"Aren't you forgetting about your escape plan?" Viper said as Harry touched something shiny on the stall.

Harry froze. "Yes! I forgot about that. No, ma'am, I don't want to buy a hammer gun! What would I do with hammer gun?" Harry shook his head at the trader and then looked at Viper. "Will you help me escape?"

"Why would you want to escape from here? You have five people who are bonded with you and who would do anything for you," Viper said curiously. It was unheard of for a sky to not want guardians.

"That's what I'm uneasy about. How much of that is forced on them because of the bond? I don't want to control someone." Harry shook his head as if he was trying to shake away bad memories.

"You say that now, but soon you will accept it and get power hungry. Just like them, you will start to control people." Viper said bitterly.

Harry whirled to face him and glared. "No, I will never do that!"

"They all say that. Don't talk about what you don't know." Viper said, annoyed. All humans were the same. Power is everything.

"No, you're the one who doesn't know anything!" Harry snapped and looked Viper in the eyes. Harry's eyes flashed with something which Viper couldn't immediately put his finger on. That's it, that darkness in his eyes from before.' Viper realized as Harry looked away.

"Anyway, are you going to help me to find a boat to the mainland?" Harry said, changing the topic.
"Let me guide you to the dock," Viper said. He sighed, determined that he wouldn't think more on his sky. In any case, it would soon be useless.

Harry tripped on something and fell. Viper started to reach out to him, then withdrew his hand at the last moment. He couldn't risk touching Harry. The sky flames were too much for him earlier. Since they bonded to Harry, none of them, bar Sinagra touched Harry. They don't know what it would do. Would the sky flames surge out a second time or was the first time just for harmonization?

"Ow. Hey, are you okay?" Harry stood up and grabbed Viper's hand with concern, turning it over in between his own. "Your hand is shaking."

'Idiot!' Viper thought as he closed his eyes. After a moment, he realized that all he felt was the warmth of Harry’s hands holding his. Viper looked at their connected hands and mused, 'So it was one time thing.'

"Oh, sorry! It's just, you were shaking so I kinda, I mean I just...grabbed your hand." Harry mistook his stare and quickly withdrew his hands. "Anyway, where are we going?"

"It's strange that you didn't ask that question earlier," Viper said as he guided them back in the direction of the docks.

"Well, you looked like you hated my guts, so I thought it'd better if I shut my mouth." Harry wryly smiled as the docks came into sight.

"A normal person would ask that question first" Viper muttered.

They reached the docks and walked by private boats that various mafiosi docked, although you needed permission from the Mafia Island to do so. Most just came here by the resort's cruise ship, but some rich bosses liked to travel with their own private boat, despite the extra expenses.

"I'm not really what you'd call a normal person." Harry smiled as if he heard some inside joke. They reached the boat at the end and Harry suddenly stopped. "You're not here to help me, are you?"

"No, I'm not," Viper said as people came from the shadows.

Harry just stood there as men from the Bochi famiglia grabbed him. One of the men gave a silver suitcase to Viper.

"You're as great as the rumors say! Don't know why the boss would want to spend so much on one single thief, but that's not my business. Good job."

Viper looked at the quiet Harry and remembered the deal that led them here.

Flashback

"Just because it's the Mafia Land, I can't collect my bounty. Mou~" Viper was in a bad mood. He came here to finish a job, but the target already choked on broccoli. A piece of broccoli! Then, he found a man wanted by another famiglia, but they wouldn't pay him because he hunted on the island!

"Hey, you," said a fat man that was passing by.

"Yes?"

"You are Viper, aren't you? Lucky! I need to catch someone. The reward will be huge. My men are
already chasing him, but I doubt they'll catch this thief. He's slippery."

"How much?" Viper asked curiously.

"Five hundred! Do we have a deal?"

"No, go somewhere else to get help. I don't work so cheaply."

"Hey! Wait! Don't you know who you are talking to? I'm Bochi's boss."

Bochi, as in the new and very rich famiglia Bochi? Viper quickly assessed the information that he gathered earlier. Even though they were new, the Bochi quickly grew and got control of a decently sized territory in Italy.

'A good famiglia to make deals with. New famiglie deals are quick, easy, and pay well in hopes of establishing positive relationships. Catching one thief will be a piece of cake,' Viper thought with a small smile.

"Do you know who you are you talking to?" Viper released his mist to construct an imitating image behind himself. For such a weak willed man, it would be enough. "You can do better. I'm in a bad mood right now."

"Y-yes, sorry! Five million!" Bochi quickly agreed.

"It's a deal. Where do you want me to take him?" Viper said.

Bochi dabbed the beading sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief as he thought. "I have a ship tied to the end of the dock. We can make the exchange there."

"Agreed."

Flashback ended

The Bochi men quickly grabbed Harry and started to embark on the boat.

"Wait!" Viper ordered as they reached the cabin's door. He could only see Harry's back from here.

"Why aren't you shouting? I just sold you! Why are you just accepting it? Aren't you angry!" Viper shouted the last part.

"Because I understand you," Harry looked back and smiled at him. It froze Viper. He couldn't move, he couldn't speak. It hurt to breathe.

Then the boat pulled away from the dock, and he could move again.

Viper clutched the silver case close to his chest and thought, 'Money is everything. Money is power. Money is freedom...Then why does it hurt so much?'

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Two Hours Later

"Verde, did you get his location?" Rene said. He was running through the streets with Fon. Colonello went to security, while Lal and Verde went to the control room where the security cameras screens were.
"I have Viper's current location, but the footage with Harry ended when they reached the dock. Some kind of mist interference. We can't tell what happened there, but Viper returns without him."

"Where is Viper?" Rene bit out.

"Go left at the next corner, now right. Left, and then forward for two blocks. There! He went to that bar in front of you!" Verde exclaimed.

"Right" Rene kicked the door open impatiently and found himself in a crowded bar. People murmured and shifted anxiously, but otherwise didn't bring out weapons. Rene scanned the bar and found Viper sitting at the bar, nursing whisky.

Rene and Fon wasted no time in surrounding him. Rene took out his gun and pointed it at Viper's temple. "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't blow your head off."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all support and reviews. I loved them:)
So how was it? How many of you guessed Viper's action(betrayal)?
Chapter 12-Feeling emptiness

Beta'd by Ie-maru.

A/N:Thank you all for support(fav,follows,reviews). They really made my day

Chapter 12

Harry sighed as he tried to loosen the ropes around his wrists. He was tied to a pole in the lower deck of the boat, surrounded by crates. They'd tied him here like he was any other piece of cargo and left. Not that he cared, really.

Harry hadn't paid much attention to his captors when they brought him down. He was more concerned with the "why" than the "who". Harry didn't know why he let them capture him without a fight; he'd been running from them successfully and giving up wasn't something he tended to do. He knew from the beginning that Viper was up to something, but he went along anyway. Harry tried to trick him with all the "window shopping" to buy time to think of a plan, but he'd gotten distracted from doing so by all the interesting things in the lively market.

If Viper hadn't reminded him, Harry would have happily spent more time there. Sadly, he didn't have time for it. He let Viper lead him to the docks and trailed his eyes up and down for a boat he could make use of. He'd thought about the pros and cons of staying on the island and then decided that it'd be better to go away for a few days to think of how to break the bonds. If he stayed, the others would catch up and stop him. Unlike Viper, they seemed invested in the flames that tied them together.

Harry hadn't expected to be sold, though. Maybe to be roughed up a bit for whatever Viper held against him, or maybe told that he owed Viper a "favor" that he was going to collect on, but not that.

Strangely, Harry didn't even feel betrayed. He understood Viper and his reasoning. Viper was afraid of their bond. Harry knew what lengths normal people would sink to when they were scared, and Viper was part of the mafia. Besides, it wasn't like Viper had promised him anything.

While he intellectually understood and forgave Viper, his inner flame was sulking. First it was angry, and Harry had to bite down and hold it in, lest the whole dock burn for it. Then the sky flame was so sad that Harry nearly cried as well. Now his sky flame was sulking to Harry about not being let out.

"Well, you have to just suck it up! I won't let you hurt people," Harry muttered to himself. He was afraid that if he let the sky flame get out, he wouldn't be able to get the flame back inside him before it did something he'd regret. Maybe the boat would burn around him and he'd drown. That would just be his luck.

Harry frowned and reached for his magic, trying to poke it into doing something helpful, but the monstrous sky flame shoved his magic aside and broke his concentration like a spoiled brat.

Harry sighed again as the boat rocked and the rope bit into his skin. He was tired. He was tired of all the losses, betrayals, and running.

'Well, if they kill me, at least I won't have to continue living this farce. There's silver linings to every cloud, right? I hope it'll be fast.'

Harry only wished that this time he would die for real. If he were to miraculously "recover" again,
they’d probably make an experiment out of him. That would be worse than death.

Viper grimaced as he felt the gun dig in his temple. He knew they would hunt him down after Verde woke up and tattled. Viper looked up from his whisky to Sinagra's cold, black eyes. Sinagra was pissed. Viper didn't how he should feel about that. Normally, he'd be nervous, as this was the World's Greatest Hitman. Normally, Viper would be making a plan and weaving illusions to make his escape. Normally, adrenaline would be pumping through his system, sending a thrill down his spine.

Yet, all Viper felt was emptiness.

"Hey, this is the Mafia Island. Fighting's not allowed here!" the bar's owner rebuked.

"Shut up! I'm in bad mood right now. So, if any of you respect your lives, get out!" Sinagra snapped.

"WHAT? Do you know who we are?" "What is with this?" "Some upstart newbie?" The customers muttered as they all drew weapons and closed rank. The owner smirked as they were surrounded.

"Fon, if you please." Sinagra said. Viper felt the gun press harder at his temple. Sinagra was wise to keep him at gunpoint, but he supposed he shouldn't have expected less from the World's Greatest Hitman. Viper put his glass down and watched Fon as he made quick work of his fellow customers. In but a few seconds, all patrons fell to floor.

Pained moans filled the bar. "Uh, you can't…do that," the owner said as he stepped hesitantly forward to interfere.

"Hmm." Sinagra pretended to think. "I think I can, actually. Leave." His dark aura filled the room, promising violence if he wasn't immediately obeyed. Viper could almost see the owner's life flash before his eyes.

The owner began to say something, but then obviously re-thought it when he saw the injured patrons backing away. He quickly said, "You can have it" and left. The patrons gawked as the owner ran away, surrendering his own bar to the intruders.

"Don't you have somewhere to be?" Fon smiled calmly at his previous victims.

"Err, yes, sorry for the bother," one of them said before hurrying out with the others.

"Now that they are gone, would you kindly answer our questions?" Sinagra smiled sadistically.

"Oh, I thought you already knew the answer to that." Viper heard the click of a gun's safety turned off.

"Don't think that I won't shoot you. I—" Sinagra was interrupted by Verde and Lal's entrance.

"And here we are," Verde said to Lal as they entered the empty bar.

Lal glared at Verde. "We questioned passersby after looking through the tapes, but no one could remember seeing Harry. The market's busy and Viper's mist flames likely helped divert recognition. Seems our only hope here is Viper," Lal leaned against the wall casually, blocking Viper's last escape path.

"Mou~ I don't think I did something bad," Viper calmly started to explain, but was stopped when
Sinagra kicked him. Viper collided with the wall and fell to floor heavily. Pictures and trophies from the shelves above him rained down on him.

"I'm not playing around here. Where is Harry?" Sinagra said as he righted his fedora.

"He…ah, he is…gone" Viper breathed out as he stood up. Sinagra had put enough force behind his kick to nearly crack his ribs. Viper wrapped his arm around to support them and focused on breathing carefully.

"Where?" Fon demanded.

"Off of the island. I sold him." Viper watched as Sinagra scowled darkly and stalked toward him.

"What!?" Lal exclaimed as Sinagra's scowl deepened. Verde looked at him intensely like he was analyzing him.

"Why?" Fon said, his calm mask straining at the edges.

"Why? Why?! I saved you. I saved all of us! Have you guys heard yourselves? Sky this, sky that. You guys are professional killers, experts in your fields, but now you're all panting after a civilian sky. A civilian sky! Do you think Harry will understand your job? Do you think he'll want to be with you, for a bond he doesn't understand? Don't kid yourselves! Harry wanted to escape. The moment you left, he was ready to leave!" Viper shouted at them.

Didn't they understand that they were trying to tie themselves to a civilian who didn't even want them?! A civilian who…Harry's concerned face flashed before Viper's eyes. Even now, he could feel phantom Harry's touch as he held his hand. Viper clenched his hands and looked down.

After his shout, Sinagra and others all fell silent. Then Verde sighed and cleaned his glasses. "I expected this would happen."

"What do you mean?" Fon said.

"Think about this. We all harmonized with our sky without prior meetings, courtship, or agreement. Elements usually harmonize with their sky after spending a certain amount time with them. During that time, they will understand each other on a deeper level; thus, harmonization occurs. Mafia famiglie usually choose guardians from a young age so they will reach that harmonization easier and earlier. We are different. We are all adults who already have a place in the world. Then we harmonized with a teenage, civilian sky and are now under his influence. It will be hypocritical of me if I said it didn't sting a little."

"Should I be expecting defection from you as well?" Sinagra challenged. His eyes didn't stray from Viper, but he did shift slightly to keep Verde in his peripheral vision.

"No, I mean I just understand his reasoning philosophically. It doesn't mean that I agree with him. Besides…” Verde grumbled something under his breath.

"What famiglia has him now?" Lal interrogated.

"You're going to rescue him, then?" Viper chuckled painfully before he muttered "Bochi". He doesn't care anymore. Let them fall to their doom.

"This is bad." Sinagra actually looked worried for once.

"Isn't that the famiglia that popped up recently? Why would that be bad, Sinagra? We can easily take
"What has you so worried about the Bochi?" Fon wondered.

"Ampelo, the sky killer, is with them." Sinagra growled.

What?! Ampelo shouldn't be there. The Bochi famiglia should be harmless. It should be – I don't care. I don't care,' Viper thought desperately as the others talked about ship arrangements.

"Ampelo…He's a cloud user who murdered his harmonized sky, if I remember right. I never heard he joined a famiglia," Verde said.

"I just learned yesterday at the café. It's recent news. What I'm worried about is the likelihood of Harry instantly harmonizing again," Sinagra replied grimly.

"Harry doesn't have a cloud," Fon realized. His worried eyes met Sinagra's, who nodded sharply in confirmation.

"So, it's possible that he would bond instantly with the first cloud that he touches, which puts him at risk of bonding with Ampelo," Verde finished.

"A normal cloud would eat him alive!" Lal shouted, "We have to get to him quickly. Colonello!"

"Found a ship, kora!" Colonello's voice said through the radio.

"Perfect!" Sinagra said as he left the bar. The others followed after him in a hurry, not wanting to risk being too late. None of them gave Viper a second glance.

Viper stayed where he was against the wall. "Eat him alive?" Yes, it's possible.

Mafia famiglie handled the harmonization of clouds carefully, since a normal cloud's first reaction was to fight the sky when they met for the first time. Clouds don't want to be tied to one place, but they also desperately want to bond with a sky. These conflicted desires usually pressed against the typical cloud's temper, causing them to lash out, which was dangerous for everyone involved.

Usually this could be fixed through a long courtship where the sky proves that the cloud is free to do as they wish, go where they please, and that they would have a home to return to. The problem was that Harry didn't know any of this, being a civilian. There was also the fact that Ampelo killed his last sky and wasn't mentally stable.

"Then again, I shouldn't care. I won't become a prisoner. I won't become prisoner," Viper repeated, even as something burned inside him.

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"Is it okay to leave Viper there?" Fon asked as they caught up with Sinagra. Well, except Verde, who said that he needed to bring something with him. Fon watched as Sinagra's expression darkened.

"Sadly, I can't kill him without doing some damage to Harry. Who knows what this instant bond will do if it's cut abruptly?" Sinagra explained. "I would have liked to punish him for the damage he's done, but we don't have time if we want to save Harry. After that, we'll have our hands full proving we're not like that sellout. It will be a wonder if Harry trusts us as guardians after this."
"True, he is already afraid of us," Fon replied sadly. It wasn't just them who had to deal with being suddenly bonded, but Harry too. The teen didn't know any of them, so it wasn't a surprise that he was cautious. That Harry was a civilian just learning about his new place in the world also put a lot of stress on their sky.

While Fon was happy that he found his sky, he wished that they could have bonded traditionally. If they'd had more time together, maybe they could have eased Harry into this better. He really wanted Harry to experience traditional courting.

'Maybe he can experience it, after this. We could reintroduce ourselves and court him properly,' Fon shook his head. Now wasn't the time to think about this.

"You finally got here, kora!" Colonello waved from the deck of a nearby boat. "Wait! Where is Verde?" One of the ship crew tried to tell Colonello something, but he angrily shouted at him, "I don't care just start ship engine!"

"Verde went to collect something," Lal said as she watched the quavering crew stumble away from Colonello.

"But this is an emergency!" Colonello groaned.

"You will be glad that I brought my supplies later" Verde stated as he came from behind Colonello.

"Shit! Don't scare me like that. And when did you get here? Where?" Colonello whirled back at him and pointed at Verde accusingly.

"Scientists have their own way of doing things," Verde grinned mysteriously. "You wouldn't understand."

"Now that we all here," Sinagra said as they embarked on the ship, "Let's head to the mainland."

"You heard the guy, kora!" Colonello commanded the ship crew. They started their journey to save Harry, but sadly their ship stopped about a mile away from the dock.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU FORGOT TO STOCK FUEL!" Colonello angrily shook the captain.

"We t-ried to to tell you," one of the crew said meekly in his captain's defense.

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Harry woke up groggily as the door opened. A person dressed in an expensive black suit with a single white rose in his breast pocket came down the stairs, holding a tray. His purple hair gleamed in the room's light and a single scar marred his handsome features. Harry watched as the person come near him and put the tray of food before him. The person's purple eyes coldly swept over his body before they met Harry's. Those eyes were cold, empty, soulless. Then, suddenly, the person smiled with a touch of madness.

"A sky! What a wonderful gift. Don't worry dear," the man said as he leaned close. His white gloved hand cupped Harry's cheek and he whispered, "I will take care of you."
Chapter 13-Elisa! Who?

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru
Thank you for all support xD

Chapter 13

Harry was really creeped out. A strange man was stroking his cheek. This close, Harry could feel the man's breath on his face. The man stood back after a moment and his cold eyes glinted as he smiled.

"A Sky, my sky, returned to me," he crooned.

"No! I'm nobody's sky," Harry protested. The rope bit into skin as he fidgeted and tried vainly to escape the hand that came up to trace his face again.

"But, you are a sky. I can feel your flames when I-" The man was interrupted by the door opening, causing a terrifying look to flash over his features before being tucked away. It wasn't fast enough for Harry to miss it, however, and he paled in fear.

"I see you've already gotten acquainted with our thief," a man said from the open door.

'Wait, is that the man I stole from?'

Harry shook his head in disbelief.

'Just my luck. He's probably mafia too.'

"Thief?" the creepy man said with a raised brow. The new man came over to him and looked down at Harry.

"Can you believe it? This thief thought he could get away with stealing from me – the boss of mighty Bochi famiglia." The boss raised his fist to hit Harry, but was stopped by the madman's hand.

"No, no, no attacking my sky!" The creepy man shook his finger at the Bochi boss like he was disciplining a dog. "I don't want you to hurt Elisa. If you hurt her..."

"What are you—aaaaah!" the boss shrieked as the madman completely crushed his fist.

Harry eyed the boss's crushed hand with horror, That creep's as strong as a transformed werewolf!

"Boss! What's happened?" The boss's men entered the room with guns in hand, ready to act. They rushed over to the still shrieking boss who was saying "Ampelo, Ampelo".

One of men yelled at the creepy, chuckling man, who was probably Ampelo. "Ampelo! How dare you attack the boss!"

"Oh, but he dared to attack my sky first. Is this not fair?" Ampelo said calmly. As calm as he sounded, Harry felt there was something off in his tone.

"Your sky?! Your sky already-" the man started to say, but was cut off. Literally, as the man's head
was separated from his body. Harry and the others stared in horror at the headless body as Ampelo brought a handkerchief from his pocket to clean his sword. Harry hadn't even noticed that Ampelo had one earlier.

"I don't like noisy things," Ampelo muttered as he cleaned his sword.

"What?! Why? I will ki-kick you out from the famiglia," the boss whimpered as he clutched his wrist.

"Bonavento, Bonavento, do remember who is the one protecting you from threats of powerful famiglia." Ampelo opened his arms and laughed. "If I didn't join your famiglia, you would be dead. But don't worry, Elisa and I will protect you."

"You're crazy." Boss-Bonavento stared at him with horror.

"Aren't we all crazy here?" Ampelo walked over to him. The boss's other men enclosed their boss to protect him, but Ampelo shouldered past their shaking, terrified forms without trouble. He leaned close to the scared boss and said, "I protect you and you give me anything I want. Deal?"

"Y-yes," Bonavento nodded. Ampelo seemed satisfied with his answer and left him on the floor.

To Harry's horror, Ampelo started to walk to him. Bonavento quickly started to make his escape with his men right behind him.

"And Bonavento?" Ampelo called.

"Y…es?" Bonavento stopped at the door.

"Don't plan anything against me. We don't want to hurt your missus, do we? After all, we are family." Ampelo smiled sharply, his eyes communicating the repercussions.

"O-of course Ampelo, you know that we won't!" Bonavento stuttered.

"And Bonavento?" Ampelo sheathed his cleaned sword and closed in on Harry. Harry gagged as Ampelo touched his cheek with his gloved hand. Harry was sure there was blood speckled on it, and that didn't help at all.

"Y-yes?"

"Bring a dress for Elisa. A White one. Oh, and golden locks. Elisa always looked good with golden locks," Ampelo said as his other hand ran through Harry's black hair.

"O-of course," Bonavento said as he threw a pitying look at Harry. Bonavento nearly ran out, leaving Harry with the insane man in a room that was quickly filling with the smell of blood.

"Don't worry Elisa. Nobody can separate us now," Ampelo murmured as he continued to pet Harry's head.

Harry leaned back from him as much as possible and thought, 'Now is the right time to blow up. Hello? Sky flame?' But his flames only crooned. 'Of course you would like the crazy killer! Magic?' Harry tried to work his magic, but the sky flames pushed his attempts away.

'Oh come on!' Harry internally groaned.
"We're wasting time here!" Sinagra snarled as the ship's crew called the Mafia Land for emergency fueling.

"I know," Colonello bit out. He should've checked the ship's status with the crew before threatening them, but this was his sky they were talking about! This was the fastest available ship, so he commandeered it. They would've done the same!

"How could you miss something so important?" Lal said as she massaged her forehead.

"How was I supposed to know that they were low on fuel?" Colonello snapped.

Why didn't she just find a ship herself if she was so perfect at it? He didn't see her working her ass off! Colonello had to track the Bochi famiglia, get into the Mafia Land's security system, and find them a fast ship with a crew! He'd like to see anyone else do better!

"We should all calm down," Fon murmured from his mediating spot. That guy started to meditate the moment they found out that they needed to wait for the fuel ship.

"Calm down? Calm down?! How can you talk about calm when Harry is in danger!" Colonello yelled at him. Why wasn't Fon more concerned? Did he not care? Their sky was with the man titled 'sky-killer'! What would that cloud do to their sky? Colonello could imagine a scared Harry trying to get away from the mad cloud, only to be stabbed or tortured or tossed overboard in chains!

'Ugh, why didn't the Vasaio famiglia hunt Ampelo down? Didn't he kill their boss's daughter?'
Colonello thought furiously.

"Everything comes to those who wait," Fon said with closed eyes.

"Why you!" Colonello drew his rifle at him.

"Colonello! Stop this at once," Lal ordered sharply.

"But Lal," Colonello whined.

"We're all worried here. Getting angry at each other won't fix this issue," Lal glared at him.

Colonello looked away from her. He could never say no to her. Sometimes, he wondered if it was a curse.

"What did you hear about Ampelo?" Verde asked as he read his notes.

"Not much, sadly. It's truly a mystery why he, a harmonized guardian, would kill his sky. Even more mysterious is that the Vasaio famiglia didn't raise trouble over it," Sinagra said with a sigh.

"Oh? Think he has something on them?" Verde said as he looked up from his papers.

"Probably," Sinagra nodded.

A crew member shouted "Oe oe, here!" as the conversation trailed off.

The fuel ship had come. After they refueled, they were quick to take up the chase once again.

They all hoped that they would make it in time.
Harry's patience had nearly reached its limit by the time they reached the mainland. There was only so much frustration he could take before it overcame his fear. He'd been with the obsessed man for hours!

Ampelo didn't even say anything to him, he just murmured about skies and Elisa. And he insisted that Harry wear a white dress, of all things! He would have refused if the dead body hadn't constantly reminded him of the consequences. While Harry would like to die, he didn't want to die in Ampelo's arms.

_The creep would probably pet and coo at my corpse_ Harry thought with a grimace.

They got off from the ship and walked carefully onto the dock. Ampelo had his hand on Harry's back to guide him like lover would, which made him more than a little uncomfortable. The bandaged Bonavento walked stiffly in front of them with his men. He had eyed Harry's new dress in the corner of his eyes when they'd met again on the deck, but otherwise stayed quiet until they reached the limo that was waiting for them.

"What is that girl doing with Ampelo?" someone murmured as Ampelo and Harry passed by them. Harry wanted to shout out that he wasn't a girl, thank you, but he managed to stay quiet. He didn't want to get them involved with these crazy mafiosi. And Harry just knew that Ampelo would kill them without blinking.

Harry wished he could do something to escape this mess, but he hadn't been able to get his sky flames to do anything during the boat ride. When Harry encouraged his sky flames to go wild on Ampelo, the flames only crooned. It didn't even pay attention to Harry's efforts. When Harry desperately tried to reach for his magic instead, his flames bristled and pushed his attempts aside.

"Why don't you guys ride first? We'll catch up with you." Bonavento smiled shakily at Ampelo and tried to walk away from them, but Ampelo suddenly let go of Harry and grabbed Bonavento by his shoulders.

"Why waste resources? Let's ride together. There is plenty of room in the limo for the three of us. Your men can ride in that car," he said as he pointed at the car that was behind of limo. "Elisa and I are more than enough to protect you, so don't worry."

Ampelo then pushed away from the shivering boss and whispered something to one of Bonavento's men. The man's eyes widened and he nodded frantically. He ran to the driver and passed Ampelo's message on.

"O-of course! How silly of me." Bonavento attempted to smile and quickly got into the limo.

Harry tried to use their distraction to slip away, but he was stopped by Ampelo's arm wrapping around his waist.

"Now, my dear, let's go to our new home." Ampelo looked at him with such strong emotion. Harry had to bite his lip to not say something he'd regret.

He'd noticed that when Ampelo looked at him, the madman saw a different person. He even clothed Harry like his so-called Elisa! While Harry really felt sorry for him, he couldn't let this continue long – it wouldn't end well, for either of them. First chance he got, he would make himself scarce.

Harry reluctantly got in the limo. Ampelo ordered Bonavento's men to drive after them. Strangely, none of them refused. Wasn't Bonavento supposed to be the boss? Perhaps they were just too afraid of the man "protecting" them from other famiglie.
Ampelo followed him in with a strange smile. As soon as everyone was buckled in, they proceed to Bonavento's base. Harry watched the streets pass and tried to ignore the sensation of Ampelo's thumb running over his knuckles fondly. As they passed a tourist group, Harry closed his eyes and started to search for his magic again. He didn't know how long he searched, but his eyes snapped open when Ampelo lightly shook his shoulder.

"We are here, my dear," Ampelo said as he smiled at him. "Let's get inside." He proceeded to gently tug Harry out of the limo and into the large mansion. Harry reluctantly followed him. Bonavento disappeared with his men somewhere when they all entered mansion. Harry didn't blame him for wanting a little distance from the man leading him around.

Harry and Ampelo walked through the long corridors. They passed numerous doors until Ampelo stopped, opened a white door, and gestured Harry to step inside. The room that he entered was almost entirely white. Harry had never seen this much white in a room that didn't belong to a hospital. Everything between the carpet and the ceiling was white, with only one exception. The only thing with some color to it was a golden music box on the bedside table.

"My room," Ampelo said as he closed the door behind him. "I decorated it myself. You always loved white on everything. I haven't forgotten," Ampelo murmured the last part and leaned close as if wanting to kiss him. That was the last straw.

"Get away from me!" Harry shouted and pushed Ampelo away. "I've had it with you! If you think you can have your way with me, I'll-"

"Kill me! Just like I killed you." Ampelo grinned madly, his eyes alight with madness as Harry shook his head and started to back up.

"I'm not Elisa!" Harry snapped. "I'm not your anything. Especially not your sk- " Harry stopped as Ampelo grabbed his neck with his two gloved hands. Ampelo started to lift him by his neck, causing him to choke. Harry's air supply closed as Ampelo squeezed.

'Please no!' Harry thought, panicked. 'I don't want to die like this.' His sky flames were strangely still and were of no help at all. He didn't have the time to search for his magic. He was…

"From now on, you are Elisa. Anybody who says otherwise will…" Ampelo trailed, his eyes completely lucid. He tightened his grip for a moment more, then relaxed and put Harry down.

Harry greedily pulled air into his deprived lungs and gingerly touched his sore neck. He stared at Ampelo with confusion. 'Does that mean Ampelo knows I'm not Elisa? Then why play pretend?'

"Mr. Ampelo?" A servant said as he opened the door, "Would your guest like-" There was a short whistle and thud as Ampelo suddenly threw a knife from his coat. Harry watched with horror as the servant touched his bloody chest with shaking hands.

As the servant fell to the floor, Harry turned and hissed at Ampelo. "Why did you kill him!"

"Why?" Ampelo laughed. "Because he was calling you a guest. No, Elisa, you'll never be a guest here. You are much more than them. So much more."

"You are delusional," Harry stepped back and watched the man warily for any more sudden attacks. He knew better, now.

"Me, delusional?" Ampelo chuckled. "Then you are even more delusional than I. Don't be so high and mighty Elisa. After all, we are in the same position here."
"What are you talking about?" Harry flinched back as Ampelo was suddenly standing before him.

"We were both betrayed by someone, we both lost someone, and we both killed someone," Ampelo whispered the last part with a mad glint in his eyes, "Don't lie to yourself. We both know what we did wrong. And we both know we would do it again."

That struck him personally and he shuddered. "I didn't, I didn't know...didn't mean to." Harry looked at his hands and said, "It was an accident! Unlike you, I would never enjoy it. I don't!"

"Oh, was it really an acc.." Ampelo murmured as Harry's hand started to shake.

"Shut up! I'm not like you. I won't hurt my friends!" Harry's vision blurred as he was pulled into his memories.

Flashback

"Stop! In the name of the Ministry, stop!" someone shouted as Harry ran away from them.

'They killed Neville, they killed him!' Harry should never have accepted Neville's help. He dodged as they fired spell after spell at him. Another half hour into the chase and Harry finally crossed the ministry's barriers, allowing him to apparate away to relative safety. He didn't have any particular location in mind. Just 'away'.

"Harry!" Luna rushed over to him as he crashed into the ground in front of her home. "Did the nargles get you?"

"Luna! Neville," Harry punched the ground and stopped holding back the tears. It was his fault, all his fault, and now... "Because of me he is," Harry's head snapped up as he realized that the danger wasn't over yet. It probably never would be. He looked up and warned Luna, "You need to get away from me! They'll kill you too!"

"It will be fine, Harry," Luna said as she gently petted his hair. She cradled him like a mother would cradle her child. Her long blonde hair obscured his vision. "Sleep, Harry. You can heal here."

Harry let her lull him to sleep. He was so tired. He was tired of running, of hurting, of losing people, of just everything. So, he slept. He dreamt of winding corridors, a fluttering veil, death rattles and fire. It was not a restful sleep. When he woke up, he found himself in Luna's guest room. He stood up and looked around before finding Luna in the kitchen.

"Thank you, but I have to go," Harry said with a bitter smile. He couldn't quite look her in the eyes, couldn't let her convince him to stay. He looked to the side and felt his heart clench painfully.

There was her beloved wall mirror, hung up in her kitchen. Neville gave the mirror to Luna on her last birthday. She had put it in kitchen of all places. Neville and Harry laughed, despite their confusion in her choice. Big mirror in kitchen? It was just so Luna! Neville had suggested that maybe she should pick another place to hang it, like her bedroom. Luna had said "it helps me" and they left it at that.

Harry saw his and Luna's reflection in mirror, sans Neville, and he had to resist the urge to destroy it. It wasn't just because Neville wasn't there, though that played a part, but...While Luna looked like a beautiful older woman, Harry still looked like a teenager. And that was a problem.

"You can stay here. They will prob-" Luna started to say, but was interrupted by the floo.

"Harry! Are you there?" Ron shouted through the fire.
“Ron!” Harry and Luna went to kneel before the fireplace.

"Oh, thank goodness. I heard what happened! They announced open season on you, Harry," Ron said as a strange look crossed his face.

"Yeah, I know." Harry tried to smile at him. "They've made it obvious by this point."

"Come through the floo, Harry!" Ron said. "I can help you escape from here. We still have a portkey to Shell Cottage. You can take it and leave the country!"

"But Ron, that's dangerous for you!" Harry protested.

"Come on Harry, we can make it," Ron said with a tight grin. "After all, this isn't the first time we've gotten into trouble."

"Okay," Harry said reluctantly. "But we'll have to leave quickly. I don't want you caught up in this and they'll probably want to search the Burrow."

"I'll go with you, Harry. The Burrow!" Luna said airily as she threw in the floo powder. Harry sighed as she stepped through the green flames without hearing his protest.

Harry stepped through floo next and came face to face with an auror's wand. He looked around and saw they were surrounded. Aurors were pointing wands at Luna and him, while Ron was just standing there guiltily.

"Why?" Harry tried to hide how much it hurt that Ron betrayed him. He didn't think he did a very good job.

"Sorry, Harry. But, if you were normal self, you would understand! That death eater's ritual changed you! You hang out with Neville and Luna more, you avoid me and…let's just say that I believe the ministry is right," Ron said defensively.

"Well, if you didn't hover over me the whole time I was with you, I wouldn't have avoided you!" Harry angrily bit out. The air crackled and the aurors who held Luna at want-point pointed their wands at him, like they were afraid that he would suddenly attack them.

"Mr. Potter, I assure you that the Ministry only wants to help. We are not going to hurt you. You are perfectly safe with us," one of officials said pompously.

"I didn't feel safe when you lot were firing Unforgivables at me," Harry replied sharply. He looked around for escape path as discreetly as he could.

"You were mistaken-" the official was interrupted as Luna suddenly cast blasting curses around them. Harry cast a protego as Ron threw a stunner at him. Someone's confringo blasted Ron away from him in a painful example of friendly fire. Out of the corner of his eye, Harry saw a ministry official start to cast a killing curse at Luna. He flashed back to Neville's death and everything seemed to slow down. When he came back to himself, the ministry official was dead.

Flashback ended

Harry found himself in a dark place. He couldn't even see his hands. When he looked "up", Neville stood before him.

"It's your fault," the ghost said blankly.
"You killed him," Luna said from behind him. Harry whirled back and tried to reply to her, but the words stuck in his throat as more people came.

"Because of you, I had to die!" "You killed me!" "Please save me!" "There is nobody with you."
"You are alone."

Harry grabbed his head and shouted, "Stop, stop!"

Ampelo tilted his head as Elisa whispered something under her breath. Suddenly, her legs buckled and she fell unconscious. He was quick to catch her so she wouldn't break her pretty head against the marble floor. As he held her close, he couldn't help but remember how it was before.

Elisa always hated it when he killed. Her green eyes would gleam with anger and she would lecture him each time; but, she never could stay angry with him long. She loved him too much. Ampelo thought he would be with her forever…but then he was the only one left. His breath caught as her death flashed across his mind.

Ampelo quickly brought Elisa to the bed and carefully laid her down. "Don't worry Elisa. I won't let this second chance slip by me." He sat beside her and picked up their music box. "With those green eyes, surely you came back to me. After all, you did believe in those reincarnation stories. You might not remember now, but you will. I will remember for us both until you do."

"Sir," an insistent voice interrupted him. "Bonavento asked for you."

"That was a quick," Ampelo muttered. He watched as the servant politely stood beside his co-worker's corpse without blinking an eye. They are too used to my behavior. Or perhaps he thinks he is safe, untouchable' Ampelo thought with a growing grin. "Get rid of that corpse. I will meet the boss. Tell the others not to enter my room," he ordered.

"Yes sir," the servant nodded agreeably. Then he said, "Decoy Team reached their destination. What would you like them to do?"

"Excellent! Tell them to stay there until I call them over." The servant nodded again and left with the dead body over his shoulder, allowing the mafioso to turn his attention back to his sky. Ampelo watched his whimpering Elisa and wondered, "What nightmares are troubling you, my dear?"

"Finally!" Rene muttered as they got off the ship. He looked around carefully for possible enemies as the others disembarked. It wouldn't be the first time an enemy ambushed him at the docks. The no-fighting rule only applied to the Mafia Land's property, after all. The mainland's docks were a good ambush point.

"How will we find them? The city is huge," Colonello groaned beside him.

"We'll go to Bochi's mansion first," Rene said. He started to search for someone he could 'encourage' to 'lend' him their vehicle.

Before he decided on his possible victim, a black car stopped before them. The driver stepped out and opened a door for them. Verde nodded at the man and slid into his seat. He looked back at the gaping Colonello with a raised brow. "What?"

"H-how could you arrange a car this quickly!" Colonello spluttered. "We didn't have reception in the
"Scientists don't tell their secrets," Verde said contemptuously. "Now, come. We are wasting time."

"But isn't that a magician thing?" Colonello muttered as he took a seat.

Lal and Fon got into the car quickly, whereas Rene jerked the hired man away before he could take the driver's seat.

"I'm driving it," he declared. He got into his self-appointed seat and looked back as he felt the others' gazes. "What? You have a problem?"

"I feel like this will end badly," Fon muttered.

"Same here," Colonello said.

"Are you sure that you can drive?" Lal asked boldly.

"Yes, no, maybe." Rene grinned.

"What!" Colonello yelled.

"But, Granny said that you can do anything if you try hard enough!" Rene started the car engine.

"I think I want to study your granny. She seems like an interesting person," Verde muttered as the car jerked backwards.

"Please, someone stop him!"

Colonello's desperate shouts drew curious looks from bystanders as the black car sped through city streets.
Chapter 14-Little brat

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank you for kudos and reviews:) You guys are all awesome!

Chapter 14

"We're finally here," Colonello said as he stumbled out of the car. He looked at the others who were shakily getting out as well. More than one looked close to kissing the ground. Sinagra, the bastard, got out calmly as if he didn't break every single law of physics during his mad race here.

"Remind me to never let you drive," Lal growled as she got her footing.

"You are the worst driver," Fon said as he followed behind her. He looked relieved to finally put his feet on land again, a feeling they all shared.

"Don't be rude. I have recommendations, you know." Sinagra took something out of his back pocket and showed them what looked like a series of cards.

"Let me see." Verde snatched them out of Sinagra's hand irritably. He read aloud, "Best driver in the world, Driver's license, best score."

"Are you shitting me?" Colonello plucked them out from Verde's hand. He looked carefully over the cards that he was sure were nothing but lies. There was no way these cards were legit, even though they had official looking stamps and signatures. "Who in the world would make these cards? Have you heard of these kinds of recommendations?" Colonello asked as he shook the cards at the others.

"Yes, they do make these cards," Sinagra said as he snatched them back. "Enough fooling around. Let's save our sky!" That said, he strolled toward the Manor he parked in front of with a bloodthirsty grin.

"B-but…!" Colonello couldn't believe it.

"Just let it go," Lal sighed as she went after Sinagra. Fon just shook his head at him and walked away.

"But you don't believe it, right?" Colonello groaned as he ran after them.

"For the record, I agree with you," Verde confided as he followed behind Colonello. It wasn't long until the caught up with the others, all of whom were critically analyzing the entrance.

"So, how are we going to do this?" Fon wondered.

"With a bang, of course!" Sinagra's grin was sharp and deadly as he kicked the door open.
"Ampelo! You're here!" Bonavento's little girl beamed up at him with her hands clasped under her chin. She wore a new dress today and had her blonde hair curled in a new style. She was dressed to impress. Unfortunately for her, his heart was and would forever be claimed by his beloved Elisa.

"Ah, the missus! You look as perfect as always," Ampelo complimented when her gray eyes looked expectantly at him. He couldn't understand why Bonavento's girl took a shine to him after he had threatened her life, but he acknowledged its usefulness. She always followed his orders cheerfully and without question. "I see your shopping trip was a success."

"Yes! So, do you like my new dress?" The missus twirled in front of him, showing off her new dress. Then she pouted and said, "I wish we could stay at Bochi Manor. This manor is too far from the city."

"Missus, you know that this is to be your new home. Is there some way I can make my manor more comfortable for you?" Ampelo said patiently.

"Well, you could stop calling me missus to start with. I'm not that old!" She huffed.

"You became the mistress of the Bochi famiglia the moment that your mother died. You should be treated with the highest respect. In turn, you should look and act respectable." Ampelo took her hand and gave it a light kiss. "You remember the three pillars of such behavior, I expect."

"To be elegant, dignified, and dutiful," Missus replied with a blush coloring her cheeks.

"Correct, now—"

"Excuse me, sir. There's a call for you over the radio," a servant interrupted.

"If you'll excuse me," Ampelo said charmingly. He smiled with a facsimile of warmth, bowed at the missus, and walked away from her with the servant. His smile fell flat as he turned to face the other man. "Escort her to her room and don't let her out."

"Yes, sir." The servant nodded once and turned back to the Bochi heiress' room.

Ampelo continued to the radio room without pause. He rushed through the corridors of the manor. This was the Second Manor of Vasaio famiglia. This was Elisa's home. After the Incident, he couldn't bear to live elsewhere, so he took Elisa's manor from the Vasaio famiglia. Elisa loved this manor since it was the Vasaio famiglia's private sanctuary before they made their alliance with the Vongola famiglia.

She grew up here. They harmonized here. It was a special place for the both of them.

'Ampelo, do you know how many deaths and births these walls went through? Every surface of this manor is made with our history.' Elisa's ghostly figure smiled at him as she touched the wall.

Ampelo froze; he knew that if he made a single move, her ghostly figure would vanish like mist in the sun. 'I'm sure we'll paint these walls with new history – our history,' Her pale hand touched his cheek. Ampelo couldn't stop his instinctual reaction; he nuzzled her ghostly hand and she vanished into thin air.

"Elisa," Ampelo murmured as tears blurred his eyes. He shouldn't feel this way. Elisa was with him now. She was in their room, safe and asleep. He won't make the same mistake as before. She would be perfectly safe, she would—
"Sir, the radio?" a servant said from behind him.

"Yes, I'm going." He opened the door of the control room. Several monitors flashed in the room's darkness and Ampelo could see a red light indicating an incoming radio signal. He took hold of the speaker and said, "What is it?"

"Sir! We're under attack!" The underling's panicked voice echoed through the room.

"Then crush them," Ampelo ordered. "You don't need my permission. Do your job!"

"B-but sir, they're all too powerful! Flame users, all of them are flame users!" Explosions were heard through the speaker, momentarily cutting the man off.

Ampelo smiled slowly. Flame users. A challenge for him, finally! He was getting tired of fighting mundane mafiosi. But, he couldn't let them come here. After all, it's a guardian's duty to protect their sky. He wouldn't lose Elisa again.

"Sir? What do we do?" the underling asked desperately.

"Stop them or die trying," Ampelo ordered coldly.

"Eh?" the underling said, confused.

"If you retreat and come here, I will personally end you," Ampelo stated. "It will not be quick."

"B-but sir, I—" the underling began to protest.

"Don't let the enemy know our new location, either. Say a word and I'll stuff your own intestines down your throat and make sure you live to taste them," Ampelo growled.

Who did that lackey think he was to disobey him, the sky's cloud? Without further word, Ampelo cut the line abruptly.

Either the man succeeded or he died. So long as Elisa was safe, he didn't care.

"What a rude guy!" Colonello grinned as he crushed the radio under his boot.

"Did you get their location?" Lal asked Verde, who was working on his new portable radio-tracking device.

"Of course! My new device is the best." Verde grinned and showed them. A red dot blinked on the digital map the screen displayed. He zoomed in multiple times until the electronic feed showed a fancy mansion from above. There was a familiar emblem patterned in the garden.

"Isn't that the Vasaio famiglia's manor?" Fon frowned. "How can the Bochi famiglia have it?"

"It's more likely that Ampelo owns it, not the Bochi. The question is how did the sky-killer keep his sky's house?" Sinagra looked up from the screen. "Now that we know where, let's get going."

"Hey! If you knew that they weren't here, why did we need to come here at all?" Colonello said mulishly as he lifted his rifle up. He followed behind them as they made their way to the car. "We're wasting time! Who knows what creepy stuff they might be doing to Harry?"

"Stupid pupil! Didn't you listen? We need to know their hideout location! And the enemy's
headquarters is the best place to seek it," Lal snapped at him.

"Our real rescue will begin from here." Sinagra reached the driver's side of the car and went to open the door.

"Oh no you don't!" Colonello lunged forward and grabbed the back of Sinagra's suit. He yanked Sinagra away and took the driver's seat. "I'm driving this time."

Colonello wasn't sure what to make of the smirk that crossed Sinagra's face when the others sighed in relief.

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"We believed in you."

"STOP!"

"You're the reason we died!"

"STOP."

"They're all dead because of you."

"Stop, please…"

"You are alone."

"Please stop," Harry murmured as the ghosts surrounded him. He had tried to save them. He had tried to be their hero. But he couldn't do it, no matter how much or hard he tried to. They left him. He failed. He just wanted to die. Harry chuckled mirthlessly; he couldn't even die properly! Only a freak could mess that up.

"Harry," Luna's voice rang.

"Please, leave me alone," Harry pleaded.

"Rude. Here I am protecting you, and you won't even look at me," Luna said. Harry whirled around and found warmth in Luna's eyes. Her ghostly form stood before him, keeping the other spirits away. They angrily shrieked as they hit Luna's shield fruitlessly.

"I am…" Harry swallowed as he tried to say something, anything to her. Last time he saw her, she was fighting a group of aurors.

"You always like to collect nargles, Harry." Luna smiled absently as another spirit uselessly slammed against her shield. It snarled at her and only earned a wider smile for its efforts.

"I-I'm sorry! They're right. Because of me, you and the others—" Harry was interrupted by Luna's sudden slap. Surprised, Harry touched his stinging cheek and stared at her with wide eyes.

"Don't underestimate our feelings!" Luna glared at him, even as tears began to trail down her cheeks. "We helped you because we're friends. Because we love you! Protecting ones loved ones is a natural thing. Don't cheapen our sacrifice by killing yourself. It would make all we did for you worthless!"

"But, I couldn't protect you. This pain, you want me to live with that? I…I'm not that strong, Luna. I can't…" Harry clutched her hand. He wanted to say more, but his throat hurt and refused to form words. He cried silently.
"You're always so dramatic. It's not completely your fault, I suppose, frozen as you are in your teenage years." Harry could feel her feather light touch as she petted his head comfortingly. The cold of the lingering dead seeped into him as he pulled her into a desperate hug.

"Harry, I'm sorry, but I can't stay much longer," Luna whispered into his ear. "I can feel the pull growing stronger."

"Oh," he mumbled into her shoulder. He leaned back and watched numbly as her ghostly form flickered like a sputtering candle. "Does it hurt to stay, like in the Three Brothers' tale?"

"I won't say that I am suffering since we're in your dreams and not the mortal plane. It does take a lot of energy, though." Luna said softly.

"Then tell me how to get you back. I think I can help," Harry pleaded. He wouldn't let her suffer more. He wasn't as selfish as that.

"I can go on my own, but there are still your phantoms, the manifestation of your guilt and memories." Luna looked at her copy trying to enter through her shield with a faint frown. "You need to let go of us, Harry. You won't ever get rid of your nargles otherwise."

"I—" Harry started to say before Luna shook her head at him.

"Don't say that it's your fault. I didn't say that you should forget us; just let go of your guilt and forgive yourself. Just live on, like we all wanted." Luna watched as Neville's lookalike attacked the shield before giving Harry a very pointed look. "Send them away."

"How can I continue to live when you all are... when you are gone." Harry shook his head. "When I'm alone and don't have any reason left to live for," he whispered. Luna heard him and threw him a puzzled look.

"I wonder about that, you know. There's a group of people who'd strongly disagree with you." Luna cupped his cheek and smiled. "You forgot yourself, Harry. You're not as weak as you think you are."

That said, she faded away without a sound, taking her shield with her. The angry phantoms shrieked triumphantly and started to close in on him. Harry started to run from their grasping hands. He couldn't dispel them, even though he now knew they were just representations of his guilt.

Harry ran through the darkness of his mind. He'd never seen his mindscape as dark as this and he found himself wondering when it had darkened. When Hermione started to bring him to his mindscape to search for any horcrux remains, his mind had shone brightly and took the form of Hogwarts. It was the only true home he'd ever known; despite all that happened there, it was where he found true happiness.

Luna's airy voice echoed over the angry spirits' shrieks as he heard 'You are not alone!'

"But I am alone here." Harry dodged as the phantoms tried to grab him. They were nearly close enough to grab his shirt. He tried to run faster, but the darkness made it feel like he was trying to run underwater.

'There's a group of people who'd would strongly disagree with you.' Harry heard her voice echo through his mind space, causing the darkness to lighten.

"Wha—" Harry started to question, but orange flames surged up from nowhere and everything started to burn. "Ah!" Harry exclaimed as his whole body went up in flames. He tried to put out the
fire by patting himself down, but soon realized that the fire wasn't hurting him. It pressed the dying shadows back instead. He reached out to the fire as the phantoms burned with the clinging darkness and disappeared.

"What the hell?" Harry looked around in wonder as the darkness covering his mindscape was burned away by the bright orange flames. The familiar Hogwarts halls formed around him, shining. As the last of the phantoms disappeared, the orange flame flowed away from him and formed a ball-like shape. Once formed, the flames happily rolled over to him. It took not even a second to realize what they really were.

"You." Harry glared at his sky flames. "You have a lot to answer for, brat."

His sky flames shone on and radiated both happiness and smug satisfaction.

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"Sir, it seems they found us," the lackey who was monitoring screens reported to Ampelo.

"It seems the others didn't follow my orders." Ampelo put down one of their more recent trade agreements and walked over to see the results for himself. He didn't like what he saw. "Bonavento, we are having guests. Oh, and remind me to kill the decoy group if they aren't dead already." With that said, he left Bonavento's office.

"What?! Another famiglia is attacking us?!" Bonavento spluttered and stumbled as he tried to chase after him.

"Why are you shocked? Attacking each other is normal between newly founded famiglie. It establishes the reputation necessary to make contracts with the more powerful famiglia," he trailed in response. Ampelo looked back and raised a brow at the Bochi boss' shaking form. Honestly, if he was afraid of something like this, then the man shouldn't have put his foot in the underworld's affairs.

"B-but, they just ransacked our previous mansion." Bonavento said nervously. "That should have been enough for a famiglia to show their place in the pecking order, right?"

"Sir, they are not from any famiglia," the lackey said as he checked the records Ampelo had provided on possible enemies.

"Not from any famiglia?" Ampelo frowned. They were a whole group of elements. Elements didn't pair up independently. They either belonged to the same famiglia or joined the famiglia their sky belonged to. And he was the only guardian his dear Elisa had ever truly bonded with, so it couldn't be that.

It was therefore more likely for a new famigila to be after his lovely sky, a famiglia he hadn't heard of. That could be dangerous. This group would push very hard, almost desperately so, and that could be very dangerous for his love. Skies greatly increased a famiglia's power and attracted even more power in prospective guardians. Newly founded famiglie usually didn't have sky flame users, and would do anything to get one for the reputation alone. He would have to be on his guard.

"Then who the hell is attacking?" Bonavento shouted.

"Here, sir. Thanks to our expensive distance cameras, we took pictures of the invaders." The lackey showed the photos to Bonavento with shaking hands. The man looked very pale.

"Now let's see who would dare to at-EH!? The w-world's gr-greatest hiiiiitma-man!" Bonavento's hands shook as he recognized the attackers. "And is that COMSUBIN? Ampelo, why are these
people attacking us!?”

"Give me that," Ampelo snatched the photos from Bonavento and critically analyzed them. He saw the black car and the reputable people in it. There was no mistaking it – these were the real deal. He felt both excited at the challenged and nervous for the danger they posed to Elisa. She was likely their target. He couldn't let that stand. He would end them or die trying!

"Let's welcome our guests. We have to show them the hospitality of the Bochi famiglia," Ampelo said as he went to the control room.

"Eh? You can't be serious! Only a few of us even know how to use flames!" Bonavento protested as he followed behind Ampelo.

"It's true that they are experts in their fields, but do remember that we outnumber them. If there are enough ants, even an elephant would fall." Ampelo pushed the door open and they entered the control room, which was filled with panicking weaklings. "Enough with your gobbling! What's the situation?" Ampelo snapped.

"They breached the wall," one of them replied in horror. He showed them the crumbled outer fence on the screen. Another screen showed the car speeding to the front door of the manor.

"Sir? What are we going to do?" another lackey asked nervously.

"Activate the defensive mechanisms. After all, this is the ancestral home of the Vasaio famiglia. One car won't stand a chance against this manor's defenses." Ampelo grinned madly as the lackey pushed a red button.

A gap immediately opened in front of the speeding car. The car stopped on a dime, kicking up dust at the sudden stop. The front door became enforced with steel, lava poured into the gap, and barbed wires sprung from the ground in front of the door. Lackeys cheered as the car seemed to give up and retreat. Their cheers died as the car whirled back. It's speed was increased with sun flames, allowing it to jump over the lava-filled gap.

"Stupid! There are still wires and steel reinforcements to stop any attempts to ram the door. It won't break from a car's charge!" Ampelo laughed, but his mirth flipped to fury as the car suddenly changed shape in mid-air. In a matter of seconds, the car became heavily armored with steel and was wreathed in sun, storm, and lightning flames. It cut right through the door's defenses without pause.

"Sir, the car broke through the steel door like butter!" a lackey exclaimed.

"I can see that," Ampelo bit out. He unsheathed his sword and sneered. "I guess we have to personally deliver our welcome. Prepare for battle!" With that shout, Ampelo walked out of the room.

"Incoming!" Colonello hollered as gun shots rained down on them. After Verde's car broke through the main doors, Bochi mafiosi immediately attacked them.

"Don't worry, my car's armor will protect us," Verde said smugly.

"Does it protect us from bazookas?" Fon pointed at a man who was preparing to shoot them with said weapon.

"I trust it will," Verde calmly said as the car rocked from the following explosion.
"What's the plan?" Lal shouted as the car shook again.

"Verde drives the car down the middle corridor. Lal and Fon go down the left corridor. Colonello and I will search the right corridor. Anyone who finds the control room should take it to better search for Harry and keep us updated." Sinagra fiddled with one of Verde's new inventions. "Are you sure we can stay connected with these?"

"Of course! Think of it like a little portable radio transmitter. Put it in your ear, push the button on it and you can speak with any of us." Verde showed Sinagra the transmitter that was already in his ear as an example. "With these, we can exchange information and keep our hands free."

"Good. Our priority is Harry, obviously. Whoever gets him first, get him out fast." That said, Sinagra jumped out of the car. He immediately shot a few of them down as he moved through the sea of mafiosi.

"Wait for me, Kora!" Colonello jumped out after him and was quick to mow down the remaining minions.

"Let us know if you find him, Verde!" Lal shot covering fire as she and Fon left the car.

"It's only you and me now." Verde patted the steering wheel as he settled into the driver's seat. In order to ship this car from his lab to the city, he had to spend so much money and man power. Still, he was pleased with the results. This was turning out to be a very successful test run.

"Let's collect some more data for our project." Verde drove his armored car through the middle corridor, easily running over anyone in his way. He smirked as panicked men screamed in terror, followed by pain.

"This is so much better than simple simulations!"

Get away from me!" Harry jumped back as the excitable sky flames lunged toward him. The sky flames crooned at him, which was an odd thing for flames to manage, but why the hell not? He hastily jumped to the side as it closed in and wondered how it even got here.

This thought was quickly followed by remembering what it had done. It saved him. It saved him and it didn't hurt when it surrounded him like some sort of warm blanket.

"You saved me. But why?" Harry wondered. "I've refused you so many times. Why not find another host?"

The sky flames somehow managed to whine at him, like some puppy. Harry could almost feel its confusion. The flames stretched forward to Harry, slower than before, as if it wanted to touch him. When its tendril reached him, it whined again. Harry didn't want to touch it at first, but after another whine he gently pet the flame's reaching "arm" and was rewarded with a croon. Suddenly the sky flames knocked him over with enthusiasm, causing Harry to get an armful of flames. That it managed to have a somewhat physical presence here was odd, but it was hardly the oddest thing to ever happen.

"You're just a big baby, aren't you?" Harry chuckled lightly as the flames licked his cheek. It crooned happily and coiled in a satisfied little ball in his lap.

"But why do you feel and act so sentient? If all flames were this sentient, surely the others would've told me," Harry muttered.
The sky flames suddenly got an almost guilty aura about them. Harry narrowed his eyes at the guilty feeling flames. "What did you do?"

The sky flames whined and almost seemed to sulk as they curled into a smaller ball. As it did, Harry noticed something shiny inside the center, something that he knew from his previous excursion with Hermione.

"You little brat! You ate it! Spit it out. Spit my magical core out right this instant!"

"On your six!" Colonello yelled.

"Got it!" Rene fired a shot behind him even as he dodged a punch from the left. He kicked the lackey away and leaned back as a gunshot cracked. The bullet flew by him as a second gunshot sounded. The sniper's body fell with a thud, instantly dead from the head shot.

"If you want to snipe someone, choose a less obvious place to hide, kora!" Colonello yelled at the corpse.

"Colonello, concentrate!" Rene shot the man who was going to attack Colonello from behind.

Colonello nodded and then kicked the corpse into oncoming enemies. It knocked several of them over. Colonello grinned wickedly as he shot a maximum burst strait at them with devastating results.

"Did you find the control room?" Rene asked over his transmitter. He dodged kicks, punches, and bullets from the obviously inexperienced enemies and shot them down with his legendary precision. They never really stood a chance. This was all a waste of time.

"I just found it," Verde said with a mad cackle. Rene could hear wood crunching and the sound of spinning wheels. This was followed by several gun shots, another of Verde's cackles, and a strange whirling sound. "I just love to experiment with new weapons!"

"I take it that the control room is yours now," Lal said dryly.

"I found a present for us. Say hi!" Verde said. There were zapping sounds, followed by some hysterical begging. "This is the Bochi boss. Now, tell us where you're hiding Harry Potter."

"Please don't! I don't know w-what you're talking about!" More begging soon followed, accompanied by some truly pathetic sobbing.

"The teen. You bought him from Viper," Rene bit out over the radio.

"You heard him. If you don't want to lose your hand, I suggest you answer," Verde said.

"That thief! I didn't do anything to him! Ampelo…Yes, Ampelo is the one who's responsible!" the Bochi boss shouted. "He took him!"

"And where did Ampelo hide Harry?" Verde demanded.

"In his room. He said something about his sky. Here, that's his room," the Bochi boss's eager voice said. There was the sound of lightning, followed by Verde's flat voice. "I knocked him out. I will lead you to Harry."

"Do you know where are we?" Rene asked. He dodged another attack and fired an overcharged chaos shot. He was, perhaps, a little stressed at hearing how the sky-killer had taken interest in their
"I can see you on the screens. For such a small famiglia, they do spend more money on technology. Or it could have been here before they took up residence. Sinagra, take the next right. Fon go left," Verde replied.

"Understood," Fon said tightly. It was the only sign of his own distress.

"Let's go, Kora!" Colonello went through the next right corridor with Rene quickly following behind him.

They tore through any enemies who had the misfortune to appear before them. Whenever they reached a split path, Verde would point where to go.

"Sinagra, go through the left….wait Colonello—" Verde's warning was too late. When he and Colonello entered through the next left corridor, Ampelo appeared and kicked Colonello. Colonello flew into the wall and didn't stand up again. He was still breathing, but was otherwise out cold.

"Tch, I told him to concentrate." Rene frowned at Colonello's crumpled form. "Fon, Lal, continue on your way. I have to clean up some cloudy trash."

"Fon to your right. Keep strait for the next two splits. Sinagra, I'm cutting your transmitter feed while you fight. Neither of us needs the distraction."


"Your private property? I thought it belonged to the Vasaio famiglia." Rene grinned as he watched Ampelo's face morph from calm to angry in an instant.

"Don't say that name!" Ampelo snarled. His form was wreathed in cloud flames as he lunged forward to attack Rene.

Rene easily blocked the sword with his gun, his own sun flames more than a match for Ampelo's efforts. He kicked Ampelo away and shot at him, but Ampelo sliced the bullet cleanly. Rene continued his attacks relentlessly, testing his opponent's reaction times, stamina, and strength. Ampelo blocked every single attack. He didn't even attempt to dodge.

"I'm impressed. It's not every day that I find an opponent like you," Rene said. He tilted his fedora to hid his expression in its shadow.

"And here I thought that the World's Greatest Hitman would be a challenge." Ampelo laughed.

"Oh, I haven't even started to get serious. Let's try this!" Rene shot his infamous chaos shot and watched the result with great interest.

"Spit it out! Right now, you little brat!" Harry ordered.

The sky flames gave off a feeling of refusal and stubbornness.

"Yes, right now! You will spit out my magical core and never eat it again!" Harry said with his best parent voice. He had a lot of experience using it when his godson, Teddy, got difficult. He could almost feel the flame's emotional "pout" before the flames mulishly spit out his magical core. Harry
was quick to catch it.

He ran his hands over the spherical core gently. "There are cracks. It broke…but, how?"

It was cracked badly, which explained why his magic only worked occasionally. Seeing the evidence was both damning and depressing.

He looked at the curled flames that were transmitting an aura of curiosity and hesitance.

"No, I don't think you broke it. It was probably from the dimensional transfer. I think that's what broke it and that's why I can't use magic freely," he explained gently.

He knew from the beginning that there was something wrong with his core. He'd tried to enter his mindscape many times to check it, but he couldn't do it before now. Harry hoped that his core would heal with time, but…

"It's hard to heal magical cores. It takes a lot of time for it to do it naturally. To do it artificially requires a lot of care and special treatments, which I don't have access to. It doesn't help that this dimension doesn't have ambient magic." Harry sighed as he inspected his magical core carefully, looking for any further damage.

His sky flames seemed to lose interest in him at that point, as it was doing lazy dances around him.

"Wait, is that a piece of you?" Harry wondered as he noticed a thin, crystallized shard of sky flames inside his core.

The flames wandered over to him, happy with the attention. It gave off an aura of confirmation and smug satisfaction.

"So, you were trying to heal it?" Harry asked, excited. "Can you finish?"

The sky flames made a sad sounded coo and curled into itself.

"Oh, it's okay. You tried your best, I'm sure." Harry hesitantly pet the flames. Said flames happily leaned against him and enjoyed the attention and pets. "But why would my magic make you sentient? That's the only reason I can think of for you to have the will you have."

The flames started to wrap around him again, while a tendril wrapped around his magical core. When the flames were fully wrapped him, it gave a soft hum. Harry could feel a protectiveness radiating from his strange orange blanket.

"In order to protect me!" Harry realized.

The flames tightened its arm around the core and gave another hum.

"Also to protect itself? To heal it?" He frowned. His magic had always been autonomously defensive of him, more than other wizards at from what he'd seen. While almost all magical cores had a defensive priority system, his core was just more active due to his time with the Dursleys and the subsequent murder attempts at Hogwarts.

But giving intelligence to this world's flames so they could protect him seemed like a strange thing for his magic to do. Harry had seen enough cases of accidental magic when he helped Obliviators to know that this was very strange. And likely power consuming.

His magic probably used most of the power it had left to give intelligence to his flames so it could
takes his magic's place as his protector. Although, from his perspective, the flames tended to make everything much more complicated. It reminded him an awful lot of his second year at Hogwarts, when Dobby showed his rather unique outlook on how to "save" Harry.

Speaking of complications, Harry glared at the flames that were still wrapped around him.

"What about all those forced bonds, hmm? Why did you do it? Do you know how much hassle you put me through!? Do you even know what you've done?"

The flames just gave off a feeling of confusion, followed by disinterest.

This little brat!' Harry thought with a sweat drop.
Chapter 15

Harry tried to explain why his flames shouldn't bond with anyone, but the brat wasn't having it. His sky flames wouldn't listen to reason. Harry wondered if the flames could even understand why it was bad or if it was all instinct. The others had mentioned that harmony was what sky flames did, so it was possible. That didn't mean that his flames had gone about harmonizing the right way, though. He had to get that across, at least.

"Listen, brat. We can't just bond with someone without their permission." Harry started to explain again, but his flames lost interest on the topic half way through. His sky flames were dancing around him instead of listening and it greatly reminded Harry of the times Teddy would disregard his lectures and run around the house without his clothes on.

He sighed and decided to try changing the topic to get its attention. "I guess I should name you since you're sentient. You do want a name, right?"

The flames chirped happily and floated in front of him in its ball-shaped form. He could feel its excited giddiness radiating from it in an almost visible aura.

"Oh, so you're listening now?" Harry said sarcastically. Harry took advantage of the attention to explain again, but the flames were still acting bratty. Part way into what seemed like the fifth iteration of his one-sided argument, his sky flames made a sad croon and began acting like a kicked puppy.

"Ah, I give up – for now. We will continue this discussion later." Harry muttered profanities when the flames started to get happy again. It was like talking to the ultimate brat. Even Teddy wasn't this bad!

"So, a name. What I should name you?" Harry wondered aloud. He thought about all the names he could relate to its being, but none of them sounded quite right. While Harry was thinking, his sky flames were doing its happy dance again. Really, this brat's attention span…

'Maybe something about its color,' Harry thought as he watched the sky flames shine brightly in its customary orange.

"How about Orange? That fits, right?" Harry happily clapped, but stopped when his sky flames emitted a sad, almost disappointed, feeling. 'What did I do? Orange can't be too bad a name, could it?' Harry thought, confused.

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"Where to, Verde?" Fon struck enemies down quickly and efficiently as he ran through the corridors. He and Lal were the only ones continuing the search to find Harry, as Sinagra and Colonello were
busy keeping Ampelo distracted.

A man stood in his way and Fon kicked the man away hard enough to crash against the wall. He didn't check if the enemy was down – the sound of a skull cracking against a hard surface was a sound very familiar to him – and in this battle, every second counted. With the number of men the Bochi were throwing at them, they had to take care not to tire themselves out. The sooner they finished this and saved their sky, the better.

"It's like there's no end of them!" Lal cursed and shot a man that tried to sneak up on her while dodging another man's attack.

"Yes, it does seem that way. I thought the Bochi was a new famiglia," Fon said as he dodged bullets. Their aim was not nearly as impressive as Colonello and Lal's, so he had no trouble. He was not so prideful as to ignore the advantage quantity had over quality, however, so he kept his guard up.

"Take a left. The Bochi is a new famiglia, but it's a very rich one. Small fries like to collect around money," Verde said.

"You might be right about that, but it looks like the Bochi didn't find anyone worth the paycheck. These men are pathetic!" Lal smirked as her bullet hit another man dead between the eyes.

"Hmm, I wonder about that. While small fries flock to the money, you have to remember we experienced mafiosi like money too," Verde warned. "Don't get overconfident."

"You mean flame users like Viper." Fon finished his enemy and obligingly took a left. There was a big door at the end of the new corridor. According to Verde, there was a ballroom on the other side. In order to get to Harry's location, they had to cross that ballroom and enter to another corridor. They also had to be very careful while doing it as it was a great opportunity for an ambush.

Lal followed after Fon and said, "I don't think there will be lot of flame users. Not with Ampelo hanging around. Any who do stay are more likely to have weaker flames than strong ones. They probably wouldn't even be able to manifest them visibly." She pushed the doors open and was met with the very ambush they had expected.

Groups of men and women were calmly standing in the center of the ballroom. They all took battle stances, their hands glowing with colored flames.

"You had to say it," Fon said evenly as he glared ahead. He saw storm, rain, lightning, and even a few sun flame users. Most of them had storm flames. Fon sighed quietly as he prepared to fight against the small, flame active army.

"Verde? You didn't see this in the ballroom cameras?" Lal said accusingly as she too prepared to fight.

"What happened? The ballroom doesn't have cameras," Verde replied as he typed. "Still, I think I can help. Give me a few minutes."

Steel shutters came down and blocked their entry and exit. The flame users grinned.

"Oh, no," Lal said mockingly. "A trap we never saw coming. What do we do now?"

"We have to break through the steel shutters," Fon said. Then he noticed something peculiar on the door. A timer?

"We have more problems than that steel. I thought it was a ballroom from its size, but now I think it's
a specially designed trap room." Verde sighed. "The walls are much thicker than any other room and there are some suspicious blank spots in the blueprints. There are also no rooms over it on the next floor."

"So, possibly some bombs?" Fon smiled serenely as the enemy surrounded them. He wondered if they knew that they were being used as fodder and were much more likely to die from the traps than his fellow guardians and he were.

"Gas, bombs, pits - it could be anything," Verde replied.

"Can you unlock the shutters from your side?" Lal eyed the timer. "Putting a stop to the timer would be a good step too."

"Of course, but I do need time," Verde said as he typed rapidly.

"We'll be fine. All we need to do is finish these guys," Fon said.

"We need to hurry. That sky brat is waiting for us." Lal grinned as she fired the first shot. The Bochi disposables were quick to return fire.

"Here we go." Harry put his cracked magical core on the pedestal inside Hogwarts' hall where the teachers usually sat. After he put his cracked core in place, the hall trembled and the pedestal disappeared.

Orange made a panicked sound and rushed over to where the pedestal was seconds ago.

"Hey, it's okay. My core just went to the place where you probably found it," Harry said as he petted Orange. "It's deep inside my mind, where it belongs. I wonder how you got there?"

Orange happily leaned against his hands as it was petted and then suddenly made a sad croon. Harry watched as Orange jumped out of his hands and sadly curled around the place the pedestal had been.

"Oh, you want to go there?" Harry asked. Orange made a happy croon in response. "Alright. I need to inspect that room for possible damage anyway," He said with a frown. Hermione had called it his Innermost Room. It was the room that housed the concept of Self; your magical core and the representation of your most important characteristics were there, along with the strongest memories attached to them.

Harry closed his eyes. When he opened them, he was inside the cave that housed his Self. The cave thankfully looked like he had first seen it; it had a dark interior, blue glowing cave murals, his magic core on its pedestal, and colorful flames. Wait, colorful flames?

"What?" Harry said, bemused.

Bright flames circled the pedestal his magic was resting on. Harry slowly walked over to the wall and touched one of cave pictures. He instantly felt one of his memories. "So, these flames didn't change this function. What are they doing here, then?" Harry wondered. Unlike Orange, these ball-shaped flames were just burning in place and showed no sign of self-awareness. It seemed like they were doing nothing more than just...being there.

Orange made a happy croon and floated over to them. The whole cave flashed with a multitude of colors the moment it passed into the circle. Harry watched as Orange happily touched each of the surrounding flames, causing them to flash in their respective colors – red, green, indigo, yellow, and
blue. He could feel enormous possessiveness from Orange as it brushed against them.

"What are they? It seems that they don't feel...sentient, like you do. And they're different colors," Harry said as Orange happily danced between the other flames. Orange didn't respond, and he felt like it probably didn't even hear his questions.

Harry walked over to flame closest to him – the red colored one. He eyed it for a minute before touching it lightly with his hand. Harry gasped when the red flame flashed brightly at his touch; with the light, he felt emotions he knew weren't his own.

"Duty, loneliness, guilt, and the feeling of an enormous burden. Hope, wonder, determination, and a fierce protectiveness. Desperation, worry, and fear." These emotions are so strong, so heavy.' He touched his now damp cheek with a shaking hand while letting the other drop to his side. The emotions retreated gradually after he did. What was that!? Even now the lingering feelings—'

The red flame suddenly started to flare even brighter as it echoed distress. Harry didn't know what to do. Then Orange came and soothed the red flame until it calmed down.

"Don't look at me like that. It was not my fault," Harry said as Orange projected a feeling of suspicion and accusation.

"These flames...wait...they said red was storm, then yellow for sun, green lightning, blue rain, indigo mist...these are the bonds that they were talking about!" Harry exclaimed. If he was right, then the emotions that he felt before had to be Fon's. That was...rather sad, actually. He hoped the man would be okay.

"But, what's with that purple flame?" He hadn't noticed it at first, but there was a faint purple flame here too. It was nearly nonexistent, almost ghost-like, but he could see the purple flame orb...and could feel the fact that it was badly injured. It felt...discordant?

Orange made a questioning croon before it floated over in said flame's direction. He watched as Orange made another soothing croon and started to touch that flame with its flame tendrils. The purple flame screeched and slapped Orange's tendrils away. Orange made a surprised squeak as it was batted away, followed by a sad croon as it felt the other flame's rejection.

"Orange! Are you okay?" Harry ran over to Orange and started to check for any damage. He was very relieved to find that Orange was undamaged, despite the supposed force the purple flame had used to push it back.

Orange made another sad croon and projected the echo it had felt from the purple flame.

"So, it doesn't want to bond with you?" Harry asked. Then he scolded Orange. "Why are you seeking to bond with another person, anyway? Didn't I tell you that you shouldn't do that? Maybe this will show you that not everybody's flames want the same thing you do."

Before Orange could reply, the cave shook terribly.

"There must be some disturbance in the outside world," Harry muttered as he looked around the cave. He wanted to thoroughly check his core, memory drawings, and also these new bonds..."But I have to get out of here quickly. I can check it later," he decided. Harry closed his eyes and prepared to get out his mind-space. He could feel himself waking up, but hesitated when he felt Orange call for his attention.

He opened his eyes and saw that Orange was floating before him in ball shaped flame form.
"I don't know how to get you out," Harry replied, guessing at what Orange's projections meant.

Orange chirped and floated over to the other flames. Its ball shaped form shook like a person would shake their head.

"Oh, you don't want to get out?" Harry asked. "You want to stay here. You like them, don't you?" He grinned as Orange happily took care of the other flames. Orange bobbed in agreement and then projected a want.

"Sure, I can come back to play. Just...try not to get us into any more trouble while I'm out."

Harry closed his eyes again. The last thing that he heard was Orange's happy chirp.

Harry opened his eyes and was met with a white ceiling. He looked around cautiously as his memories caught up to him. He was very grateful to find that the creep wasn't with him.

Gratefulness quickly turned into shock and worry as a big boom shook his room.

"Explosions?!" Harry quickly stood up and walked over to the window, but all he could see was a garden. Another explosion rocked the room. That was not good. He had to get out of here before the room collapsed on him. Also, a country or two between him and the creepy madman would be a blessing. Harry tried to open the window. When it refused to budge, he went for the door, but it was locked as well. Possibly barricaded, too – he couldn't really predict what the madman would do to keep him in here.

"Maybe I can smash the window glass with the chair then..." Harry paused as he felt Orange's presence come forward, more present than ever. Orange curled happily and Harry's hands started to glow. "Thank you, Orange. Now, let's blow up this window."

Harry concentrated more flames in his hand. Just as he was going to fire said sky flames against the window, a strange mechanism clicked. Harry looked back as the wall slid open and revealed a secret tunnel.

"Should we risk it?" Harry questioned aloud. Orange certainly seemed to think so. He curiously walked over to opening of the secret tunnel. A normal person would probably hesitate to enter, but Harry was never normal, no matter how much he wanted to be.

Another explosion shook room, making it a split-second decision – one he hopefully wouldn't regret.

"Well, let's see if this tunnel leads outside," Harry murmured as he stepped inside the tunnel.

Ampelo laughed as the hitman's shoulder got sliced by his sword. "World's Greatest Hitman? What a joke. You can't even dodge my sword!"

Sinagra growled as he clutched his shoulder. "Tch, it's a light wound. You barely grazed me." He dodged a following swipe and used a flame-enhanced jump to put some distance between them. He shot a succession of chaos shots in an effort to keep that distance, but the cloud wasn't having it.

Ampelo dodged between Sinagra's bullets as he closed in on him. Ampelo used his propagation flames to multiply the force behind his steps and increase his speed; a heartbeat's time and Ampelo stood behind Sinagra, ready to strike. Ampelo slashed at Sinagra's back, but Sinagra blocked his sword with his gun and kicked him away.
"My Flicker Slash, you blocked it. How interesting!" Ampelo's smirked.

"Oh, so that last attack was a special technique of yours? Did you kill your sky with that technique?" Sinagra wondered. "She never would have seen it coming."

"Kill?" Ampelo's excitement fell. His beautiful Elisa struck down by his sword. He could almost feel her cooling body as she clutched his suit. Her green eyes shone with tears as she murmured her last words. "No, that wasn't it. I guess I'll just have to show you. Be glad that you will receive my Dragon Claw," Ampelo said as his sword started to emit cloud flames.

Ampelo slashed in Sinagra's direction and cloud flames shaped like claws sprung and, due to the cloud's propagation, multiplied. Sinagra dodged the first few claws, but was hit by the last three. One got him right across the chest and the surprise pain caused him to bite the inside of his cheek. Sinagra spat blood and glared at Ampelo as he let himself fall down.

"Oh, don't be such a sore loser. Nobody has ever escaped from my claws." Ampelo grinned as he walked over to fallen hitman. He suddenly lashed out with his foot, causing Sinagra to crash into the wall.

"You are still getting up?" Ampelo arched a brow as Sinagra stood up with a slight tremble. His injuries were healing, rapidly. Anyone else would have died by the loss of blood by now. "Ha-ha! You really are the Strongest Sun! And yet, is healing all that brought you that name? You've hardly proven a challenge so far. Then again, I'm the Strongest Cloud in the world, so that could play a part."

"No need to glare at me. It's the truth! I was able to win because, between us, my resolution is stronger. The resolution to kill, to live."

"So you want to live, even after killing your sky? You don't want to die?" Sinagra said curiously.

"Of course a normal guardian would want that. But, I have to follow the last order of my sky." Ampelo clenched his fist around the handle of his sword.

"And what last order could give you that strength?" Sinagra asked.

"She told me to live, even as she died. It was my fault. The Boss had said we needed to make it look like she died to protect her, but...it was my fault. I should have seen the signs, I should...but she's come back to me again, like she said she would. I won't let her die again!"

"Then it was all an accident? They say you killed her in fit of cloud rage," Sinagra said as the last of his injuries knit together.

"An accident?" Ampelo laughed hysterically. "You can say that. My sky, my Elisa, happened. After I used my dragon claw on an enemy, she ran right into my sword. I can still feel and smell and see her blood. Did you know what she said then? She said that she was sorry and ordered me to live. To live!"

"Suicide," Sinagra muttered.

"No!" Ampelo snarled and rushed over to kicked Sinagra in the gut. Sinagra flew to the opposite side of the corridor. Once again, the hitman slowly got back on his feet. "The Vasaio heiress wouldn't do such a thing! I - Ampelo - killed her," Ampelo said coldly. Then he smiled. "But my Elisa came back to me. Just like in her favorite stories. Although, she is he now, which I didn't expect. But, I know those eyes and know her flames. It's her, my Elisa."
"He?" Sinagra trailed.

"Bonavento brought her. I knew that he was Elisa the moment I stepped into that room. Her flames, just like before, were powerful and welcoming. I felt her flames shift and roll like it wanted to come to me. Even though she doesn't remember, her flames do!" Ampelo shouted with joy.

"You think Harry is Elisa." Sinagra realized.

"Harry? I don't know who you are talking about," Ampelo said. "Is that Elisa's new name? Ah, I have to get back to her. Let me finish you quickly. I have to congratulate you. You're the third person to know the Vasaio famiglia's secret."

"A final question before the end?" Sinagra smirked confidently.

"Huh?" Ampelo perplexed. He recognized that something changed and he wasn't sure he liked it.

"Did you touch him with your gloves on or off?" Sinagra pointedly eyed Ampelo's white gloves.

"My gloves? I was wearing them. Why?" Ampelo was amused that Sinagra was stalling with such a strange question.

"Truth," Sinagra stated with a relieved sigh.

"What are you talking about?" Ampelo glared at him, his earlier amusement gone.

"That was what we were waiting for. Kora!" Ampelo felt a gun's barrel touch the back of his head. Vines sprung from the floor, keeping him in place. Ampelo tried to move and break free, but the vines' grip held strong. The gun dug into his skull to discourage further attempts. Ampelo was confused. What happened? Didn't he win? Was this all an illusion?

"Yare yare, what took you so long? You should've just let me do it. It would have been quicker," another male voice drawled. "Time is money."

"Don't whine. You didn't receive this guy's every attack in order to check if he bonded to Harry or not," Sinagra said as he casually fixed his suit.

"It was hard for me too, Kora. Viper didn't even let me move. I would've been quicker than you!" the first voice shouted.

"I don't want to hear that from you, Mister I-didn't-know-I-was-bonded-or-not-until-someone-told-me," Sinagra said irritably. Ampelo noticed Sinagra's wounds were all healed once more without the Strongest Sun showing even a hint of strain. Sinagra walked over to him with a confident stride and brought his gun up.

"So, you tricked me?" Ampelo said blankly. He was defeated...but, he couldn't die here. Elisa was waiting for him in their room. "You know, if you kill me the Vasaio famiglia won't forgive you. After all, Dominico was the one who gave me this mansion. He treasures his sister's stuff, you know."

"Kill you? I'm just granting your request. Didn't you want to die? Picking fights with everyone in your path and dancing on the edge of the Omerta. After all, your sky only ordered you to live, but if you got killed even after trying your best, she can't blame you." Sinagra's lips quirked sharply as he put the barrel under Ampelo's chin. It wouldn't do to risk hitting Colonello too, so this angle would be best. If the idiot got covered in a rain of gore, well, that wasn't his fault.
Ampelo stared at Sinagra's black eyes and found they lacked a thread of emotion inside them. Those bottomless black eyes were like black holes, sucking everything in and giving nothing. Ampelo knew now why people called Sinagra the World's Greatest Hitman. He had been played expertly by the man and would now be killed by him without remorse.

"But my Elisa...she came back to me," Ampelo said, desperate to get back to his sky. He had promised that this time would be different. They could finally be together!

"Maybe, but as the sun guardian of my sky, I won't let such an unstable cloud bond with him," Sinagra said seriously. "I'm sure you'd understand. Just like your Elisa was to you, Harry is the only one for me. I will protect him, even if it means the whole world—"

"Burns," Ampelo finished. Ampelo closed his eyes and murmured, "You and I are the same after all."

'Let's meet again in our next life. After all, we are destined to be together, just like in those stories you love.'

The sound of a gunshot echoed down the corridor.
Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru.
Present for you xD. Ampelo’s memory:) (Intermission)

Ampelo - age 5

"We were waiting for you, Ampelo." The orphanage head mistress smiled as Ampelo entered the room timidly. While he was comfortable with her, she was not alone. Two men sat in the wooden chairs before her, looking very out of place in their expensive black suits.

They turned to look at him with serious and determined eyes, which made him all the more nervous. 'Did they come because of the stolen bread?' he though wildly. 'It was only bread!'

"Whatever they said, I didn’t do it!" Ampelo immediately protested. It was all Bluno's fault. He was the one who came up with the idea to steal it! "Bluno was one who—"

"Ampelo!" the headmistress interrupted sternly. Then she smiled to the two men and said, " Kids these days." She cleared her throat and continued with, "Ampelo, these fine gentlemen are from the Vasaio famiglia. They want to adopt you."

"B-but why!" Ampelo spluttered, shocked that a mafia famiglia would want him. Why would they want one scrawny orphan? While the Vasaio famiglia was their benefactor and all of the orphans wanted to repay them, there was little they could actually do for them. They didn't know exactly what the Vasaio famiglia did, but they heard the rumors on the street.

"That purple hair," one of the men murmured to the other. "Yes, I think he's what we were looking for."

"He has the eyes too. There's no mistake," the other man replied. While his face was expressionless, he sounded satisfied.

"You know the protocol, yes? You release the ones with strangely colored hair into our custody, no exceptions," the first man said as he brought out papers from his back pocket.

"Yes, for the glory of our famiglia." The headmistress nodded, her expression happy.

"Thank your lucky stars, brat. From this day forward, you are part of our Famiglia." The man stood up and walked over to him while motioning him to follow. Ampelo followed obediently. He wasn't quite sure what to think about all of this, but he was sure that things would be different from now on.

Ampelo-age 6; Elisa-age 5

"Put your back into it! Your back, Ampelo! Quickly now," the old butler nagged at him.

Ampelo came to this mansion a year ago and since then many things had changed. He was very busy between his lessons and chores. Everyone was nice to him, except this butler!
"I'm washing as fast as possible, you old bat!" Ampelo snapped back as he tried to wash the damn floor.

"To think you were just a shy, obedient little thing," the old butler lamented as he brought out his handkerchief and dabbed his eyes. "But, as a butler of the Vasaio famiglia, I have to show you the right way to do things. Which you aren't."

"If you don't like it, then do it yourself!" Ampelo threw the damp cloth down and fled the scene. "Bye, old bat."

"Hey! Ampelo, come back here this instant!" the old butler shouted as he was left behind with the cleaning supplies. He chased Ampelo determinately, but Ampelo had the benefit of youthful energy to power him whereas the old man did not.

Ampelo giggled as he turned the corner. He run through the corridors and dodged the laughing maids.

"Ampelo!? Running away from Old Ale again, are you?"

"Ampelo, did you finish your chores?"

"Ale, don't overdo it!"

"These two, honestly."

"Ampelo, come back here!" Old Ale shouted.

"Catch me if you can," Ampelo shouted back. Due to his distraction, he accidentally collided with something. A someone, actually.

"Kya!" the young girl screamed as she was knocked back. She tripped and landed on her behind.

"Milady!" one of the maids called in concern.

"Ouch! Look where you're going, bastard," Ampelo snapped as he rubbed the back of his head. The teary-eyed girl with long black hair and green eyes looked up and pouted at him. Her pink dress was rumpled from the fall and her lips were quivering. She was obviously on the edge of full-out crying and it was making him uncomfortable.

"Ampelo! Apologize to the Lady right now," Ale ordered with a frown, his tone hard.

"Hah? Why do I need to?" Ampelo started to protest, but Ale forcefully pushed his head down and bowed himself.

"Milady, I'm so very sorry. This old butler couldn't properly supervise this brat and such a failure led to this. Are you okay?"

"Ale, what's the meaning of this? Isn't he the new cloud? The boss reminded you that milady was going to visit today!" a woman in a business suit snapped at Ale. She glared and stepped before the girl as if she were protecting her from Ampelo. "This is not appropriate at all."

"Miss Ines, I am at fault. I didn't think…" Ale bowed even further while forcing Ampelo to do the same.

"What I want to hear is—" Miss Ines growled before being interrupted by her charge.
"Ines! It's okay. As the Lady of the Vasaio famiglia, I forgive this small fry," The girl said with a smirk on her face as she stepped out from Miss Ines's protection. The earlier waterworks were already gone, leaving a confident young lady instead.

"Kya! Milady, generous as always," Miss Ines cooed as she fawned over the girl.

"My name is Elisabeth Vasaio. For you, I give the right to call me Elisa," Elisa said, her tone superior and smug.

"As generous as an angel!" one of the maids praised.

"Who the hell would want to call you Elisa? You're a hag!" Ampelo said.

"Hag!?" Elisa gasped, shock clear on her face. Her face flushed with anger as she growled back at him. "You're just a snot nosed brat!"

"No, I'm not! I'm Ampelo. And I don't have runny snot, unlike you," Ampelo gloated.

"I don't have snot. You take that back!" Elisa ordered.

"Do too," Ampelo goaded.

"No, I don't!" she stated firmly.

"Do!"

"Don't!"

"Now you do." Ampelo grinned as he flicked some snot at her way.

Elisa gasped, then jumped at him. She punched him! He was dazed for a split second before he returned the favor. A brawl started between them while the adults watched in horror.

"Milady!"

"Ampelo!" Miss Ines and Ale shouted. They tried to stop the two, but Ampelo ignored them, determined to win. Suddenly, there was another voice in the hall – a much deeper and intimidating voice.

"What's going on here?!" the voice demanded. They both froze and looked up. Lucan Vasaio, the boss of Vasaio famiglia, stood before them with an irritated expression. Ampelo met the boss a year ago to congratulate him for becoming a part of his Famiglia. The man he admired most had explained about his duty and flames before sending him to his tutors.

"Boss!" He stood up quickly and bowed with genuine respect.

"Father," she said as she too stood up. Ampelo looked over at Elisa as she said father and felt a terrible feeling of dread weigh down on him.

"Is she really the boss's daughter? Is she the heiress? Was I beating up the heiress?!' he thought in horror.

"Look at yourselves, brawling like common thugs! And Ampelo, why were you attacking my daughter in the first place?" the boss demanded furiously. "What could possibly drive you to such madness?"
"U-um." Ampelo tried desperately to think of a possible explanation that wouldn't end in his death. He looked over at Ale, but found Ale was already looking away. 'No help from there. Traitor.' Ampelo started to hyperventilate as no solution came forward. 'I don't want to be tortured to death!'

"Father!" Elisa exclaimed sweetly. Her dress was torn and her hair was in disarray. There were already several bruises forming on her face and each one only made him panic more.

"What?" The boss asked with a strained smile. While he said it with a loving tone, the bruises on his daughter's face kept him from falling into the same sugary trap everyone always did.

"I want him. I want Ampelo," Elisa said with a toothy smile.

"Eh!?" They all chorused in shock.

**Ampelo-age 7, Elisa-age 6**

"1, 2, 3, 4," Ampelo counted in the garden. He was playing hide and seek with Elisa. Their playground was the entire garden of the second mansion of the Vasaio famiglia.

Elisa didn't live with her father in the head mansion as it was too dangerous, being the center of her famiglia's mafia dealings. Instead, she lived in the old mansion the Vasaio famiglia founded centuries ago. He had been living with her in this mansion ever since she had suddenly decided that she wanted him a year ago. No matter what the boss did to try to convince her otherwise, Elisa stubbornly stuck to her decision. She used every weapon in her arsenal and finally won when she brought out the waterworks. The boss was weak against Elisa's tears.

"Ready or not, here I come!" Ampelo laughed as he went to find Elisa. It was hard to get along with her at first, but they were happily playing games together now. From hide and seek to role playing, they did it all. Elisa also loved to explore the old mansion and had convinced him to join her ongoing search as well. They had found many hiding places and secret passageways over the last year and each one was an exciting victory.

"Ampelo, that's unfair! You didn't count to ten!" Elisa's indignant scream echoed through the garden as he smugly captured her.

**Ampelo-age 8, Elisa-7**

"...and Cinderella married the prince. They lived happily ever after," Miss Ines finished. They were inside Elisa's room and were surrounded by a small hill of books they had convinced Elisa's personal guard to read to them. Or, Elisa did. Everyone adored her.

"Aw, I love this story. Thank you for reading it to us!" Elisa beamed happily and clapped her hands.

"Kya, your generosity knows no bounds. To thank this lowly servant," Miss Ines cooed.

"Tch, down bastard," Ampelo shook his finger at Miss Ines with a smirk.

"What did you say, you little brat?! Story time is over for you! It's time for you to go to your room," Miss Ines growled as she grabbed his shirt and started to drag him away. "Now sleep," Miss Ines said as she threw him inside. She stalked off back to her charge's room and ignored the cursing behind her.

"That bastard!" Ampelo rubbed his sore head as he dropped down on his bed.

"Bastard is a bad word," Elisa's said behind him.
"Argh! When did you—" Ampelo whirled back and found Elisa was standing by his bed.

"Shh!" she scolded. "Do you want her to hear?"

"You have to stop using the secret tunnels for this. The last time they didn't find you on your bed, the whole mansion shook," Ampelo scolded even as he accepted her hug. They settled down together to sleep, still hugging each-other.

"Hey, Ampelo?" Elisa began seriously.

"What?" Ampelo sighed tiredly.

"Will you marry me?"

"Hah? What are talking about?"

"Like in the story," Elisa replied. "But, you'll be Cinderella. I'll be the hero and save you!"

"But isn't Cinderella the princess?" Ampelo refuted.

"Then you'll be the pauper," she concluded.

"Why do I have to be the poor one?" Ampelo grumbled as he shifted away from her. "I'm not poor anymore. I've saved up, you know."

"Well, I'm the princess, aren't I? Besides, the Princess and the Pauper just sounds right. We'll make our own story! We'll marry and grow old and then we will tell our story just like Ale or Miss Ines does. It'll be our own happily ever after." Elisa's smile shone brighter than any night light, which Miss Ines had installed despite him being a big boy.

"Yes, our own happily ever after," Ampelo murmured. He fell asleep with a content smile on his face.

**Ampelo-age 9, Elisa-age 8**

"Heiress Elisa, congratulations on your flame activation!" Yet another hag cooed and smooched Elisa's cheek.

Elisa's flames had awoken during the Stair Incident, as some were coming to call it. While the boss hadn't been happy with the danger she'd been in, he was pleased to know she was a sky. Skies were the royalty of the mafia, so the Vasaio famiglia were celebrating her activation by throwing a party for her.

Ampelo, who had been stuffed in an uncomfortable suit, had been standing beside Elisa ever since the party began. He growled lowly as another old bat came to congratulate her. They fawned over his Elisa and then pinched his cheek. It was really trying his patience!

"Ampelo, where are you going?" Elisa asked as he walked away.

"Too many people!" Ampelo replied as he headed outside.

When he heard Elisa trotting behind him, he sped up to put a little distance between them. When he was sure he'd finally lost her, he found himself just outside of the terrace in the garden. Ever since the Stair Incident, Elisa had become more clingy and possessive. She would bawl if he even so much as left the room without him. It was driving him crazy! They spent so much time together already and he needed some space and time for himself. Couldn't she understand that?
"That ungrateful, purple brat! Just because he has the hair and eye color of a cloud, he's allowed to be with the heiress," a man said to his friends as they walked out into the terrace.

"Can't be helped. The princess likes him, even though he is just an orphan." A brief flicker of light and one of the men started to smoke. "And now that it's proved she's a sky, well…that explains why, doesn't it? She's probably courting him."

"I heard the boss has started to search for other possible guardians for her. If only I was younger," another man laughed.

"You? Don't joke, man!" another man replied with a smirk. "You wouldn't have made the cut!"

"Still, possible cloud or not, that purple brat is weak. He shouldn't be with the princess just because of his looks," the first man growled.

"Yeah, god just loves some people more." With that they walked away.

Ampelo stood there for a while, just thinking. 'Am I…is she really? Is that why she's been so…? But I'm not...good enough.'

He shook his head and returned to the party.

**Ampelo -age 10, Elisa-age 9**

"And this is the third boss of the Vasaio famiglia." The current boss pointed at some ancient portrait on the wall and continued, "She was the first female boss of our famiglia. Her motto was 'no man left behind'. She also constructed our training grounds."

Elisa's eyes glowed with delight as she gazed at the amazing blond woman in the portrait. Elisa's thoughts were easy to read. She would buy another wig, a blonde one. She had begun wearing wigs because she thought her natural black was boring. Today she wore a blue wig.

"Boss? I want to go," Ampelo said suddenly as he bowed. If he didn't say it now, he might not be able to at all.

"Oh, you can go. We can continue our historic journey as father and daughter," Boss laughed.

"No, that's not it. I want to train. I want to become a flame user. Please," Ampelo begged, his head still down.

He couldn't bear it anymore. He needed to leave and get stronger. He needed to become a flame user, a worthy one. Ampelo had tried and tried to activate his flames in secret, but he couldn't do it. He'd been trying fruitlessly for a year. He couldn't do this by himself and he couldn't do it when Elisa demanded so much of his time, even though he was happy to give it to her.

That night, Ampelo left the mansion for flame training. He heard later from Miss Ines that Elisa had cried for days. While it pained him, he knew he couldn't go back. Not until he was good enough.

**Ampelo -age 14, Elisa-age 13**

"So, you came," Elisa said evenly. Elisa's back was to him, so Ampelo didn't know what kind of expression she was making. He hoped it was a good one, that she was happy he was back.

Ampelo himself was very happy to be back in his true home, the Vasaio mansion. They had written each other letters, but letters were far in between and weren't nearly as enjoyable as speaking with
her in person. By God, he had missed her! Her face, her voice, her company. But Ampelo had forced himself to not return until he was sure he was worthy. He visited many masters during his training and fought with every person who would accept his challenge. And finally, he was ready. Ampelo was sure now that he could cut down any obstacle in their path. No one would be able to accuse him of being unworthy.

"Yes, I'm home," Ampelo said with a smile.

"Last time I heard from you, you were in America. It must be nice to explore the world," Elisa said, her tone indifferent.

She was looking out through the open window, which allowed the wind to play with the strands of her favorite golden wig. She was wearing a white dress with golden adornments and altogether looked like a hidden angel who spent her whole life in a tower.

"It was boring without you. I wished that you were there," Ampelo replied. "I wished every day to be in your company."

"Then it's a promise. We'll explore the world together!" Elisa suddenly whirled back, smiling, and Ampelo was struck dumb. She was more beautiful than anything he'd ever seen. God, he had missed her.

"Yes," Ampelo managed to say, flustered.

"Ah, but before we do, you must be punished for leaving me behind. Promise to me that you will always follow my orders," Elisa said with a wobbly grin. "Swear to be the cloud to my sky."

Ampelo walked over and kneeled before her. He kissed her hand like a knight would and made a promise. "Yes, my lady. Your wish is my command."

**Ampelo-age 15, Elisa-age 14, Dominico-age 4**

Six months ago, Ampelo had harmonized with Elisa. Miss Ines said it was the fastest harmonization she'd ever seen. Considering that they had spent their childhood together, it wasn't really that surprising. The year following that had Ampelo seeing many changes. One thing that stood out for him was that his sky had become almost fanatic for Vasaio.

As the heiress to the Vasaio famiglia, Elisa did a fair share of paperwork to help train her in the administrative duties she would be responsible for in the future. His sky was very serious about it all, but he didn't much like it himself. She was too...he didn't want to say invested, as a future boss should be invested in the famiglia's future, but he felt she went a little too far at times. He wished she would take better care of herself.

He opened the door to her office with a sigh and was met with a curious sight. His sky was smiling at a small boy with black hair, who was reading a book bigger than his own body.

"Ah, you're finally here! Meet my new little brother, Dominico. Isn't he just the cutest little thing?" Elisa smiled and brushed the boy's hair away from his eyes.

"Off with your hand. You are making my hair messy." Dominico batted his sister's hand away with a pout. Then, the boy turned to him. Ampelo's purple eyes met with intelligent red eyes. The look in those eyes... those were not the eyes of a normal child his age.

"Hmm, is this your boyfriend then?"

"Boyfriend!? No, he is my cloud guardian," Elisa denied and blushed.
It both hurt and brought him hope. Her words said one thing, but he knew from the look on her face that she wanted him. Ampelo wanted her too. He wanted to deepen their bond, but every time he took a step forward, Elisa would take two steps back.

"How old is he? Isn't that a medical book?" Ampelo said in an effort to change the topic.

"Dominico is 4-years-old now. My father got married to his mother when I was ten, the year after you left," Elisa said with a frown. Ampelo's leaving was still a bad topic between them. Then she smiled, "Dominico is a genius!"

There was no way even a genius 4-year-old could read that medical book which, from the look of its cover, was very advanced. It was far more likely that the boy was pretending for attention. Ampelo shook the thought from his head as Elisa kissed her brother. Her brother batted her away with flushed face.

"Nice to meet you," Dominico said with a sigh.

"Nice to meet you too," Ampelo replied.

"I'm so glad that you two are getting along. Let's work together for the future of the Vasaio famiglia. Glory to Vasaio!" Elisa cheered.

"Glory to Vasaio," Ampelo and Dominico murmured.

**Ampelo-age 16, Elisa-age 15, Dominico-age 5**

"Still reading moldy books, Dominico?" Ampelo said blandly as he entered the mansion's library.

"Your Bean-brain wouldn't understand," Dominico replied as he turned the page. He was sitting on the floor with books scattered around him. Ampelo glanced over the covers of the books curiously. Elisa did say she got a new project from her father…

"Orchard management? Dominico, you must truly love your sister to be helping her research such a thing," Ampelo teased. He dodged a book the embarrassed Dominico threw in response.

"No, I'm just reading it because it's interesting!" Dominico denied. "Aren't you going to stand beside my sister? Why are you here?"

"She sent me to find you. She's meeting with the storm flame users your father invited." Ampelo clenched his fist. If he went there, he would massacre them in seconds. Elisa knew that, which was why he had been sent away.

"You need to take action before it's too late." Dominico sighed.

"I'm…" Ampelo paused. He knew Elisa loved him. They just need to take a step forward. Or he could… Ampelo smiled and walked out of the library with haste. "Thank you Dominico."

"What a farce my life has become…giving love advice for teenagers," Ampelo heard as he swung the doors open. He paused a few seconds, then shook his head and ran to the garden where Elisa was meeting with the possible storm guardians.

"Ampelo?! What happened?" Elisa asked, shocked at his sudden entrance. Ampelo made his way across the garden and, in front of many prospective guardians, kissed Elisa.

It was heaven.
Ampelo-age 17, Elisa-age 16

Miss Ines was dead; she had died in a car crash. Elisa fled in tears when they heard and had closed herself in her room.

Ampelo was sitting on his bed. When he was younger, he never thought there would be day he would miss Ines, but she’d been supportive when they announced their love to Elisa's father. The boss looked like he wanted to kill him on the spot. He likely would have if it weren't for Elisa and Ines working together.

The wall opened and interrupted his inner musings. Ampelo saw his swollen-eyed Elisa coming from their old secret tunnel. She didn't say anything, just walked over to him and kissed him. They spent that night, and many more to come, in bed together.

Ampelo-age 18, Elisa-age 17

"...you should have killed me then!" Elisa's loud voice was heard through the door as Ampelo stood outside of her office. He hesitantly opened the door and walked over to Elisa's side.

"Just like you did for yours?" The boss growled.

"Yes! Vasaio tradition only recognizes heirs born in wedlock. B*** aren't allowed," Elisa said coldly. Ampelo looked away. He wouldn't think about that.

"What happened?" Ampelo asked when he was sure his voice would be steady.

"I'm a bastard, apparently. My mother was just some whore my father spent the night with. My dear father couldn't do his duty when the time came, so he faked everything. He told the whole famiglia a dirty lie. Ampelo! The boss lied to his famiglia," Elisa cried. Her quiet sob seemed to echo in the office.

The boss stayed quiet.

"So, what's the problem?" Ampelo arched a brow. For him, it changed nothing. He would love Elisa even if she was the devil's child.

"The rest of the famiglia found out," The boss said tiredly. "Our famiglia has become divided. One half wishes for Dominico to be acknowledged as heir, saying they won't follow some whore's daughter. The other half is rooting for Elisa. The conflict has started already. Neither side shows sign of backing down quietly. There will be infighting. A Civil War in our famiglia."

Elisa looked away from the boss and hugged herself.

"And what's the plan then?" Ampelo said suspiciously as he put himself between the boss and Elisa.

"I need to erase Elisa. If she is gone, one side will lose their motivations," The boss replied.

"No!" Ampelo snarled and unsheathed his sword.

"Ampelo! What are doing? Father is the boss of our famiglia!" Elisa protested.

"I don't care!" Ampelo shouted. "I don't care about the Vasaio. I would burn the world to keep you safe! Happily, and gladly!"

"Ampelo," Elisa murmured. She stepped closer and hugged him.
"There's no need for that. I've already made some plans. You two will 'die' in a fire accident during a dangerous mission. I prepared bodies that will take your place. In order to make it realistic, the mission will have real enemies, not actors. You can take care of that, right?" The boss looked very tired and strained, as if the whole world was on his shoulders.

Ampelo nodded wordlessly.

"Leave this world. Live as a civilian, far away from here…if you wish to marry, you have my blessing. There's not anything holding you back now, is there?" The boss smiled wryly.

Then they started to plan in earnest. It took a servant pointing out the hour to get them to finally go to bed.

Ampelo collapsed beside her on their bed and held her close. He could see her tears gleaming in the moonlight as they trailed across her cheeks. "It's going to be okay, Elisa," he said. "We can finally fulfill our dreams after this. Remember? We were going to marry and grow old and live happily ever after. We can do that now. There won't be anything holding us back."

Elisa's lips quirked oddly and her expression twisted before she hid her face in his shirt.

It was only after her death that he could look back and realize what the look on her face had been, what it meant. It was a realization that came much too late.
Chapter 16-Doppelganger

Beta'd by Ie-maru

Thank you for all support xD.

Chapter 16

"No matter what you say, I won't ever forgive you!" Colonello snapped as they continued their rescue.

"I don't need your forgiveness," Viper muttered angrily. 'This is why I didn't want to show myself to the others!' Viper thought as he ignored Colonello. He glared at Sinagra's back and thought, 'If only you weren't here.'

Flashback

Viper sipped his whisky in the emptied bar. 'They already left. Left me here, alone. All alone. This is what I wanted, isn't it? This crushing loneliness…and the money.' Viper looked at the suitcase sitting at his feet. Normally, he would gleefully count the money, but this time he couldn't bring himself to touch it. His heart beat uncomfortably and his hands became clammy with sweat. It was all that sky's fault!

"Don't f**k with my head," Viper growled and threw his whisky glass. It crashed against the wall, but did nothing to satisfy his frustrations. "I'm not one of them!"

"Hey, Juno, come quick to the dock! They need emergency fueling," a sailor outfitted man called frantically. "And they're not the patient sort!"

"Fueling?" Viper wondered aloud.

"Yeah. Their ship left in a hurry without refueling. Hey, do you know where all the people have gone? I'm searching for Juno – a crew member." The man scratched his head as he nervously searched the room.

"What are you talking about? I'm here." Viper's expertly crafted Juno came from behind the bar and waved.

"Ah, man that was not funny," the sailor growled. "Follow me!"

Viper grabbed his money filled case and invisibly followed behind the sailor and his construction. He didn't know why he was going through all this trouble…it wasn't the sky, no, he was just curious. Wasn't he?

After he boarded the fueling ship, Viper met with the devil.

"I know you're there," Sinagra suddenly said. It seemed his invisibility did nothing to hide him from the world's strongest sun. He stepped further in the shadows, wary of being caught by the others. Fortunately, no one kicked up a fuss while the fueling crew almost finished their work.

"Yare yare, I never thought you'd find me this quickly," Viper replied. He didn't remove his illusion as he spoke; he knew the others wouldn't react nearly as calm to his presence. Sinagra merely looked at the ocean with a frown.
“Why aren’t you revealing me?” Viper murmured curiously. His mind already pictured the different scenarios and the illusions he’d need to escape them.

“I’ll make a bet with you,” Sinagra said with a bored expression.

“A bet?” Viper asked, curious.

“The world’s greatest mist vs time. How much longer can you last? Will the others notice? And if the others notice…would you survive them? Would you escape? I’m curious to find out.” Sinagra smirked, but his cold black eyes stared at him without mirth.

Viper shivered. ‘I’m not. I will definitely hide myself from them.’

Flashback ended

“Devil,” Viper muttered as they turned the corner.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Sinagra said innocently as he opened the big door.

They came to another corridor and found Fon and Lal standing on the other end.

“Lal, what happened to you?” Colonello shouted as he excitedly ran to her.

“Don’t ask,” Lal growled as she wiped her face.

“It was tiring.” Fon sighed as he looked at his slashed sleeve.

“Anyway, is this it?” Sinagra looked at the single remaining white door.

“It should be,” Verde replied from behind them. He briefly glanced at Viper, then proceeded to ignore him.

“Oh, you came too. Wanting to save our princess?” Colonello joked.

“No, I’m just checking on my valuable specimen.” Verde fixed his glasses with a slight smile.

“Open the door,” Lal demanded as the two started to argue. Sinagra started to open it, but Colonello dashed forward to open it instead.

“Wait, I’ll be the one who’ll save the princess. Harry will probably cry, kora! You won’t know what to do then,” Colonello laughed and opened the door. The white room shone brightly under the combined light of the hall and its own chandelier. There was nothing notable within except an opened tunnel…

They stood there in silence.

“All in favor of investing in handcuffs?” Sinagra sighed.

“Aye,” they answered simultaneously.

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“Finally, we can get out of this tunnel,” Harry said as he stepped out. “Another room?”

Harry looked around. There were dresses, make up, and books littering the floor. The room design had more feminine colors; yellow, white, pink, and other soft colors decorated the room. Harry
curiously examined the different colored wigs that were on a mirror stand.

After a minute of looking around, he shook his head and said, "There's no time for this. I have to escape!"

Harry made his way to the door, but stopped short as he noticed a big portrait hung on the wall. It was not the size of the portrait that made him stop, but its content.

"She looks like me," Harry wondered aloud. The black-haired girl in the portrait was smiling serenely. She looked exactly like a female version of himself would. There was a single name below the portrait. "Elisa!? Isn't that the name that creepy guy was spouting about? No wonder that guy mistook me for her. If I didn't know myself, even I would mistake myself for her!"

Then he remembered the theory; they said that if there are infinite dimensions, then there would be infinite alterations of yourself as well. Harry didn't believe them when he first heard it - it was too far-fetched that there would be multiple dimensions. But, considering he was in different dimension already...Elisa actually could be a version of himself. That was rather surreal.

"It's your entire fault, you know. If you didn't meet this Ampelo, there wouldn't be a creep after my ass!" Harry pointed at the portrait dramatically. The portrait only smiled. Harry ranted at it, "Why do these things always happen to me!? I get transported into a new dimension and then this! My doppelganger is a female who spends her time with a crazy person. What the hell were you thinking?"

Harry snapped out of his rant and looked around again, feeling ridiculous. He saw more pictures on the dresser and curiously picked one up. "You do like to wear wigs, don't you? And this one, where did you get this wig? Wait, this boy looks familiar." On one photo Elisa was wearing a rather funny wig. Beside her there was a black-haired boy with crimson eyes glaring with such a familiar look it sent a shiver down his spine. Try as he might, Harry couldn't remember this boy in his world. He noticed a journal beside the photos and put down the picture to look through it instead.

"Just a few lines before I go," Harry promised himself as he opened his doppelganger's journal. The journal flashed in orange light for a moment before it opened. It must have been some flame-version of a privacy charm.

'My name is Elisabeth Vasaio. Dominico, I welcome you as the next head of the Vasaio. If you are reading this, Dominico, then you are with Ampelo as I believe Ampelo will find my journal first. I want the both of you to read this. I want both of you to know that I...

You are probably angry at me. I know what I am going to do is unforgivable, but I couldn't see any other way. For the Vasaio famiglia, as the supposed heiress, I have to cleanse myself. My end is unavoidable. For the glory of Vasaio...

Dominico, I...

Harry snapped the journal shut. He didn't want to intrude on something so personal, even if it was from his other self. A suicide note...what had happened to her to make her think that?

"It looks like I've caught a rat," a young girl said behind him. Harry didn't know why, but he hid the journal down the front of his dress. He slowly turned around and faced a blond-haired girl who was smiling nastily at him. Beside her stood a butler in a formal black suit.

The expressionless butler stared at Harry as he said, "Miss, if Ampelo knew that you are here then —"
"Quiet!" The girl demanded. She took out a hidden pistol and aimed it at Harry.

"Hey, there's no need for that!" Harry quickly lifted his arms in front of himself defensively. If she fired at this distance, he would definitely get hit! Probably fatally, too, no matter her experience with a gun.

"I said quiet!" The girl's hand was steady as she aimed her pistol his way. "I tried and tried, but Ampelo wouldn't open his heart to me. But you...you!"

"There is nothing between us!" Harry replied desperately. He backed a few steps as the girl shook the pistol in frustration.

"He took you to his room! You witch!" The girl's angry grey eyes flashed with a mad light.

"I…Orange, what!?" Harry screamed and grabbed his head as Orange suddenly shrieked within his mental castle. The pain became almost unbearable. Sky flames surged up furiously as Orange continued to shriek. Harry stumbled forward as the pulses continued.

"What? Don't come near me! Stay away!" The girl screamed and shot. The bullet flew in his direction with a loud bang.

Harry escaped the fatal possibility with his fast reflexes, but the bullet still hit his left shoulder. He quickly put his hand to the wound to try to stop the bleeding. Harry's uneven footing caused him to fall over as he did so, which only added to the physical pain spreading through his body as he landed on the marble floor. Thankfully, when the bullet hit him, Orange stopped screaming. Orange became quiet, extremely quiet, instead. He couldn't even feel its presence anymore. Harry worried that something happened to Orange, that maybe the bullet was special, but he couldn't check on it in this kind of situation.

"Stand up!" The girl ordered.

Harry stood up carefully, not wanting to aggravate the girl further.

"Now, go to the portrait," The girl continued.

"Look, I don't know why you want to shoot me. I've never met you. I never wanted him. You can have him," Harry started to calmly explain. He wouldn't be able to dodge another bullet. How could he get her to back down?

"Shut up! Do you know how much I've wanted to do this?! Ampelo never looked at me. No matter what kind of dress I wore, no matter what kind of hair style I chose, Ampelo never paid attention to me. But you! Just because you look like her, Ampelo suddenly shared his room with you. I bet you are happy. But you won't be anymore. I, Angelica Bochi, will erase your ugliness from this world!" The girl named Angelica started to laugh loudly.

Harry knew then that no matter what he said, this girl wouldn't let him go. Judging by the expressionless butler that stood beside her, the butler wouldn't help him either. 'This truly is the Potter luck,' Harry thought with a grimace as he put more pressure on his wound.

"You really do look like her," Angelica whispered in awe as Harry walked over to the portrait.

"Miss, sorry to interrupt, but I think we need to get out of here," The butler suddenly said.

"But I need to," Angelica protested, but the butler sternly shook his head.
"As the only heiress for the Bochi famiglia, I think Ampelo would want you to escape to a safe place," the butler insisted.

"Yes, Ampelo would want that. My Ampelo always thinks of me." Angelica touched her cheek with a dreamy sigh. Her pistol lowered as she became lost in her little dream. Harry took the chance to get out there and bolted for the open door that she had left open.

"Stop!" Angelica screamed and shot again.

Harry ducked and felt the bullet fly over him. He sprinted through the open door. Another gun shot and the door's wooden frame splintered. Another narrow miss to get his heart pumping.

He continued to run through the following corridors without looking back. Harry thought only about escaping as he pushed his pain and worry aside. He didn't check where he was running. Corners and corridors passed by him as he continued his mad dash. When he turned the next corner, he collided with someone.

Harry scrambled in panic as the person grabbed him. He pushed the person away with his bloody hands and struggled fruitlessly. No matter what he did, the person stubbornly hold on.

"Harry, Harry" the person called out to him. That familiar person's voice sounded far, like Harry was lost in a fog. The person shook him hard and called for him again. "Harry!"

Harry finally snapped out of his panic and looked up at the person's face. He found himself face to face with a green haired man – Verde – and nearly collapsed with relief.

Gone was the scientist's serious and bored expression. Verde looked genuinely worried for him and looked at him with such gentle eyes that Harry couldn't look away. After all of this madness, it was a beautiful sight to see.

"It's all over now. I won't let anything happen to you," Verde murmured as he hugged him.

Harry held tightly to the man's lab coat in return. He ignored the pain in his shoulder in favor of the comfort offered so freely.

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"Verde! Go back to the control room and check the cameras," Sinagra ordered. "There's got to be something you can use to track where he might've gone."

Verde nodded and hurried in the direction of the control room. He needed to check all the cameras' history. If Harry escaped before their fight, it should be on earlier recordings. He could go forward from there to see if he'd left the grounds or not.

"Maybe an hour or so earlier. Argh, why didn't I check it before?" Verde muttered in frustration. This flame bond was really affecting his performance. He had to get control of himself. Then again…

"More experiments for me," Verde smirked. His brain already started configuring what experiments he needed to do. Harry would be a prime subject, but he wouldn't hurt Harry. No, he couldn't do that. Just the thought alone was making him want to throw up. He'd have to find some other way to test the effects of the bond.

"Ah, what a pleasurable prison you are, Harry," Verde sighed. Maybe Viper was right. This bond was making them crazy and irrational. But, it was too late for him. If he could only get rid of these
feelings, he would happily reject them and return to the challenging depths of science. At the same time, he paradoxically couldn't stand the idea of doing so. This was truly madness.

Suddenly, a blond girl crashed into him in her rush around the corner. Verde managed to grab the girl so he wouldn't fall to floor and she wouldn't escape his questioning. The girl scrambled in panic as she tried to get away from him, but he refused to let her go. During that brief moment when she met his gaze, Verde noticed her very unique eyes. They were filled with an unfamiliar panic, but he would know them anywhere. It was Harry! He didn't know why he was in a dress and wig, but he hypothesized that it was an attempt to help him escape.

"Harry, Harry," Verde called, but Harry couldn't hear him in his panic. Verde shook him to try to get his attention. "Harry!"

Finally, Harry recognized him. Those teary green eyes looked into his own with such relief and thankfulness…it was in that moment that all denial and half-hearted plots left Verde's mind. The only thing left was protectiveness. He had never felt like this for another person. For him, there had only been one path – and that was science. But now, there was Harry, his sky, and he would do anything for him.

"It's all over now. I won't let anything happen to you," Verde murmured as he hugged him.

His heart swelled when his sky returned it, but it quickly changed into concern as he felt wetness seep through his clothing. His sky was bleeding! Verde was quick to put pressure on it and layer his flames over the wound to help prevent any further blood loss.

"Come on," Verde said. "We need to get to the car. I'll call the others to join us. Sinagra can use his sun flames to heal this after we get the bullet out."

Harry nodded weakly and sagged against him. "Okay."

Verde gently uncurled his sky's hands from his lab coat and called the others as they headed for where he'd left the car. No one stopped them.

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"Skull de Mort, Skull de Mort, Skull de Mort," the crowd cheered.

"Haha! I'm Skull de Mort," Skull shouted enthusiastically. The crowd went wild.

He was the best stunt man. His handsome looks and daring smiles drew crowds and excited old fans. He was the man who was hated by death. No matter what he did, death would just leave him. He healed from the worst injuries and survived the most fatal of crashes.

'Yes, this is life' Skull thought as he put on his helmet.

"Ladies and gentlemen! Our daring stuntman, the one and only man who's hated by…" the announcer paused and the crowd finished by shouting, "Death!"

"It's show time!" Skull started his motorcycle's engine and drove recklessly forward, up the ramp, into the air and landed without a single fault in his stunt.

"Aaaaaaand a perfect jump!" the announcer said. "Now for the second!"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa," some women shouted and swooned.
"Perfect! Now for the last jump…ohhhhhhhhhhh, that was a triple spin! Ladies and gentlemen, a TRIPLE SPIN. This is Skull de Mort! Only he can do these daring stunts!" the announcer claimed.

"Haha! I'm Skull de Mort! You guys know my name!" Skull shouted loudly as the excited crowd went wild.

"Skull, Skull, Skull de Mort! The man who's hated by Death!"
Chapter 18-Finally met each other

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank you :)

AN: Thank you for all support. I am so glad that you all are enjoying this fic:

Chapter 17

"Damn it!" Colonello shouted as he hit the tunnel's wall.

It had been a long walk through the dark passageway with only their flames to light the way. They hadn't found Harry yet, nor any trace of where he might have gone. Added onto that frustration was how obvious it was that Colonello's flame was the dimmest; he did not appreciate having the "weakest" status thrown in his face so boldly.

"Look where you step! We don't have time for clumsiness," Lal growled. Her blue flame looked stronger and purer - a deeper blue compared to his own light blue flame. Colonello glared at her blue flame and burned with jealousy.

"This truly is the Vasaio famiglia's stronghold. From trap rooms to secret tunnels, this old famiglia sure knows what to do to discourage intruders." Fon sighed.

"The Vasaio famiglia's heirs lived here for generations, so they had to fortify the location to protect them," Sinagra explained as they turned a corner. "But as you can see, the new heir left this mansion to Ampelo and the lesser famiglia the madman took up with. That cold brat has little sense if that's how he treats such an important part of his famiglia's history and security."

"A brat? You met the heir, then. Do you think he'll try to get back at us for this?" Colonello asked. He wouldn't stand down and let Harry be hurt by anyone, but knowing who was coming would help. Thinking of those who hurt Harry had him looking back at Viper, who was still following behind them. Colonello would punish him after they rescued Harry. All of this was the other man's fault!

"Why, you scared?" Sinagra mocked.

"As if! I'm just curious, kora," Colonello retorted. "Making plans would help stop me from just worrying about him. What do you think?"

"Hmm, I don't know. We can't predict what the Vasaio heir will do," Sinagra admitted grudgingly. "Not much is known about the brat."

"I thought the new heir was only ten?" Fon said in confusion. "Wouldn't the advisers be making the decisions?"

"No. He already controls the whole of the Vasaio famiglia. I've never met with that kind of child before. If you saw it yourself, you wouldn't believe he's only ten years old," Viper stated. It was said blandly, as if there was nothing wrong with Viper being there with them, as if the man hadn't been silent earlier because he was obviously unwelcome.

Fon stopped briefly, then continued forward without saying anything. Neither did anyone else, really. It was a mix of not wanting to talk to Viper and knowing that, if they did, they might not be able to stop themselves from starting a fight.
"It's the least you deserve, Traitor!" Colonello looked back to see if the heavy, accusing silence was wearing down the mist, but Viper didn't acknowledge him. Colonello snorted at the man's "cool" act and faced forward to see they were reaching an end to the tunnel.

Said end apparently opened into a girl's room. Colonello and the others took a moment to look around at the wigs and dresses. Then Sinagra noticed blood on the floor and waved the others over. Fon quickly moved over him and lightly touched to determine how long it had been there. "It must be Harry's. It's a recent injury, but that won't mean much if he was hit in a vital spot. We have to hurry!"

'Harry should be fine' Colonello thought with a clenched hand. 'He's fine.'

"Look! He went out this way." Sinagra pointed at a trail of blood leading to room's opposite door. Colonello and the others were ready to bolt after the red trail, but Sinagra dallied a second more as he examined a portrait with a frown.

"Come on! We need to go," Colonello shouted back at Sinagra. The hitman nodded sharply and sprinted after them.

"Sinagra! I found Harry. Come back to the car," Verde's said through the transmitter.

"Is Harry okay?" Sinagra asked as they hurried through the corridors.

"He has a bullet wound in his shoulder. I patched him as best as I could...if I only had my lab," Verde said, frustration clear in his voice.

Colonello and others made their way back to the car without any interruptions. In their haste, they didn't notice a girl and butler who were hiding in an alcove. The two let out twin sighs of relief once the monstrous elements were gone.

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'Blood,' Rene thought furiously. In the end, he couldn't save his sky from harm. He shouldn't have taken his time with Ampelo. He should have just killed him the moment he found himself facing the discorded cloud. Harry might not have been hurt if Rene had gotten to him sooner. There were so many things he could have done better and it was his sky who was paying for it.

In their path were fallen enemies, but they didn't pay attention to them; they were dead or dying and none of them had the energy to stop them. Half-way into their trek, Viper disappeared to erase their presence from the manor. Rene didn't spare a glance at him. Viper would know what to do and there wasn't anything Rene could add to that.

They finally got to the car after a minute of dead sprints around and through corpse-strewn halls. He immediately saw how pale Harry appeared and how worried Verde was in response.

"I'm telling you, I'm fine," Harry slurred and batted back at Verde's hand.

"And I'm worried. We don't have a professional laboratory here. What if it gets infected?" Verde frowned at Harry's wound, which was already dressed in white bandages.

Rene reached Harry first and stepped close while the others kept their distance. They all knew of the sun flame's powerful healing ability; it was better to let the professional do their work. Verde reluctantly gave his space up to the sun guardian so Rene could fret over their injured sky in peace.
"I'm fine," Harry protested tiredly.

"I'm the doctor, so I'm one who decides that." Rene frowned as he checked Harry for injuries.

"Since when? I thought you were mafia?" Harry glared at him to no effect.

"I'm your sun guardian and have the education required. Enough about that, though. I've never met a sky who pulls half of your stunts," Rene complained, "I'm in half mind to handcuff you to myself!"

"What!?" Harry indignant shriek was cut short as Rene pulled his arm to check the bleeding mess that was currently his shoulder.

Rene gently took off wrappings and examined the wound beneath. "Let's see. Hmm, looks like the bullet went through. It doesn't seem to have hit anything vital."

Rene sighed with relief as the wound would easily heal under his sun flames. He was worried that Harry would need more professional help, but Rene would be enough for this. He steadily fed his sun flames into his sky and focused them around Harry's shoulder. The wound closed under the influence of his powerful sun flames. Unseen was Rene's flames increasing Harry's body's capability to make the blood vessels needed to replace what Harry had lost. Rene would get him some water later to help with the rest, but for now...

"Done. Now, there will be some pain, but it will get better." Rene smiled at Harry, who was looking at his shoulder carefully but without the shock he'd expect from a civilian. 'Interesting,' Rene thought.

As if his announcement was blanket permission, the rest of the present guardians gathered around Harry.

"Hey! Don't do something this stupid again, kora!"

"You brat! Do you know how much trouble you caused?"

"I'm glad you're alright."

Harry's bewildered expression was funny. Harry was desperately trying to not look embarrassed, but was failing miserably at it. Harry's rosy cheeks were like a bright neon sign and gave him away.

"I-I don't know why you—" Harry started to say, but was cut short by Lal's voice.

"Don't be stupid. Of course, we'd come to save you. Listen up brat, you're my sky! Our sky. You're not alone anymore," Lal eyed Harry with an intense but warm look.

"I'm not," Harry protested weakly.

"You are our sky! Maybe you don't understand or want it now, but we are already one team. Get used to it," Rene said firmly. Then he tossed a mocking smirk at the others. "Though, we could drop a few of the more useless ones, if you want." He sent Colonello a meaningful look.

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean?! You wanna fight?" Colonello spluttered, then angrily lifted his gun to wave it challengingly in the hitman's direction. The man snorted in response.

Harry shook his head like he wanted to stop thinking about something before he met Fon's eyes. "Do you also want this bond?" Harry hesitantly asked him.

Fon calmly smiled and said, "I would also like you to be my sky. But, let's not talk about it right now. I'm sure you're tired and we really do need to go." Fon gestured to the car. Harry eyed the
armored car for moment before awkwardly sliding in. The dress didn't make it easy for him.

The others quickly took their seats after he was settled in. There was a brief struggle for the seat beside Harry, but Rene solved the issue of seats handedly.

"I'll drive," he offered innocently. Rene made to get into the driver's seat, but Lal shifted from her hard-earned place beside Harry to climb into it first with a challenging glare. Rene refrained from laughing at her and climbed into the back instead.

All of them heaved a sigh, which obviously confused Harry. Viper took the front passenger's seat to keep distance between him and their sky. Rene didn't even know that he got back until then. 'Really need to be sharper,' he thought briefly. Then he scooted closer to Harry, picked him up, took Harry's seat, and put Harry on his lap. "Let's go."

Harry protested as he finally figured out that he was on someone's lap, but quickly tired. Rene smirked down at Harry, who was drowsy and nodding off due to Rene's offered stream of sun flames. The others glared at him and Rene smirked right back at them in response.

Once the stare off calmed down, Rene rolled his shoulders and looked out the window. The rescue was over, but that didn't mean they wouldn't be attacked even after they left the famiglia's property. Fortunately, nothing happened as they exited the gates and continued to put distance between them and the stronghold they'd stormed. A few more miles and they all began to unwind a little more.

All that was left now was finding a safe place to bunker down and recover in. Then they could sit their sky down for a very serious conversation. Hopefully, Harry would listen and come to an understanding.

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As Rene healed their sky, Viper stealthily made his way to the side of the world's greatest scientist.

"Yare yare, I thought you wouldn't contact us if you found Harry first," Viper trailed. That Verde didn't just kidnap Harry and leave them all behind when he could've was a curious thing.

"I don't know. It was," Verde sighed and didn't finish his line of thought. His eyes led straight to Harry, who was surrounded by his guardians. Verde's eyes had always looked hard or bored when Viper saw him before, but on Harry they became warm and gentle. 'This sky bond is getting ridiculous!' Viper thought with a frown.

"You are getting more and more imprisoned. Your every step closer to him is one step farther from freedom." Viper said flatly.

"Then I guess I will take that step willingly." Verde smiled as he walked over to the car to be with the others now that Harry was healed.

"Hah, the genius mad scientist? The Da Vinci of our time? He's stupid is what he is," Viper muttered. After a moment of observing the group, he went over to join them as well. He told himself that he wouldn't think about Harry, wouldn't care, but when Harry didn't even notice him…'Ah, my heart hurts. Why?'

He shook his head sharply and took his place in the front passenger's seat. He tensely kept watch until they left the mansion far behind. Only then did he allow himself to relax a little. It seemed to be the same for the others as they finally broke the heavy silence that had fallen over them.

"By the way Harry, I'm curious…why are you in dress?" Colonello asked the yawning sky.
"I have to admit to also being curious about that." Fon smiled apologetically while Harry blushed and avoided meeting anyone's eyes.

"I'm also curious about your new look," Lal said with an arched brow. "It needs a bit of work if you were using it as a disguise."

"Hmm, I don't think the color yellow suits you." Verde eyed Harry's blond wig with a grimace.

"Well, I think it suits you. You should dress like this more often. I can give some tips on making it work," Sinagra, the bastard, said shamelessly.

Harry could feel smugness radiating from him. It wasn't enough that Harry was in his lap, no, he had to go pointing out the different ways he could dress in drag better. Well, now that he was awake he could at least take care of one of those issues. Harry quickly picked the wig up from his head and made to throw it out of the window, but Sinagra caught it the moment he let go.

"Throw that away!" Harry looked up and hissed at Sinagra.

"Aw, but I like it." Sinagra pouted.

"It's not funny!" Harry tried to take the wig back, but failed when Sinagra threw it to Verde.

"Verde! Give it back." Harry groaned as Verde threw the wig to Fon, who threw it to Lal.

"Hey! I'm driving here," Lal snapped before tossing it back. Colonello grumbled when Verde grabbed it before he could.

"I give up," Harry slumped back against…Sinagra! Harry almost forgot he was on someone's lap! He jumped right back up and looked around for another place to sit, but everyone was already packed together like sardines. If not Sinagra, he would have to sit on someone else's lap. He resignedly allowed the man to pull him back down.

"Where are we going?" Harry asked to distract himself. He needed to know anyway so he could plan his next move. He was also worried for Orange. Harry needed to enter his mind as quickly as possible and needed some undisturbed meditation time to do it.

"First, we'll head into the city and grab a room, then we'll grab some food. We can talk about our next move there," Sinagra said with a pleased expression.

"What city?" Harry murmured. Then he suddenly shouted, "Wait! I need to change out of this stupid dress first!"

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"Sir, the manor was attacked by an unknown enemy." A professional looking man read the related report to a boy seated in an expensive looking armchair. The boy was reading his own book while simultaneously taking in every detail of the report. His crimson eyes flashed with interest as the man continued.

"Ampelo?" the boy put his book down with a sigh, already half expecting the answer that followed.

"He perished," The man stated.

"And who was the enemy?" The boy stood up and walked over to the nearest window. His anger wasn't evident in his tone or face, but was easy to see in his stride for those that knew him.
"We don't know," The man replied. "All the cameras are either broken or had their data scrambled by mist flames. Most of the surviving subordinates' minds were tampered too."

"Are you telling me that not a single one of them remembers the enemies' face?" The boy looked back at the man, surprised.

"Not all of them. Even the best will occasionally make a mistake. These are sketches from the two eyewitnesses - Bochi's girl and her butler." The man sighed and continued, "Sadly, she only talks about the cross-dresser. Something about stealing her love with his wicked whiles. He looked a lot like your late sister, apparently. The butler was a little more informative on the others, but he only saw them for a short amount of time. He couldn't tell us much."

The boy looked at one of the sketches, then smiled strangely. "Tell me, did she call him Harry?"

"How did you know she said the man called himself Harry?" the man looked at the boy with surprise.

"Just a hunch." The boy walked back to his armchair and picked his book up again. "Just a hunch."
Chapter 18-I won't be in Mafia

Beta'd by Ie-maru. Thank you for always helping me.

As always thank you for support you guys. Those reviews really made my day :)

Chapter 18

"Open the door! Breakfast is ready!" Sinagra – no, Ren, he'd said to call him Ren – knocked on the door of the bedroom Harry had barricaded himself in out of shame.

Harry was not someone who usually shied away from trying new disguises; he had been an auror before, so he occasionally wore dresses and acted like a woman for undercover work. But that was different! In those cases, it was his choice to do so, he would take polyjuice potion to do it, and he was in the mindset of his predetermined "character". Bystanders also didn't tend to think he had a harem!

Harry buried his face in his hands and blushed in mortification as he remembered what happened earlier.

Flashback

After a few hours' worth of driving, they finally decided they were far enough away to be safe for the night. Sinagra, of course, insisted they rent a room in the most expensive looking hotel in town. Harry had tried to protest; he didn't think it was necessary to stay in an expensive hotel when there were definitely fine looking hotels at a more reasonable price.

Then Sinagra said "only the best for our sky", which got Colonello fired up and Fon nodding along. Verde had protested about the hotel's quality, that it was 'overdone', but seemed willing enough to go forward with it. Surprisingly, Lal didn't say anything against it either. His only ally against the hotel was Viper, but the others didn't listen to Viper anyway.

Harry was still sore about Viper's supposed betrayal. He only called it supposed because neither Harry nor Viper had asked for the bond they were tied together by. Viper was a stranger who didn't owe Harry anything. Harry didn't feel anything for Viper in particular aside from some anger for selling him, but that was somewhat muted considering he had already known something was off, but followed Viper anyway. Orange had been far more affected by the illusionist's actions than Harry had.

Thinking about Orange reminded him of how silent and far-away his sky flames felt. He would have to check on Orange the first chance he got. The absence was very worrying.

When the car stopped outside the hotel, Harry was quick to get out. He had no intentions of sitting on Sinagra's lap any longer than he absolutely had to. He stretched his tired muscles and briefly thought about running for it, but he knew the others would catch him in the blink of eye, so Harry decided to just rest for now. Trying to escape them on foot was not only hopeless, but would put them on guard from any other attempts he could make later.

Once everyone was out, Sinagra entered the hotel like he owned the place. Harry and the others followed close behind him and went to join him at the receptionist's desk. As they reached the front desk, Harry suddenly remembered what he was wearing. Harry blushed as he thought about people's reaction and looked down to avoid the amused gaze of the hostess. As he looked down and
balled his hands in the skirts of the dress, he felt a familiar weight settle on his head. Verde had put that blasted wig on him again! Or was it Fon? He glared at Fon and Verde and both looked away from him with small smirks curving their lips.

"A luxury suite, please," Sinagra said as he flashed a charming smile at the woman behind the desk. The woman was momentarily stunned, but quickly took on a more professional air and politely smiled back.

"Welcome to the Empire Hotel. How many luxury rooms will you be reserving?" The woman asked as she subconsciously put her hair behind her ear. A light blush showed that she wasn't nearly as unaffected as she was trying to project.

"One for the lady and I," Sinagra purred as he grabbed Harry and hugged him like lover would. He paused and looked at the others. "For them? I don't care," he said flatly.

"What," Harry hissed quietly, "do you think you're doing?"

Sinagra leaned closer and murmured in his ear, "Trust me. We need to hide. Play along."

"Oh," the woman said and tried to hide her disappointment. "Then what shall I put the rest of you down for?" She continued. She faltered slightly as she noticed how heatedly the others were glaring at the couple.

"What are you saying, bastard? Of course, I'm with her, Kora!" Colonello snatched Harry from Sinagra with a scowl.

"Naturally, I will be the one who stays with her." Verde tugged Harry away from Colonello and smiled. "For scientific purposes, of course."

"I want to stay with her as well." Fon smiled at Harry as he snatched him so fast that Harry's head spun. "And I don't think any of you can be truly trusted with Harry's safety...or virtue."

"Hmm, Harry and I have unfinished business," Viper muttered. He walked over to Harry and looked at him, but wisely made no move to grab him. Fon glared at Viper, assuring the man exactly what would happen if he changed his mind and tried anyway.

"Oy, oy, oy. What are you guys talking about? Naturally she would be with her lover," Sinagra said as he grabbed Harry and hugged him close again.

"No! Kora"

"Never. And when did you become her lover?"

"I don't think you suitable for her."

"I still have unfinished business with her."

They then began to argue with each other for who would be his best lover. A small crowd started to gather around them, far too curious and entertained for Harry's peace of mind. Harry's face became scarlet as the others continued to argue despite the onlookers. Some women looked at him with envy as the argument began to get a little heated. Harry wanted to die right there. He'd never felt this embarrassed in his life!

"Look at her! All of those men just for her," a woman whispered to another.
"Yeah, I want to be like her," another woman sighed. "Even that other woman wants her!"

"Do you think she's with all of them?"

"No way! I think they're all chasing after her."

"Yeah, there's no way she's with all of them. They wouldn't be fighting over who rooms with her if they were."

Harry wished a hole would open up and swallow him. Didn't the others hear the crowd? Harry was just opening his mouth to stop them when Lal slapped the reception desk loudly, causing everyone to quiet down and pay attention.

"Stop it!" Lal demanded shortly. Then she turned toward the receptionist and continued, "We'll all be in one room, since we all bonded with her."

"Eh!?" the shocked crowd and reception's voice filled the hotel hall.

'No! Lal, now everyone will think I'm in relationship with all of you!' Harry wailed internally as the shocked receptionist looked at him.

Flashback ended

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"Is he still not coming out?" Fon asked as he threw a worried look down the hallway. They were all sitting at the suite's dinner table, waiting for Harry to come out. A few knocks sounded in the hallway as Reborn repeated himself. That was all the answer they needed.

"It's all your fault, kora!" Colonello told Lal.

"How would I know people would think that!" Lal snapped irritably.

"You have to remember that this is the civilian world, not mafia land. Of course, civilians wouldn't understand what we mean by flame bonds," Verde said as he read the newspaper.

Viper was quietly sitting at the corner of the table and keeping to himself. Fon still didn't understand why Sinagra wanted the mist to stay with them last night. He was so sure that Viper would be put up in another suite, at the very least, but Sinagra had argued for him to stay with the group instead. Fon wasn't sure how Sinagra had won that argument, but the hitman had gotten his way in the end.

"And why is Harry shutting himself in his room? People thought he was a loose woman, so what! It's not like they know it's actually him. We kept him in the dress so we can hide his identity better. It's for his safety!" Lal huffed and ran her fingers through her hair as she continued to mutter her frustrations under her breath.

"Maybe I should check and see how things are going." Just as Fon started to get up, a resounding crash of a broken door echoed down the hall.

Following the crash was Harry's indignant shouting coupled with Sinagra's cursing in Italian. Sinagra eventually come out from the hallway with a furious Harry in his arms. Sinagra deposited Harry on their sky's reserved chair and sat in his own with a sigh and easy roll of his shoulders.

"Never do that again!" Harry hissed at Sinagra, who simply smirked in response. Harry looked like he was on the verge of attacking the hitman, but eventually settled down in favor of simply glaring.
Fon noticed that Harry was wearing the jeans and shirt he'd grabbed for his sky last night. While the dress would be used as a disguise in public, that didn't mean Harry had to wear it in the privacy of their rooms as well. That Harry was wearing his gift made the storm happy, but he also realized that things would go downhill when trying to get him in the dress again. He didn't like the thought of their sky being so unhappy with them, but they needed him in that dress to disguise him. It was all to keep him safe.

"I hope you slept well," Fon said to interrupt their staring contest. He wanted Harry to pay attention to him. Fon didn't like Sinagra catching all of his sky's attention. He was one of Harry's guardians, too! Even though his family labeled Fon as a disappointment, he wanted to prove himself to his sky.

"Ah, yes, thank you." Harry smiled at him shyly before he started to look at the obviously foreign breakfast with curiosity.

"Here, have some breakfast. I ordered bāozi. It's one of the traditional breakfast meals from my home country. Even though we are in Italy, I wanted to show you my home country's taste." Fon smiled as he put the offered plate in front of Harry.

He knew it was not traditional bāozi with the special stuffing, but he couldn't just let the chance fly by after he saw the restaurant. Even though they had already bonded, Fon wanted to court Harry in the proper, traditional way – Harry deserved it and it would likely help their sky accept the bonds between them. He would have to order the special stuffing from china later, but this was a good place to start.

"Thank you," Harry said. He picked up the offered silverware and tentatively took a bite.

"If you like it, I'll cook the traditional recipe myself," Fon offered happily.

"It's good, but you don't need to—" Harry started to say before Colonello interrupted.

"Hey, we need to choose a home base ASAP, kora!" Colonello shouted. "We can't live in hotels forever."

"Oh, so you do have a brain inside your head," Verde said blandly as he glanced away from the paper.

"Don't worry, I chose the perfect spot for us. It's one of my hideouts and it'll be perfect for our famiglia," Sinagra replied with a large grin.

"No, no, I think my laboratory would be better," Verde said as his glasses flashed in the light. "My security far exceeds the options currently on the market."

"What? No! It should be in my place, kora!" Lal refuted and slapped the back of Colonello's head.

"Stupid pupil, your apartment is only one room!" Lal refuted and slapped the back of Colonello's head.

"Then how about China? I think it would be ideal," Fon said calmly. "No one would expect us to go there and China is a very large country." The person who's chosen base becomes headquarters will have the most influence. I refuse to lose to you, Sinagra," Fon thought.

"You're joking, right? Italy would be better for our new mafia famiglia," Sinagra said. "The majority of us have more contacts in Italy than we do in Asia."

"A new mafia famiglia?" Harry asked, dread pooling in his gut.
They all looked at Harry, who had been quietly eating. Fon had almost forgotten that Harry was civilian. They had gotten ahead of themselves again, hadn't they?

"Since you are our sky, but don't currently belong to an already established famiglia, it's either we form a famiglia or we join one," Sinagra explained. "It would be ideal for all of us if we simply formed one for ourselves. That way, we would have a say in how things are run."

"Does a sky have to be in the mafia? I don't think I can be a part of it," Harry said with determination.

"A sky not in the mafia? Impossible," Sinagra said flatly. "Someone would drag you into it the moment you were found out. It's better to enter on your own terms."

Fon looked at their determined sky and sighed quietly. He knew why Sinagra wanted them to create a famiglia of their own. It would give them more freedom to be allied to Vongola than they would if they were absorbed into their fold. It would also give more protection to Harry as he wouldn't be forced to do fieldwork or essentially be a hostage so Fon and the others would do it instead.

Avoiding it wholesale was impossible. Skies couldn't stay out of the mafia, like Sinagra said. Other famiglie wouldn't leave Harry alone since he was a sky with five powerful elements. Harry was way too tempting a target. All his prospective abductors had to do to keep Harry was find a cloud that could bond with him. Then Harry would have to stay with their famiglia, as clouds didn't like leaving their territory.

"I won't start a mafia famiglia," Harry said through clenched teeth.

"But having a famiglia is great," Sinagra said with an easy smile. Harry shook his head sharply and frowned.

"So, you don't count us as your family? I thought that you thought of us as your friends at the very least. I thought we were family after all we've been through!" Sinagra looked away and dabbed fake tears.

"I…I think of us as friends," Harry muttered reluctantly as he looked at his empty plate. "Maybe."

"Great! Then we are starting a new famiglia," Sinagra said and nodded his head in agreement, no trace of tears to be found. "We just need a name, now."

"Hah!?” Harry looked at him with a shocked expression on his face.

'And where did you get that logic?’ Fon wondered. Then he looked at Harry, who was trying to protest again. ‘...perhaps your brand of reasoning is indeed needed for this.’

"How does maybe being friends make us family?" Harry asked incredulously. He thought of his old friends as family, but this was too much. It was true that they have been through a great ordeal, but they had just met a few days ago! In fact, that bore repeating. "We just met a few days ago!"

"Granny always said that good friends make for good famiglia," Sinagra said with a straight face.

"What granny says that? We can be friends, but we won't start your famiglia stuff," Harry protested.

"My granny! Famiglia stuff aside, I think of us already as one big family!" Sinagra smiled smugly.

"Look, Sinagra, I know...” Harry started to explain his reasons, again. He had to make them understand.
"Ren, remember? Call me Ren," Sinagra, no, Ren looked at the others and said, "You guys too. Since we're all one big family."

"Fine, Ren! I know it's important that I'm sky or whatever, but I don't know anything about your world. I'm just Harry. I don't think I'm your ideal sky," Harry said bluntly. He was not their choice. It was accident. Besides he hated even the idea of soul bonds. They reminded him too much of the horcrux that had been attached to his scar.

"Then I'm going to tell you one more time." Ren walked over to him and kneeled before Harry. He looked up at him seriously and said, "You are my sky. I will always choose you if given the chance. I'm glad that we bonded, even though it was on accident, as I probably would've been stubborn about it. For a sky, elements are their family. For the elements, the sky is their family and their home. I'm an orphan and I've been searching for family for a long time, so please be my family now."

Harry looked at the proud man kneeling before him and swallowed. He looked away from the gentle look in Ren's black eyes. Turning meant seeing the others and Harry saw that all of them were looked at him the same way. The only exception was Viper, who was looking at the wall.

"Me too. I want to be your family," Fon said, a smile curving his lips.

"I guess…for science, having a family won't be bad," Verde muttered.

"Hey! Don't you leave me alone, kora," Colonello smiled and waved his finger at him. "I want in, too!"

"If I don't look after you, brat, I won't be able to sleep," Lal confessed.

"We have unfinished business," Viper said evenly.

"See, we all want you as our sky, our family. Won't you be ours?" Ren smiled as he touched Harry's hand.

"I guess," Harry looked up at the ceiling, his face flushed.

"Great! Now, let's decide on our famiglia's home base." Ren suddenly stood up so fast that Harry was shocked by change. Ren's earlier, soft pleading look was gone, leaving only smugness on his face. "Oh, and a name too. Can't forget that!"

Harry buried his face in his hands and groaned.

"Sir, we found them. They are in the Empire Hotel," the man reported.

"Great." The young master Dominico laughed as he twirled on his chair.

"Your order?"

"Have our men surround the hotel and hold position. We're going to join them." Dominico stood up and walked out of his office.

"Wait for me Harry," Dominico muttered. His crimson eyes flashed with a strange glint.
"No," Harry refused for what seemed like the twentieth time. He was not some teenager who rolled over for everyone…even though he does look like a teenager. Besides, even in his teenage years, Harry was never a pushover.

"Why? We would make a good famiglia!" Ren smiled as he took a bite from his breakfast. The others ate and quietly observed Harry's refusal and Ren's arguments like they were testing the waters. Harry was glad that they weren't also jumping on board Ren's crazy idea. At least it was only Ren who was pushing this on him.

"No, you said family! I think this famiglia business has a whole different meaning than that!" Harry glared at Ren, who smiled in response. Harry crossed his arms and looked away first. He didn't want to start another pointless staring contest.

"Famiglia is family. We did agree on that." Ren sipped his espresso with an almost innocent expression.

"You are—" Harry started to call Ren on his fakeness, but Verde interrupted them.

"While it's entertaining to watch you two run in circles," Verde said sarcastically as he put his newspaper down, "We really do need to decide on where to live. I still think my lab is the better choice. It's remote, well stocked, and has excellent security systems."

It seemed Verde's interruption roused the others from their breakfast. Like a domino effect, they started to talk about their own home bases in an effort to impress Harry and get him to choose.

"Harry, let's go to China. China has amazing scenery," Fon said.

"No, to my place, kora!" Colonello insisted.

"Stupid! It's not secure. Inside a big metropolis, there are too many nooks that snipers can use," Lal growled.

Harry helplessly looked at them. 'Do they really think I can decide? If I decide, would they even listen?' Then he looked at Ren, who was sipping his black coffee silently. 'Would Ren even go along with it if it wasn't his choice?' Ren was a very strong and pushy fellow used to having his way and Harry was not stupid. He knew he was the weakest one here. He didn't have his former reputation, nor his money and prestige. Even worse, Harry looked like a teenager! He didn't think these grown men and woman would silently follow his commands like his past aurors would.

"Lal is right. Our base shouldn't be in the city. We need something like a manor with a plot of land. It should be easily securable, have plenty of rooms, and we can't forget about image…” Ren trailed.

The others all exchanged looks before saying, "Bochi's manor!"

"Of course, we almost finished their men. It'll be a piece of cake, kora!" Colonello nodded.
Harry's shoulders bunched up and sweat gathered at his temples. "Didn't we just come from there? I don't want to go back!"

Fon put a calming hand on Harry's arm and said, "That wasn't the Bochi famiglia's manor. The majority of the Bochi were stationed where you were, but the property belonged to Vasaio. The Bochi manor was visited earlier by the others and myself and we cleared it of enemies."

"A quick run through to double check and we can forge the paperwork to make it ours," Ren said with a nonchalant wave. "The Bochi are relatively new, so it won't be too hard to get it done."

"We just need to finish their boss," Verde said blandly. "I left him behind at the Vasaio manor and he's probably run back home, thinking we wouldn't backtrack." A small, evil grin grew. "We could catch him off guard if we work quickly enough."

"It would save money," Viper muttered. "Buying a full estate with or without furnishings would be far more expensive than forging the necessary documents."

"Then let's go!" Lal stood up from her seat and brought her gun out at the ready. "We've got some work to do!"

"We need to do some spring cleaning before moving in," Ren agreed and armed himself. "Lal and I can handle it. The rest of you can play guard detail in the tank in case anybody tried to make trouble."

Harry was stumped. 'Are they talking about stealing someone's house!? They said they took out the guys...they killed them! And they plan to kill more of them! Bochi was right to be mad at me for stealing his wallet and he obviously didn't have control over Ampelo; he doesn't deserve to be killed so we can just take his house! Especially when they seem to have houses already!'

"No, nobody is moving an inch from this table," Harry said firmly as he stood up.

They all looked at Harry like he suddenly grew two heads. 'That's it. No more Mr. Nice Guy!'

"All of you, sit down right now! Verde, no more talk about killing the Bochi's boss! And Lal, Ren, put those guns away and stand down!" Harry shouted, channeling his time as General Potter.

They quickly sat back down. Lal grumbled, but she put her gun back as well. Ren smiled, strangely and quite visibly pleased, and also tucked his gun away.

'Thank Merlin! I thought Ren would refuse for a minute, but...he seems willing to play along.' Harry frowned and shook his head. He really didn't want to think about Ren's reasoning.

Colonello opened his mouth to say something, but Harry held his hand up and glared at him.

"No Colonello, we won't storm another mansion," Harry said tersely. He massaged his head and tried to ignore his growing headache. 'Really, did I anger some god in a past life? Why do I have to be bonded with this bloodthirsty bunch!'

"Then where will we live, Boss?" Ren smiled like the cat that caught the canary.

"B-boss! Oh, no you don't. I won't be in the mafia!" Harry glared at Ren. He wasn't going to step on that landmine. Thank you very much!

Ren chuckled lightly in response.
"Harry, we really need to secure a place for our famig…family!" Fon hastily changed his word as Harry's glare went his way. He forgot that Harry was a civilian. Of course, the mafia would scare Harry. But, Fon knew Harry wouldn't get a choice when the time came and his name known. Skies were always dragged into the mafia. They were so very coveted.

Harry sighed and said, "Why can't we just rent an apartment some place you can all agree on?"

"Apartment? Don't joke about that. We'd be the laughing stock of the mafia world if it ever got out. Also, think about the other civilians you'd live near. Your new apartment neighbors would either be dragged into our world or be caught in the crossfire," Ren pointed out.

Fon really wished that Ren would stop being so blunt and forward. He didn't want the hitman to scare their sky away. A heartbeat after Ren's proclamation, Harry's expression shifted from indignant to worry for others. Fon smiled and thought, 'Our sky is truly softhearted.'

"Is there really not another way? Why can't you guys just tell the other famiglie that you didn't find me?" Harry asked. "Or that I died? Or something!"

"Even if they believed us, you can't hide your flames. Sooner or later, someone will sense them and you and your unsuspecting passerby will be dragged into the mafia world," Ren said evenly. "At least you would be safe and well cared for with us. We will respect your moral boundaries and won't force you to fight or deal in dirty work, but others would just keep pushing until you break. Please, just work with us here. We want the best for you. We want you to be safe and happy."

Harry looked helplessly at Fon. Fon could only nod his head, trying to convince Harry without words that everything Ren had said was true. Harry slumped back into his seat, his earlier presence gone. Fon could only see a scared teenager who was clinging to his sanity by sheer stubbornness. Fon's heart clenched at the sight.

"Ok, but…I don't want to steal someone's home. Then again, I don't have money…" Harry sighed and blushed due to his own admission. He didn't like being unable to provide for himself.

"Perhaps it would be better to build one to our own specifications," Verde mused aloud. "I could make traps and security systems no one would be able to suspect. We could get off the grid and be harder to track."

"Yes, we can plan everything ourselves," Lal agreed as she warmed up to the idea.

"Oh, I want a training field," Colonello said as he waved his hands enthusiastically.

"All that money…lost!" Viper mourned.

"Decided. But where should we build it?" Ren wondered.

"Oh, right. Finding a good plot of land in Italy would be impossible! All the major famiglie own the best spots," Colonello groaned.

"Then we'd really need to seize land by force to stay here," Lal murmured. "Going further afield from our contacts would put us at a disadvantage."

"Or you could build on a small island," a young boy's voice suddenly chirped.

Fon jumped and immediately took guard between Harry and the intruder. Ren was already there, gun out and pointed between the eyes of the young boy who was standing in doorway with a wide smirk painted across his face. The others were quick to follow their example.
The young boy looked around the age of 10, but his crimson eyes held a glint that shouldn't be found in a child's eyes. Behind the boy were men dressed in black with their own guns defensively brought up.

"How?" Ren demanded, his expression cold.

"How? Ah, how can I be here when you ordered the staff not to let anyone enter?" The boy's smirk grew. "Using the staff as your guards and informants was clever, but unfortunately for you, they obeyed a higher power when pressed."

"Higher power?" Colonello said sharply, eyes narrowed and trigger finger itching to fire.

"Yes, higher." The boy imperiously held out his hand and one of the men opened a suitcase and handed over a packed of clipped papers. The boy tossed the packet over to them. "The Empire hotel was bought by me earlier today, so I'm their new boss. You, on the other hand, are merely customers."

"Ah, then I have to report a complaint. The Empire hotel really treat their customers' privacy badly," Ren said with a strained smile.

"Complaint received. Thank you for your time. We will shortly contact you with a refund," the boy said sarcastically.

"You haven't changed. As wordy as ever, Dominico Vasaio," Viper muttered.

"And you as well, Viper. Hiding in the shadows, as usual," Dominico replied.

"What are you doing here? Business?" Ren said seriously. "Revenge?"

"I'm not here for your services. Actually, I'm here for Harry." Dominico looked at Harry, who was hidden behind Fon.

"Me?" Harry popped his head out from the storm's protection curiously. He may not have had a chance to see their guest, but he recognized the last name. This Dominico didn't sound nearly as angry as he would have expected. Harry squeezed through Fon and Ren to get a better look. He could practically hear Fon's nervous shifting and thought he could feel Ren's heated glare.

"Why?" Harry wondered.

"Oh, I'm hurt. You don't remember me!" Dominico dramatically put his hand over his heart and swooned. His crimson eyes shone brightly with mischief as he looked at Harry.

Harry thoughtfully stared at Dominico, suspicions rising in his mind as tried to remember anyone who looked like the young boy before him...his eyes suddenly widened and Harry sputtered, "Voldemort!?"

"Bingo," Dominico said cheerily.

'Voldemort? Why is he here?' Harry thought in alarm. He subconsciously took a fighting stance and tried to draw his wand instinctively, but his hand met with the empty space his wand once took. Harry took a step back as fear rang at the back of his head and he was both grateful and worried as Ren pulled him back to take cover behind him.
"Why are you here!?” Harry's demanded as his heart beat painfully against his ribs. He found himself bunching his hand up in the back of Ren's suit as he waited. He wasn't completely sure if it was for his own comfort or if it was so he could switch places with the sun guardian to protect him should Voldemort attack. Maybe it was both.

'Just great! Out of all people who could have crossed over, it's him!'

"I'm hurt, Harry. I come over to talk to my old friend and this is the greeting I get?” mini-Voldemort mocked as he flashed an innocent look his way.

Harry's brain short circuited. 'I give up. All of this is a horrible nightmare. Wake up Harry! Wake up in your comfortable bed!'

"We were never friends!” Harry spat.

"But we had such history!” Voldemort faked a blush and even shed a tear. "Such intimacy we had. You could say that our very souls were bound together! How could you forget?"

"What?” Harry choked. He looked around to the others in renewed panic, unable to find the words to explain how very wrong this was. Ren and others looked surprised and disbelieving at the claims whereas the black suited men looked angry.

"Hey, you bastard! How dare you hurt our famiglia's heir," one of Voldemort's lackeys shouted.

"Our esteemed heir," another one said.

"I will cut your head off!" another claimed as he brought out his sword.

Voldemort raised his hand and all of his men halted immediately. He smiled at them and said, "None of that. Harry is my friend. You are not to hurt him, understand?"

The black suited men nodded hastily. Voldemort nodded in satisfaction before he happily skipped to Harry, much to Harry's horror. Harry stepped back quickly, but Voldemort somehow managed to twist between Ren and Fon's grasping hands to hold Harry close.

Using Harry as something of a shield against Harry's more trigger-happy guardians, Voldemort continued. "Nee, let's leave these block heads and talk privately. After all, we have so much to catch up on."

"What?! No way! You're the last person who I want to talk with!” Harry hissed.

"And here I thought you'd want to know about your fellow traveler." Voldemort sighed as if he was disappointed in Harry.

"I don't care! I don't want to associate with you. Leave!" Harry escaped from Voldemort's clutches and backed away from him.

"Yeah, as if we'd leave Harry alone with you, kora!” Colonello glared at Voldemort and the others nodded sharply in agreement.

"Ah, how annoying. Harry, you really do want to speak with me," Voldemort said.

"Why?” Harry growled. "Tell me one reason why I should hear you out."

"Oh, I just thought you'd want to hear about your favorite dog. That mangy, black dog you loved so much,” Voldemort trailed.
"No! He can't be," Harry dodged his guardian's and hurried back over to Voldemort. "Tell me!"

"Of course, but we need privacy for this sort of conversation." Voldemort pointedly looked at Ren and the others who were glaring hatefully at the Vasaio heir.

"Fine, let's go." Harry grabbed Voldemort's hand and started to leave, but a bullet shot out to hit the door-frame in warning. When Harry looked over his shoulder, he saw that it was Ren who was holding the gun their way while the others held off Voldemort's minions.

"Oy-oy-oy, I can't agree with you on that." Ren stalked over to them, gun pointed at the Vasaio heir with deadly precision. "Harry, get away from him."

"No!" Harry replied. "I have to hear what he has to say."

"Oh, you have guardians!" Voldemort gleefully looked them over, as if truly seeing them for the first time.

"Harry, I won't tell you again. Leave him," Ren growled. "He is not safe."

"No, I need to talk with him," Harry refused stubbornly. "That dog he mentioned, it's referring to my godfather. I thought he was dead... you understand, right? You're always going on about the importance of family. I need to know!"

"Ah, your sky has spoken. What will you do now?" Voldemort said mockingly. He laughed in the face of the deadly hitman pointing a gun at his face.

Ren nearly shot Dominico right there. He grit his teeth instead and glared.

**A/N: Thank you for support xD. Sorry if its short and rushed chapter but I was busy**
Chapter 20-Enemy or not

Chapter Summary

Beta'd by Ie-maru

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru.
Thank you for all support. I loved it:

Chapter 20

"Harry, I think it's better if you don't go with him, " Fon said as he looked at Harry worriedly. This was the Vasaio famiglia's heir. While Dominico was 10, he wasn't an innocent child. Dominico had a killer's eyes and every reason to be angry with them. It would be stupid to let the heir take their sky away and out of sight.

"Yeah, come here Harry." Colonello had his gun aimed straight at Dominico's head. Colonello recognized the killer in the boy as well and Fon could see that it was making him twitchy at how close Dominico was to their sky.

"He's dangerous," Lal continued, warily sizing up Dominico's guards.

"I'm not saying he isn't dangerous," Harry assured. "Of course, he's dangerous. I could never forget how dangerous he is." Harry sighed in resignation. "But I need to hear what he has to say. So, no matter what you guys say, my decision won't change."

"There are other ways to seek information on whoever you're interested in," Verde argued stiffly. Fon could tell Ren wanted to argue with Harry too, but they were all stopped short by Dominico's slow clapping.

"Oh, my. I have never seen such unruly elements! Your sky has made his decision, so why are you still arguing? Do you stand against your own sky?" Dominico looked confused, but then he made "aha" sound and continued. "Ah! I get it. Harry, skies are the bosses of the mafia for a reason. Tell them it's an order and they can't refuse. Be firm and reel them in with your flames! You're letting them walk all over you."

Fon looked at Harry with rising dread. It was true. If Harry ordered them with his dying will, they wouldn't be able to refuse him. But...there was one thing that gave Fon hope.

'The relationship between skies and elements depends on the sky, mostly. Not every sky orders their elements around,' he remembered. 'What kind of sky will you be Harry? Will you order us to stand aside? What happens if we fight it? Will we lose trust between us this quickly in our relationship? Things had started looking up...' He glanced over at the others, who also stood quietly. The tension was rising high.
"No, they are not my slaves! Each of them are their own person and I respect them for it." Harry's clear voice cut through the tension like a hot knife through butter. Harry smiled at them briefly before continuing. "Maybe we bonded accidentally, and sure, we don't know each other very well, but I do know one thing! Strange as it seems, I trust you guys. Yes, even you Viper. I trust that you guys will make your decisions with your best intentions in mind. I believe in you. Can you also believe in me?"

Warmth bloomed inside him at Harry's words. Fon swallowed with some difficulty as his emotions ran amok. When he took a moment to look, he saw that the others were also affected by Harry's words. Viper looked away, Colonello blushed, Verde coughed loudly, Lal tutted, and Ren smiled.

Harry looked over at Dominico, who was smirking in such a way that made Harry want to punch the not-child. Harry valiantly refrained from doing so and turned back to his guardians. "Maybe it's a mistake, but I need to meet with him, alone. Please respect that."

"What a troublesome sky you are," Ren sighed. He tilted his head and hummed before nodding. "I wish you'd stop acting so recklessly, but...if this meeting falls through, we'll save you again. After all, it's the guardians' duty to look after their sky." Ren stepped closer and patted Harry's head with gentle smile. That smile turned sharp as he glared down the Vasaio heir, silently warning the boy what would happen should the meeting "fall through".

Harry smiled at Ren brightly, thankful that the most willful of the bunch had agreed. Fon was instantly jealous that Ren could draw such a smile from Harry. He opened his mouth to say that he believed in Harry too, but was interrupted by Dominico's laugh.

"Foolish as ever, Harry! Well, if you won't bring them to heel, I'll just have to cover for you and deescalate this. I swear to use the Vasaio's special technique, the Campo Cielo," Dominico assured them.

"The Campo Cielo?" Harry wondered.

"As he said, it's the Vasaio famiglia's special move. They create a small energy field made of sky flames which only skies can enter. Those within can't hear or see anything from the outside and the people inside the field can't attack each other; because of its effects, the Vasaio are highly regarded as negotiators in the mafia. I've heard that being able to make one is a key requirement for the Vasaio famiglia heir to be decided," Ren lectured. Then he looked at Dominico and said, "We would appreciate it being used and will stand down so long as you both remain within it."

"Then let's go." Dominico grabbed Harry by the arm and started to tug him to the bedroom. Before they could enter, one of Dominico's men stepped in front of them. He looked different from the others with his slicked back, black hair and closed expression.

"Master, I advise against this," the man said as he adjusted his glasses.

"I know my limits." Dominico turned to Harry and gestured to the man. "Meet my mist guardian, Dante. Don't fret Dante, we need to be a good example for Harry's guardians."

The man stiffly bowed and stepped aside, allowing them to pass into the bedroom. A second later and everyone could feel an outpouring of sky flame as the bedroom's door was sealed with it.

Lal slapped the grumbling Colonello to quiet him as they waited. Verde brought out some mechanical instrument and started to work on it. Seeing as Verde had plugged in an earpiece, it was likely he was trying to listen in; judging by his frown, he was not successful. Viper left the room altogether, seeming to be unconcerned over the proceedings. As for Ren, he leaned against the wall
and stared at the bedroom door impatiently. Fon quietly joined him.

"Finished. Now we are alone and can speak privately." Voldemort immediately let go of Harry's arm and sat down. The man then gestured to the opposing chair, inviting Harry to join him.

Giving the other a suspicious glare, Harry followed Voldemort's prompting and sat across from him. "Let's get to the point. What do you know about Sirius?" Harry demanded.

"What, no 'how did you get here' or 'what happened to us?'" Voldemort arched a brow mockingly. "I'd rather not hear it from you. Just tell me what I want to know," Harry snapped. 'If only it wasn't Voldemort! I'd ask a million questions…'

"That's cold!" Voldemort pouted and his eyes teared. He looked like a small child, but Harry wasn't fooled.

"Stop that! It's way too creepy," Harry protested. "And we both I'm not falling for it."

"Of course, I expected as much from you." Voldemort's expression became neutral and Harry nearly sighed with relief. This was a Voldemort he could handle. This whole mockery so far had been making him sick.

"So, I take it that you're the Harry Potter from Magical Britain. The one who killed me at seventeen with a stunner." Voldemort leaned forward and inspected Harry like some kind of new specimen.

"Yes and no. It was the disarming spell," Harry gritted out. "Why?"

"So, your memory is intact…I was just checking if you really were the Harry Potter I know. Who knows if there are multiple versions of you floating around," Voldemort replied offhandedly. "I didn't think you would arrive as you did…I came this world 10 years ago. When did you?"

"Two years," he replied shortly. Harry then settled into his chair with an irritated sigh. This would take a while at this rate. He thought he'd get the information about Sirius and be done with it, but it seemed that Voldemort wouldn't let him ago that easily. 'He never did make it easy for me,' Harry groused.

"Only two? So, it's your own body then. You aren't a reincarnation like I am, nor have you possessed another. Your own damn body!" Voldemort laughed, his expression incredulous. "Oh Harry, you destroyed my theory!"

"What theory?" Harry asked, curious despite himself.

"That one's body couldn't handle inter-dimensional travel. That's why we get reborn in a new body. It was like that for me, and also for Black, if my resources are correct," Voldemort explained.

"So, Sirius really is here! Is he also child?" Harry asked, excited. He could finally meet his godfather!

"No, he came way earlier," Voldemort said as he brought out a picture from his breast pocket. Voldemort handed the picture over to him with a grave expression.

Harry took the picture wordlessly. It was an old picture, black and white. A family picture, from the look of it. The man and woman smiled at the camera. The woman was hugging an infant with
obvious love, but Harry didn't really pay much attention to her or the child. It was the man who grabbed his focus. The man looked familiar; it was in the shape of his face, the determination in his eyes, and the wave of his hair.

"Nadir Airaldi was born in a little fishing village out of southern Italy. He became a hitman during his teens and later married into the Vasaio famiglia. People called him Black. He was known as the Black Dog in the mafia," Voldemort said.

"That doesn't prove that he's my godfather," Harry said reluctantly. Just because this man had a similar name and appearance didn't mean that he was really Sirius Black. "What makes you think he is? You don't know him. And even he arrived earlier, it should only be by a few decades. Sirius would be old, but alive."

"I don't know. Perhaps time flows differently between our two dimensions…but we can only theorize that. I might not know him well personally, but I read a book he wrote about a fantastic castle where everybody learned magic. According to our family's records, he also named his son Harry," Voldemort said. "I don't believe that to be simply coincidence."

"That still doesn't mean—" Harry began.

Voldemort interrupted him by saying, "And on top of all of that, his close family's nickname for him was Padfoot. I believe Wormtail wasn't lying when he said that it was your godfather's codename."

It was then that Harry came to a horrifying realization. The way that Voldemort had phrased things, the look on his face as he handed the picture over to him…Harry stared at the picture, tears falling as he acknowledged that Sirius was probably dead, again. Perhaps a part of him had known that he was dead and that was why he had been so skeptical; but, Harry had really hoped that he could meet his godfather again. He had hoped they could at least talk one more time. Maybe he could've gotten some closure after having lost him so suddenly. The Potter luck was always screwed up. It would figure that he'd be brought to the world Sirius had been reborn in, only to miss him completely.

"Tell me about him. Was he happy?" Harry asked, voice hoarse as he tried to memorize the features of the man in the picture. His finger traced over his godfather's face as if it would help him commit it to memory.

"Going by his journal, he married for love, had two kids, and died in his sleep," Voldemort said. "Such a beautiful way to live," he sighed.

"Pardon?" Harry looked up at Voldemort in shock.

"What?" Voldemort arched his brow.

"Did you just say living like that was beautiful?" Harry asked incredulously. Voldemort, the dark lord that terrorized England, said that living domestically was beautiful.

"I did. It's a nice way to live. What, you don't think so?" Voldemort asked, confusion clear in his tone.

"B-but, you're Voldemort! You're happy when you torture and kill people. And it's even better if there's world domination involved!" He couldn't believe this.

"You have to understand that it was in the past. I'm a different person now. I have different motives and goals. You can say I changed," Voldemort opened his arms like he was welcoming that change and was inviting Harry to enjoy it too.
"That can't be true," Harry said bluntly. "I don't think you can change so much in just a few years."

"Harry, that's just stupid. Everyone can change." Voldemort looked away as if he had been hurt by Harry's words. Voldemort shook his head a moment later and turned back to Harry. What Harry saw there shook him to core. 'Anger, pain, loneliness, acceptance and love. How could he have changed so much?'

"Perhaps, for you, it was two decades since my death, but it was centuries for me. Time flows differently in that station, that place between life and death. I was there for nearly seven hundred years, Harry." Voldemort gulped and his hands shook as if he was remembering his time there.

"Seven hundred years?" Harry stared at Voldemort, bemused.

"Yes, a century for every time I split my soul. It was probably meant as punishment, although I didn't see anyone there who might have judged me." Voldemort muttered.

"But, you were reborn? Did your punishment end, then?" Harry asked, feeling strange. He didn't know what to feel for Voldemort. He was his enemy. But he couldn't imagine how he can stay in that place for seven hundred years, alone and literally at Death's door.

"You ended it." Voldemort stared at him with shining eyes, reminding him somewhat of his old fans in a very disturbing way.

"Me?" Harry pointed at himself.

"Yes, you. You saved me. Don't you remember?" Voldemort asked, excitement rising. "I cried and cried. I begged for help, but nobody came to me. Then, when I lost all hope, you were there. You opened your arms and hugged me, despite how filthy and ugly my form had become. And you said to me that I would heal and live. Then I was being reborn." Voldemort smiled wryly.

"I-I...wait, you were the last piece of hocrux. The one who stayed at the station. But how can you be whole now?" Harry wondered.

"You are the one who put me together," Voldemort said with a reminiscent smile. "Do you really not remember?"

"No, I don't remember. I was running away and then...I don't remember. Why can't I remember?" Hysteria bubbled inside him as his continued efforts were only met with a dark void, and intimidating expanse of nothing. His whole vision started to grow dark and his breath hitched.

"Harry, Harry!" Voldemort shook him. When it didn't work, he climbed into Harry's lap and hugged him. "Shush, it's okay. You don't need to remember. I know it was you, so you don't need to," Voldemort soothed. "Take deep breaths."

"...getting comfort from your archenemy. Who would have thought?" Harry chuckled weakly. It was sort of funny, in a surreal way.

"Ah, but I'm not your archenemy anymore, am I? I'm Dominico, now." Vol-Dominico reluctantly released the unsettled sky and returned to his own chair. "We don't have much time now–"

"You're leaving already?" Harry asked, somewhat irritated. Honestly, if the former dark-lord had a time limit, the least he could have done was get to the damn point sooner.

"It's not that. Oh, I'd love to talk with you more, but I can't keep this field up much longer. I'm young still, so I don't have enough flames." V-Dominico chuckled lightly. "You, or this world's version of
you, could keep it up much longer. By the way, you are one troublesome person, you know that? I thought I'd keep watch over the you in this world, but then you died on me. And now, the original you is here in her place.” Dominico shook his head sadly before continuing. "But, I'm truly glad that I got to meet you again. Yet...can I ask one more thing from you? Could you close your eyes for a moment?"

"Oh, um, okay?” Harry dubiously closed his eyes, keeping a careful ear listening to be sure the protective field wasn't being taken down. While Harry wasn't quite sure what to think of Dominico, he wasn't about to forget about Voldemort, the one who killed countless people with a smile. 'But he was punished for it all, and for seven centuries. And now...'

"Thank you, sister," Dominico murmured, sounding his physical age for the first time. There was the sound of shifting cloth, as if Dominico was wiping his face on one of his sleeves. "You can open your eyes now," the reborn man said hoarsely.

"I, um." Harry glanced away, feeling awkward in the face of the man-child's obvious mourning. That the person being mourned was a female version of himself only unsettled him all the more.

"What did you want me to come here for?" Harry asked, trying to dispel the awkward atmosphere.

"Yes, that." Dominico cleared his throat. "Would you come with me to the Vasaio famiglia's new manor? I can teach you flame techniques, and things about this world you have likely missed so far."

"I-I don't think I can do that," Harry admitted.

"Of course, you don't trust me." Dominico sighed, then stood up. He gave Harry a piece of paper before stepping toward the door. "Think about it, alright? I just want to help. Don't hesitate to call me if you need help, even if it's not for tutoring."

As the orange layer over the door and walls began to dissipate, Harry suddenly remembered the journal. "Wait! I have something I think you should take." Harry went to the bedside table, picked up the journal he'd stolen from the Vasaio manor, and handed it to the family's heir. "Here, I think she'd want you to have it."

"Thank you, Harry." Dominico took it gently with a sad smile.

Before Dominico could open the door himself, the door swung out from the other side. Colonello, Fon and Verde pushed their way inside and placed themselves between the two skies.

"Did the bastard hurt you?" Colonello demanded as he started to inspect Harry. "If he did, I'll make him sorry, kora!"

"I'm glad that you seem well," Fon said, his tense shoulders loosening at the sight of his healthy, if rather bewildered, sky.

"Don't be such a mother hen. It was the Campo Cielo," Verde grumbled. "The only thing that could be hurt were his feelings."

"You worried too, kora!" Colonello snapped at Verde.

"Don't be stupid. I wasn't." Verde denied stubbornly with a narrow glare.

Harry stared at the strange, arguing duo with a growing smile. He looked at Fon, who was watching with more exasperation than anything else. This atmosphere was nice. It was lacking something, though.
'Where are Lal, Ren, and Viper?' he wondered.

"Let's go," Dominico said to his men. Dante checked him distinctly for any injuries, causing him to roll his eyes. 'Worrywart,' Dominico thought fondly.

When they neared the lift, Viper stepped out from the shadows and intercepted them. The cloak hid Viper's eyes as is usually did, but the shadows it cast seemed somehow darker than usual. Their was a heavy feel to the air, setting both Dante and he on edge.

"Why, hello Viper! It was a pleasure to meet you again, but I have to go. Later," Dominico waved sharply and tried to enter the lift, but was stopped when the mist's flames erased the lift's door.

"Viper, what do you want with my master?" Dante said evenly, glasses glinting as he shifted them.

Dominico looked over at his other lackeys when he didn't hear anything from them as well. Their expressions were blank, as if they were under an illusion. Dominico sighed. 'I need to remind Juin to train the men better. Viper is strong, but they should have put up a better fight than this.'

"I have a proposal," Viper began.

"Oh? Do tell," Dominico replied dryly.

"Leave Harry alone and I won't tell certain people that you bought poisons from me. Poisons that you used on the Vasaio elders to assassinate them," Viper stated.

"I see. You never release your client's identity; but, for him, you'd sacrifice your own principles." Voldemort trailed. He never thought he'd see the day when Viper would break his own rules; however, harmonization always changed things. That was something he had personal experience with, so he could be forgiving just this once.

"Don't worry, I won't hurt Harry. As for the information, I don't really care. All dissenting factions in my famiglia have long been dealt with," Dominico laughed, genuinely amused now.

Viper stared at him for a few seconds as if weighing his words, then disappeared from his sight. The illusion over the door broke, allowing them to leave.

"Boss, what should we do if he turns against us?" Dante asked. Dominico saw Dante's indifferent face crumble for the first time. He looked pitiful.

"No worries, Dante! Viper is not our enemy right now," Dominico assured as he proceeded to enter the lift.

They left the Empire hotel in several cars. Dominico looked out through the shaded window, pondering the meeting. It was certainly an enlightening experience. Who could have guessed that Harry would forget, weaken, and become so naive after they parted ways? Harry had been so much more in that station between life and death.

Time passed quickly as he was enveloped in his memories and they arrived at their destination shortly. Dominico got out and was immediately assaulted by a black-haired beauty.

"Nee, Dominico, how could you leave me?! Did you suddenly forget your own lighting guardian?" Chesie pouted as she hugged him. Her black eyes shone with pleasure when Dominico didn't immediately push her away.
Instead, he stared at his lighting guardian and inwardly lamented. 'Why must such a beautiful woman be so stupid?'

"Put Dominico down, Chesie. He is not a toy," Lucio said slowly.

Dominico looked at his sun guardian over Chesie's shoulder. Lucio's long, blond hair fluttered in the wind and his blue eyes shone with innocence. Lucio looked like an angel to anyone who met him for the first time, but the image would be broken five minutes after the introductions.

"Look at what Black gave Lucio. Lucio will treasure it!" Lucio titled his head and smugly showed off a red earring.

"How nice, I didn't think Black would give you anything." Dominico snorted.

"I didn't give him anything. Lucio stole it!" Black shouted as he came running.

"Eh, Lucio wouldn't do that because Lucio loves Black!" Lucio smiled, lost in his own little world. Dominico thought he could almost see stars in his eyes.

"Whatever," Black shook his head in disgust and inwardly debated if he even wanted the earring back after Lucio did merlin only knows what to it. Then, his grey eyes narrowed on Dominico.

"Where were you, Voldy?"

Dominico just smirked at him. He ignored the suspicious looks from Black and thought, 'Juin Vasaio, son of Nadir Vasaio, and the reincarnation of Sirius Black.' He laughed silently.

"Black, how could you call your master so improperly?" Dante admonished, "You are our sky's storm guardian. Act like it!"

"What I call Voldy is my business. And if I'd known he was Voldy back then, I wouldn't have bonded with him," Black snapped. "Where were you!"

"I was just sightseeing. I thought your nanny days were over." Dominico smirked as Black angrily stomped away. It was a sore spot for Black, that the man had been his caretaker. He didn't know Dominico was Voldemort at that point, so Black and he had bonded after many fond years together. Dominico didn't know why Black was angry when he found out. The past was the past. Was Dominico the only one who could put it aside?

"Ah, wait for Lucio!" Lucio called as he followed after Black.

"Chesie, go after them," Dominico ordered.

"What? Oh, fine," Chesie grumbled as she went after them. Dominico sighed.

"Master?" Dante asked.

"Hide that sky from Black. From now on, all information about Harry will be directly brought to me. No one else is to know of him."

"Understood. May I ask why you wish to hide this from Black?" Dante asked.

Dominico frowned slightly at him. Dante was asking too many questions today. Then again, Dominico didn't chase after other people every day – much less other skies – so he suppose Dante's curiosity could be forgiven.

"Tell me, if you were alone in an unknown place, would you stick to someone you knew or
someone you didn't?" Dominico asked.

"Of course, I would stick to the familiar one." Dante snorted as if it was a stupid question.

"Exactly. I want Harry to rely only on me. That won't happen if he attaches himself to Black, so they are to remain separated until Harry's sufficiently attached to me." Dominico smirked as he walked towards the nearby café.

"Why would master be interested in such a weak sky?" Dante asked, confused.

"If you had known Harry as he was before, you wouldn't say that," Dominico chuckled.

An image of Harry, that one from before, rose in his mind. It was true that Harry was weak here, but Dominico vividly remembered that god-like being that had saved him from his maddening purgatory. That Harry with those glowing eyes and suffocating magic aura, who then picked him up with gentle hands to be cradled in welcoming arms. Dominico treasured that image.

'What happened to you, Harry? Ah, it might just be for the best though. Acquiring you would be so much harder if you hadn't fallen as far as you have.' Dominico thought with a slight smile.
Chapter 21-Cloud flame

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Iema-ru. Thank you for wonderful job as always.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 21

"Damn, that's the fifth one," Colonello grumbled as he sniped another cloud user who was trying to scale the building. For the supposedly second rarest flame, the cloud users just kept coming and coming. "Hey, tell that prick boss to leave Harry alone. Kora!" Colonello shouted at the fallen, miraculously alive cloud.

"Colonello, don't provoke them." Fon sighed as he watched the injured cloud glare up at them with glowing purple eyes. The cloud got up and started toward their direction with determination. Fon groaned, "There! Now he will never go away until he gets his revenge. Really, Colonello, stop it. I'm tired of fighting with them."

"Hey, it's not my fault the cloudy bastards are here! Kora! You're a storm, so do your duty and blow them away!" Colonello snapped at Fon.

"Well, Mr. Rain, maybe you should shower some tranquility instead of making things worse!" Fon growled, his usual even temper already frayed from the constant fights and arguments.

"Hey, we are not fighting with each other again," Lal commanded from the couch.

"Mou, this group is already breaking apart," Viper muttered as he continued to float. While he was maintaining the illusion on their floor - the reason the clouds couldn't find their room by normal means – it didn't take up so much concentration that he had to give up the comfort that came with floating instead of sitting.

"I don't want to hear that from the traitor!" Fon and Colonello shouted simultaneously at him, turning their frustration toward their mutual enemy.

"Morning." Verde came through the door with a yawn. He grabbed coffee from the table and sat on the nearest chair with a slight frown. He muttered something under his breath and started to write on paper which he produced from seemingly nowhere.

Fon was mildly interested in what Verde was writing, so he peeked over at the paper. He saw a series of questions and observations. After each question, Verde either placed a check next to it or underscored it with double lines.

-Harry producing flames (checked)

-Sky flames becoming weaker over time (checked)

-Can't feel flames anymore? (double lines)
There were twenty or so more questions on the paper and the scientist was just adding more as time went on. Fon didn't know what to make of most of them, but he hoped Verde could find what went wrong with Harry quickly. They were not going to last much longer at this rate.

"How is Harry?" Viper asked.

"He is fine," Verde stated with a small twitch.

"Then it's my turn." Viper started to make his way to Harry's room, only to pause at the doorway as the more annoying of the rains called him out.

"Hey! Why is it your turn, kora?" Colonello glared from the window, proverbial hackles raised.

"If someone didn't act so impulsively, perhaps you wouldn't be left waiting." Viper's lips twisted in remembrance.

Fon glared at Colonello as he was reminded. He saw Verde and Lal's glare too.

Colonello immediately flushed under all the accusing looks and said, "I didn't mean too, kora."

"Whether you meant it or not doesn't matter. If it weren't for you, we wouldn't have to take turns just to feel our sky's flames," Viper pointed out before leaving.

Fon sighed. 'Just two hours, then I can have my turn to be with Harry.'

Harry slowly opened his eyes as Viper entered and stood beside his room's window. He was very tempted to ignore the illusionist and return to his meditation. Harry had been having difficulty entering his mindscape again and it was only recently he had been making any headway. It was only two days ago that Harry had managed to even enter. The reasons why worried him to no end and he had been trying to find the cause ever since he discovered what lay within his barriers.

Flashback

Harry carefully walked through Hogwarts' halls inside his mind. He didn't see Orange, but he could see the remnants of a fight. The halls were messy and littered with scorch marks. The one thing that really stood out were the obvious signs that something had been dragged from the great hall's doors to the teachers' table. There was a long, black trail burned into the marble.

Worried for what it might mean, he immediately wished himself to his inner room. For some reason, he found himself in front of the door instead, with a magic lock barring entry. He saw orange and purple flames shine beneath door and it brought him from his stupor. He knocked on the door when trying to open it failed, hoping Orange could open it from the inside. Only, it seemed he was being ignored.

"Orange! Open the door," Harry said as sternly as he could. Considering the circumstances, Harry would be the laughing stock of Magical world if anyone knew of this. Locked outside of his own
inner room by a childish avatar of his own powers? Yeah, everybody would laugh.

All annoyance was forgotten as Orange screamed, pain evident in its strange voice.

"Orange!" Harry hurriedly tried to slam the door open, despite knowing its futility. He retried the variety of unlocking spells he'd learned over the years, but none of them worked.

Orange screamed one more time before Harry found himself outside with a worried Viper nearly hovering over him.

Flashback ended

Harry slumped into his seat at the memory, closed his eyes, and started to meditate again. Maybe this time would be different. Maybe it was something that only time and continuous effort could wear down.

Trying to meditate with the illusionist in the room was awkward. Harry could feel Viper's eyes staring at him, as he tended to do. Fortunately, it was only him in the room with him. If everyone were here, he wouldn't have a chance in hell to actually make any headway.

For some reason, Viper and the others were taking turns to be in his room. He wasn't sure why they were doing so, just like he didn't understand why they felt they couldn't leave him alone. It wasn't like Harry was doing anything dangerous or interesting. He was just sitting there with closed eyes. He tried to tell them they could leave him alone, but Fon and the others refused vehemently. Harry grudgingly allowed them, unwilling to continue a pointless argument when he already had other things to worry about.

They tried to be as quiet as possible, but between Verde's examinations and Colonello's clinging, he couldn't really meditate in peace. Harry kind of liked when it was Viper's turn, despite the awkwardness. Viper didn't try to cling to him like Colonello, and he never suffocated him with a concerned air, as Fon did with his not-so-covert glances.

Harry pushed those thoughts away and focused on his task. He got as far as he could and frowned as he encountered the invisible shield in his mind again. He couldn't even enter his mindscape now!

"Why are you meditating so much?" Viper suddenly asked. Harry opened his eyes in shock. It was first time Viper said something to him in three days.

"It seems you know reason why your flames are low," Viper continued, not waiting for his answer.

"My flames are low?" Harry asked, befuddled.

"You couldn't tell?" Viper wondered. Harry could feel an arched brow from him.

The following silence was interrupted by a loud crash from the living room. A muted scuffle sounded from behind the wooden door, likely due to another fight. Lal shouted, voice sharp with anger, and then it quieted down.

"It's your duty, you know," Viper said. "As the sky, you should be with them and make things go more smoothly."

"I can't stay in that room. They're acting strangely. You know what happened when I entered the living room last time," Harry replied, a grimace growing as the memory played in his head.

"Which is why we are taking turns. Seeing you getting licked by someone while they played tug-war
out of you was strange," Viper said evenly, though Harry could feel amusement from him.

"And my flames?" Harry asked, trying to forget that episode.

"It's almost non-existent now. The others can feel it too, which is the cause of their strange behavior," Viper explained as he gestured to the door. He slowly approached him and grabbed Harry's hand. Viper looked at their connected hands for moments, then said, "If we don't touch you, we can't feel your flames. It's almost like you are not flame active."

"Is it bad that you can't feel my flames?" Harry asked, a sinking feeling in his gut.

"A guardian's flame tends to subconsciously feel for their sky's flames. Think of it like a pack member seeking assurance from their leader. This is very important for newly formed bonds especially, as the new guardians need to frequently feel their sky's flames to assure them that their sky is present, safe, and healthy," Viper explained. He snorted and shortly shook his head before continuing. "For those idiots, it's killing them that they couldn't feel your flames. That's why they're constantly touching you. I'm not nearly so fragile."

"Can I get my hand back?" Harry pointedly arched his brow at their connected hand.

Viper jerked his hands away and walked stiffly back to the window. Harry looked thoughtfully at his reclaimed hand, thinking on what Viper said. While they could supposedly feel his flames before, he had never felt something from them. 'Is it because Orange is sentient or do I just need training?' Harry wondered.

"I'm not going to apologize," Viper said suddenly. Harry looked at Viper and found that Viper was still facing away from him and looking out the window.

"Sorry for what?" Harry wondered. He couldn't remember anything recent that Viper need to apologize for, unless Viper thought Harry had something against hand-holding. Which he didn't. It was a lot less intruding than what Ren tended to do when invading his personal space; if anyone had to apologize on that front, it wasn't Viper.

"For selling you out," Viper said slowly.

Harry didn't know what to say on that. He was a bit angry, but he didn't feel anything else in particular. He wasn't depressed about the whole fiasco, unlike Orange. Orange...Harry thought about that locked room again.

"Money is everything in this world. There is nothing powerful than money," Viper said, interrupting Harry's circling theories.

"I don't think money is everything. There's something more powerful than money. It's—" Harry was interrupted by Viper.

"Don't tell me it's 'friendship', that's crap. I can tell that your friends abandoned you," Viper whirled back and stared at him, almost accusingly.

"They didn't abandon me," Harry glared at him.

"I can see the pain of betrayal in your eyes," Viper replied quietly.

"Maybe you're right, maybe not, but I wasn't going to say friendship. It's forgiveness," Harry said as he smiled at Viper. "And I forgive you."
Maybe he was talking crap here, but he'd experienced so many betrayals already and he was tired of feeling angry, hurt, and confused. Forgiveness was such a powerful, freeing concept that he had nearly forgotten when he entered this world. He was glad to find he could still forgive; hatred was a weight he didn't want to carry anymore.

"You are strange one," Viper muttered, bringing him out of his musings once more.

"I forgive you," Harry smiled at him. For moment Viper was stunned by his sky's bright smile.

Viper hadn't expected to feel relief when his sky said that. That ache that was heavy in his heart lifted, making him feel lighter than he had in years.

He didn't even apologize, but his sky forgave him anyway!

'Even without his sky flames, he proves himself to be one.' Viper looked back out through window with a sigh. He didn't want this bond, but he couldn't help himself. He was getting fond of Harry. 'Soon, maybe Harry would become more important than even money.' Viper shuddered.

He shook his head and looked back at the quiet sky from the corner of his eyes. Viper briefly clasped his hands, remembering the warmth they had shared. He had been subconsciously looking for his sky's flames too. He hadn't even realized that he was still holding Harry's hand earlier. It was really dangerous.

'So much for being made of sterner stuff. If Madam could see me now, what would she say?' Viper wondered. 'Money is everything. Money is power, right?'

"Two hours," Ren hissed as he kicked the door open. Colonello looked up from his position by the window, which he took earlier to snipe the annoying clouds. Ren went straight to the booze cabinet and downed a shot. He sighed as he put the small bottle back in place and turned to face the others.

"Two more hours and we are leaving this godforsaken place."

"Finally! One more day and I'd lose my mind!" Colonello growled.

"You and me both," Fon muttered.

"I take it that you finally collected everything?" Lal asked Ren, who took a seat beside the door.

"From the island to the workers and almost everything else we might need. That boss-brat tried to block every move that I made, but I won in the end, as usual," Ren explained, more tired than smug.

"I can't believe a ten-year-old danced around you for three days," Fon said, shaking his head.

"Ten-year-old?" Ren snorted. "More like a devil in disguise." He closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose as if warding away a headache.

"What about the doctor?" Lal asked.

Ren shook his head. He opened his eyes and glared at the window. "Damn brat, blocked every doctor I tried to hire. Unless I ask from Vongola…"

"I hate this, kora! The first day after we got away was ok – his sky flames were weak, but at least I could feel them – but now I can't feel even a single spark of flames unless I touch his skin!"
Colonello complained. "All of this is making me edgy."

"You're not the only one!" Lal snapped. Colonello grumbled and looked away.

Colonello felt his rain flame shift as he mused on how she was always scolding him, even when he was right. Lal's eyes focused sharply on him and her flames answered with an agitated surge. Colonello looked away with a curse and tried to calm down. Ever since Harry's flame became so low that they couldn't sense them, Colonello's flame was agitated. His instinct screamed that he should take Lal out from the picture. It whispered 'rival, rival'. It felt that Lal's flame was purer than his. Colonello knew she was his friend, but his flames only saw her as competition that he needed to eliminate now.

Tension rose as others sensed the rains became unstable. When Lal looked down with a grimace and backed down, they all sighed. Colonello smiled bitterly as his hand left his gun's trigger. He was glad she had backed off, because he knew he was too worked up and wouldn't have been able to. She always had better control than him.

"So, what will happen to Harry now? Whatever this is, it's not normal," Fon said, frowning. "Did you find anything, Verde?"

"Not much. Harry's producing flames, but the flames keep disappearing. It's like pouring into a sieve. We need a specialist to check him over," Verde replied.

"Harry's okay, then?" Ren asked.

"He's irritated, but ultimately healthy. Then again, three days locked up make anyone irritated," Verde grumbled.

"We had to compromise, but we're free to go now. Thankfully, we can go out from this city via ship and head directly to the island." Ren sighed. "Then maybe we can call Verde's American friend to check on Harry. You're sure the little devil doesn't know about him?"

"Yes, I'm sure. There will be no trouble. He has a great debt to pay that I'm calling in, so the Vasaio brat would have to kill him to get him to turn me away." Verde yawned as he took the coffee from table.

"Where's Viper?" Ren asked as he looked around.

"He's with Harry," Verde replied.

"I can't believe you let him be with Harry after what he did," Colonello grumbled. He would never forgive that mist.

"I'm curious as well," Ren admitted to the scientist.

"Viper won't do anything. It's not profitable for him right now. Besides, we need a functional mist if we're going to get away cleanly," Verde said as put the cup down and fixed his glasses.

"True. I don't believe Dominico will let us go after this much struggle. What's our plan?" Fon asked.

"I have a good one. I'm the leader for it, though. Agreed?" Ren trailed, buffing his nails on his suit.

"No," Colonello and Fon said simultaneously.

"What's your plan?" Lal said, ignoring the two.
"Viper will illusion one of us as Harry and we will separate into three groups, each heading to the docks. One will run as decoy, one will be the assault team, and the original will be between the two." Ren bared his teeth in a facsimile of a smile and said, "Let's get this show on the road."

"Hmm, not bad, not bad at all. Then again, you are the greatest hitman," Dominico said aloud as he read Dante's report. They were in the hotel opposite from the Empire hotel and had been keeping watch over the situation. He had wanted to stay in the Empire hotel originally but then he thought it will be more fun if he stayed in a different base so he could better watch the fun.

"I can interfere, if you would like?" Dante said with an apologetic expression. Dominico stayed silent for few minutes to let Dante sweat. Dante was the perfect tool - he would do anything for him, much like a certain follower in his previous life. For Dante, disappointing his sky would be the greatest shame. Dominico really had outdone himself in finding such a perfect guardian to manipulate.

"No, not needed. Let them have their 'escape'. If we interfere with Sinagra's plans more than we already have, he would probably kill us. I don't want to make an enemy of that man. He's strong, and it would complicate things with my famiglia. Ah politics," Dominico murmured as he put down the report.

They had intercepted every communication from the Empire hotel at first. Then Dominico ordered all his men in the city to intercept every attempt of Sinagra's to hire the ship and people he needed. It was like a fun game of chess. They fought by sabotage and misinformation. And, of course, you couldn't forget the lovely clouds that Dominico threw at them at every possible turn. It was too bad that not a single one of them met and bonded to Harry. Dominico was sure that Harry gladly welcome one as part of the group if they had harmonized, no matter what the others might say. 'That Gryffindor's bleeding heart will ruin him.' Dominico chuckled.

"They bought an island, hired a building company, and have rented a ship. I think they are planning to leave for the island soon," Dante reported.

"Let them build their home for now. We need to find a stronger cloud to pull Harry in," Dominico said.

"Any stronger clouds wouldn't be interested in that weak sky," Dante snorted.

"Oh, don't be a spoil sport. And maybe I just know where I can get that cloud," Dominico smiled evilly.

Someone knocked the door. They both turned as one of the lackeys entered the room.

"Sir, they left hotel," the man reported.

"Hmm, throw all of our men at them," Dominico laughed as he whirled with chair. He was really having fun. If only Harry participated actively, it'd be even better!

"But I thought you said to let them go?" Dante asked, confusion clear on his face.

"Yes, I did. But a little exercise won't hurt anyone. Remember, if you catch Harry by some miracle, there will be a great reward," Dominico promised. The lackey brightened and hurried out to inform the others.

"Now that that's settled, we have our own mission to complete. Inform the rest of my guardians that
it's time to leave." Dominico stood up and made to leave, followed by his loyal guardian.

"Yes, sir," Dante replied.

"Don't forget to bring warm coats." Dominico grinned and continued, "After all, it's very cold in Vindicare."

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Harry was walking with Fon and Colonello to the harbor, quite eager for a change in scenery. His mood was quickly fouled when a small group of obvious mafiosi walked out from a nearby alley to block their way forward. Fon and Colonello sprang into action the moment the men made themselves known; Fon stood before Harry and Colonello brought out his gun. The civilians in the area had the common sense to retreat and wait the confrontation out.

" Damn it, where's the assault team? They should have taken care of this, kora!" Colonello growled.

"They're probably fighting with another group," Fon replied.

"Fighting lackeys is starting to get more annoying than fun," Colonello complained as his hand started to glow blue.

Harry watched as the other men took out weapons in response. Only a few of them were glowing too, and with much weaker red flames. Harry wasn't too worried.

"Harry, take cover," Fon said, gesturing to the nearby building's corner. Harry shook his head - he refused to hide like some damsel in distress – but then things went hazy and, before he could do anything to help, Fon and Colonello had finished the fight. Harry didn't even have to dodge a bullet. His bemused realization was interrupted as a sudden explosion threw Harry to the side. The previously hiding citizens panicked and flooded the streets, looking for better cover as theirs was suddenly destroyed. Emergency sirens rang as the crowd moved, taking Harry with it after he managed to get back to his feet.

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"Time?" A man next to him asked in a rough voice. The guy had a somewhat bloodthirsty edge, like he was prepared to fight anytime and would greatly enjoy it.

"Um, I don't know. Sorry," Harry answered. He tried to leave and return to the others, but the guy grabbed him before he could take more than two steps.

"Do I know you?" The man said.

"I don't think so," Harry replied. He tried to jerk his arm back, but the man's grip was strong.

"No, wait…" The guy brought out a picture from his jacket and looked at it for few seconds before he grinned and tightened his grip. "That prize is mine! Never thought I'd meet you like this, but fortune comes when it comes. Too bad you're too much of a weak sky to harmonize with me. Ah, well, the money's good either way."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Harry snapped. "Let me go!"

"Normally, I would let you go, but I have to pay back your current guardians for all the trouble they caused me. Just a couple of bones should do it, it won't take long," the man's mad grin stretched and
his other hand came around to grab Harry's fingers, intent obvious as he began to pull them back.

Harry gritted his teeth and tried to pull away. It was too tight to escape! Harry really hated this Potter luck of his. A passing man hurried past, not realizing Harry's situation, but providing inspiration all the same. Harry opened his mouth and screamed as loud as he could, "Fire!"

Passersby instinctually looked in his direction and his enemy's grip loosened for that critical moment. Harry used his chance to make his escape; He rotated his arm and slid from the man's hold before taking refuge in the anonymity of the crowd.

Harry ducked and ran through the streets. He took a winding route to help throw off his pursuer, but he wasn't sure if he'd succeeded or not. His eyes darted around to look for a place to hide and landed on a woman's clothes shop. Harry ducked inside and grabbed the first thing he could get his hands on - a lace bra, to be specific – and tried to walk confidently to the changing room.

The woman at the counter looked at him strangely, but didn't say anything to him against it. Perhaps he'd succeeded in looking like he knew what he was doing; the fact that she probably thought he was either a cross-dresser or a transvestite was something he firmly put out of mind. Instead, he sat on the bench inside changing room and took deep breath to try to calm his racing heart.

"I'm really getting tired of running away from people," Harry muttered. He grimaced before throwing the bra to the other side of the bench. He leaned against the wall and rubbed his temples, trying to head off the growing headache.

He sighed in frustration as he heard a commotion outside of the store. From the sound of it, the man who was chasing him was searching around and interrogating the other shoppers. Luckily for Harry, the guy had seriously alarmed the assistants and customers, causing many to either point him in the wrong direction – outside – or hurry to make their own escape.

Harry stood up with a curse as he heard the man scoff in disgust and get closer to his hiding place. Harry needed to get out of here before the guy started forcefully entering the changing rooms. It was just too bad that his magic wasn't working. Some "accidental" magic would really help right about now!

With a quiet sigh, Harry sneaked out of the changing room and hid behind a nearby clothes rack. Peeking through the hanging coat rack, he watched as the man turned his back to him and entered his previous hiding spot. Harry took the chance to look around for an escape path. Luckily, there was a staff door nearby. Unfortunately, if he moved to that door, the guy would probably see him.

Then he realized another opportunity - the coat rack. Harry grinned and quietly took a coat from it and pulled it over his own casual wear. It was a long coat, so it hid his shirt and blue jeans. He grabbed a nearby hat to cover his messy hair and slowly made his way out, hoping beyond hope that his disguise would be enough.

It was then that a group of bold woman start to gather around the guy and sharply demand him to leave the changing rooms or they would call the police. Harry took the chance provided in the man's distraction to get closer to the staff door. When he finally reached it, he opened the door just as slowly and walked out. He shuddered and let himself lean against the wall for a moment to get his bearings.

Harry allowed himself to slump further and sighed. "That was crazy, for sure."

He shed the coat and hat and shakily walked out from the shop via the rear door. Once he reached the street, he sprinted to get as much distance as he could between them. After a good while, Harry
looked around and found himself before the park. As he looked around and failed to find the hunter, he decided it was time to try to meet up with the others at their original destination. The only problem was that he was unfamiliar with this part of town and couldn't remember which direction to go to reach the harbor.

"Excuse me, can you tell me which direction to go to reach the harbor?" Harry asked from a passing woman.

"Through the park here," she answered with a smile. "You'll find a busy street on the opposite side of park, and the entrance to the harbor is on the other side."

Harry smiled and thanked her before following her directions.

'I just wish this whole thing was over. Sure, the others can be overbearing at times, but at least they look out for me. They could've had that man down in a second. Me? I'm just...hopeless. Weak.'

As he was walking, head down in contemplation, he saw a rock sitting on the path in front of him. He didn't know why – perhaps due to his frustration - but he kicked that rock as hard as he could. The rock sailed through the air and fell out of sight. Not even a second after, someone screamed. Harry quickly went to where scream sounded and found a fallen man with an ice-cream cone smashed against the stone walkway. The rebelliously dressed, purple-haired man was rubbing his head as a scowl as he glared at the rather familiar rock. As Harry got a better look, he saw that the man was spreading ice cream all over his face as he tried to fruitlessly clean it. The second thing he noticed was the numerous and piercings and small bandages on his cheeks.

"Hey, are you OK? I'm so sorry," Harry asked as he kneeled beside him.

"You! You! You're the one who hurt the Great Skull's face, aren't you?! My handsome face, my handsome face!" The man, apparently named Skull, started to dab his face with his sticky hands. Harry sweat-dropped, even as a guilty feeling weighed him down.

'It's not like his face was injury free to begin with, what with those bandages. But then again, it was my fault he got hurt even more. I have to do something before I go to make up for this.'

"Here let's go to that fountain and clean you up." Harry grabbed Skull's hand and started to drag him over to the drinking fountain. Skull continued to complain about the "Great Skull's ice cream" and his face, but didn't fight to get away. The cleaning was a quick process, since only Skull's leather gloves and face had become sticky. Skull grumbled about his smeared make-up, but Harry insisted that he wash his face – the ice-cream was ruining it already.

"Haha! The Great Skull is so great that even his make-up wouldn't run!" Skull laughed. Harry sweat dropped once again and shook his head. He began to turn to leave and make his way to the harbor, but was stopped by Skull.

Skull pointed at Harry's face and said, "You! Pay me back by getting me a new ice-cream cone. You can't just leave after all this without paying me back for it!"

"Ah, I'm really sorry about earlier, but giving you another ice-cream is not possible right now," Harry said, feeling awkward that he didn't have money right now. He really should start thinking about a fix to his money problem, but things just kept cropping up and distracting him. It wasn't like he could job hunt while being abducted, after all.

"Oh! The Great Skull has never faced this shame. The Great Skull de Mort!" Skull opened his hands as if showing how great he was and how very absurd this was to be happening to him.
"I'm sorry, but I really don't have money right now. Maybe if you give me your number, I can buy you another treat later," Harry said with another awkward smile.

"Hmph! Since the Great Skull is always generous, I will forgive you." Skull snorted and sent him a superior look, as if Harry should be so very grateful for his "leniency".

Harry had to bite his tongue in order to not say something.

Skull took his wet gloves off and lifted his hand to Harry, almost like he wanted a hand shake. Harry looked at him, confused as to why he would want one.

"What? It's obvious you would want a handshake from your Great Skull," Skull said, his tone as superior as ever.

"No, it's not necessary," Harry shook his head and put his hands up defensively, just wanting to leave.

"Don't be shy! The Great Skull is cool with it. Here like this," Skull grabbed his hands and shook vigorously. Harry stumbled slightly as Skull shook fast. When a familiar feeling started up, he felt a great surge of dread. A familiar, previously missing, warmth surged through him. Skull's knees buckled, causing the boastful man to collapse.

"No, Orange, we bloody talked about this!" Harry shouted. It was too late to do anything about it, though.

He could see a drunken Skull deliriously mumbling something as bright orange and purple flame circled him. After a few moments, the flames died down as it they were never there.

"Orange, you didn't. Tell me you didn't just bond with him!" Harry hissed as he kneeled beside Skull. Orange just chirped at him happily. Apparently, whatever Orange locked itself away for was gone. Harry didn't know that should he be happy or worried. He decided he could be both and immediately set to scolding the brat for not listening, again.

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"I can feel Harry," Fon said with wonder. He immediately contacted the others over the line Verde had provided asked if they were feeling the same.

Now that he could finally feel Harry's flame, that wouldn't be a problem anymore. As bonded guardians, they could follow him instinctively. It could help them triangulate their sky's position, which was much more effective than what they had been doing before. Searching blindly had given them no results, but that wouldn't be an issue anymore. It was only a matter of time now.

"Me too, Kora." Colonello said beside him as he made a sharp turn. They hurriedly passed through the streets and found themselves outside of a small park. The others arrived soon after.

"Finally! When I get that troublesome…" Ren angrily walked up the park's path, leaving the rest unsaid.

Fon and the others followed quietly behind him, matching his pace as they closed in on the sky flames that called to them. Finally, they found Harry! Only, they found Harry with a flame-drunk, purple-haired guy who had a very strong cloud signature.

"Um, Hi?" Harry smiled with a wide range of contrasting emotions and waved at them. The cloud simply hugged their sky and continued his babbling.
"What is that thing!" Ren demanded as he pointed at the leather wearing, purple-haired, clingy cloud. One who, from the wild flames, was very likely a civilian.

"Um, he's a new friend?" Harry answered hesitantly.

Ren and Colonello hissed, Fon rubbed his temples, Lal cursed colorfully, and Verde and Viper each observed with matching neutrality.

The cloud was quite oblivious to all of it.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I'm so sorry for long wait. Me and my beta had so much on our plate this month. I'm sorry again.

I hope you all like this chapter. And thank you for all support that you guys are giving. Really thank you. I'm so happy :)}
Dominico impatiently gazed at the cloud from his position behind his office desk. They had arrived at the manor, but the current situation was not in Dominico's original calculations.

"Pretty sky, pretty sky!" the dirty gray-haired man lunged at him, but was stopped by a swift kick from Dante. Dominico didn't even bat an eyelash as the crazy cloud groaned in pain. The cloud looked up at Dominico with a crazed gleam and Dante growled at him in response.

The man on the floor was dressed in prison rags, but his crumbled, thin figure couldn't hide the cloud's dangerous potential. The dirty cloud's muscles were tense like a tightly stretched bow cord, ready to attack in moment of weakness. The flames burning under the man's skin were honed, ready for action. While this danger was something that Dominico could appreciate, the cloud's rudeness wasn't.

"John, stand up! That's an order." Dominico gazed down at John, one of his men.

He was one of his top men at that, but sadly couldn't take rejection. John had started to imagine that Dominico was his and, as clouds tend to do, had gotten territorial. He'd been causing more through than he was worth. Inwardly seething at the loss, Dominico threw John's special cards before him - cards that could cut steel and blow up on contact. They were valuable weapons that Dominico had awarded the man with and which the man used very, very well.

John blankly gazed at the valuable, fallen cards, as if he had forgotten about his favorite weapon.

"Pretty sky…" John murmured, his face somewhat lecherous as he turned his gaze to his newfound obsession.

"You peace of shit! My sky finally graced you with his presence, but you dare show that face!" Dante punched John hard enough that the man flew a few meters back.

"Pretty sky…" John groaned as he stood up shakily.

Dominico didn't want this cloud to be near Harry. He was disappointed by this turn of events. He had thought to use this cloud to shake Harry up a little. If John had bonded with Harry, then Dominico would've just needed to separate them little bit; the new bond would demand closeness and it would give time for Dominico to get close to Harry as he helped the "search".

If the cloud was destroyed, then Dominico could just play the hero to save the day or be the concerned friend and let Harry's guardians do their jobs. Either way, it would give more time to Dominico to work.

But John, as he was now, was more dangerous to his plans than Dominico could allow. Sending
John off and letting him re-fixate on Harry wouldn't do any good. It would be just like throwing a starving wolf to hunt an innocent lamb. Well, if you didn't consider the guardians Harry already had. It would take a great deal of effort for John to get past them, but it was a chance he wasn't willing to risk.

Still, Dominico wasn't completely ready to write the man off. He had been very useful before this whole issue arose.

"Dante, bring John to the healing wing. Maybe they can do something for him. At least make him more useful, less…I don't know, just order the doctors to do their best." Dominico rubbed his forehead as Dante dragged John out of his sight. The doctors would have to think of something else, something even great Voldemort couldn't think of. He'd really rather not have to write the man off as a complete loss.

"What else do I need to do today?" Dominico wondered aloud.

BANG!

Dominico looked back after his office door was kicked open. He frowned as the old man responsible entered. Dominico frowned and wondered what happened to the Vasaio security. The old man, who wore a tattered rob held a strange cane, shouldn't have been able to simply walk in here without an appointment or even some last-minute warning.

"Ah, young Vasaio, just the person I need!" The old man exclaimed, like they had met at a busy street instead of in his office, which should have been secure.

"You are?" Dominico said, calmly. Dominico wasn't really worried for himself - he was sure that he could take care of this old man – but then again…you never know in the mafia world. He wouldn't make the same mistake as he did in his last life by judging a book by its cover. So, Dominico nudged one of his guardian bonds sharply, insinuating distress and emergency. With this, Dante would probably run back to him and he would at least have some form of back-up.

"My name's Talbot. I'm here to…well, play the messenger for you." Talbot scratched his head thoughtfully, but as to what he was thinking, Dominico was clueless.

"Talbot? What kind of message could you have for me? You're Vongola's blacksmith, are you not?" Dominico frowned. He'd heard that Talbot worked exclusively with Vongola, unless you were willing to pay a heavy amount. Something a little much to pay to pass a message.

"Ah, then you heard of me," Talbot said as he sat opposite from Dominico.

"Of course! After all, a good weapon is essential for us mafioso." Dominico chuckled lightly. He brought out his sky flame to surface and smiled. 'Sky charisma, oh how I love this flame!' Dominico thought as his flame started to make him more approachable and make his target to more likely loosen his tongue. 'Sky flame, the flame that governs all other flames, the flame for leaders.'

Talbot frowned and suddenly swung his cane down like a hammer. " You are a hundred years early for that, brat."

"I see." Dominico sighed. "You can't blame me for trying, though."

"Of course not, but your famiglia has an excellent blacksmith already." Talbot pointedly eyed his pen on the table. "Such a suitable weapon for the boss of a negotiation famiglia."

Dominico held his pen in his hand. He'd received this weapon when he ascended to his position as
boss. Dominico heard a long time ago that the weapon a person wields reveals a lot of their personality and he had to say that he agreed. He thought the pen was a firm statement of his new life in this world. A weapon that, while not as strong as others, can still defend him as a last resort.

'I'm no longer the front-line fighter that Voldemort was, but am the negotiator Dominico Vasaio. Talbot put it very well.'

"My sky!" Dante shouted as he entered the office. He paused upon noticing the intruder and was beside Dominico in the blink of an eye, prepared to attack at the slightest notice. His glare communicated quite clearly what he would do should the man make the wrong move.

"Dante, stand down," Dominico said as he patted Dante's hand.

"Understood, master." Dante settled into a less confrontational pose beside him, but still kept a very close eye on the man across from him.

"Youngsters these days! No respect for their elders," Talbot grumbled.

"You said you were here as a messenger," Dominico prompted, curious.

"Ah, I remember!" Talbot started to pat his robe slowly, causing Dante to glare at him impatiently. Dominico was amused at Talbot's passive aggressiveness and was more than willing to wait him out.

"Found it! A stranger asked me to deliver this to a certain person. For some strange reason, I couldn't find him. Then I heard you were close to him and hoped you'd be willing to help." Talbot said as he put a ring on the table.

"A ring?" Dominico picked it up lazily, rather unimpressed. When he looked at it closer, his eyes widened in shock. He knew this ring! The ring was gold with a cracked black stone.

'Salazar Slytherin's ring. My ring!'

"To whom were you sent to deliver this?" Dominico asked warily. What he really wanted to ask was who gave it to Talbot, but from Talbot's expression, Dominico knew he wouldn't tell.

"To Harry…Harry Potter," Talbot said. His lips curled up in a satisfied smile at Dominico's reaction.

The morning sun shone through the forest branches. Birds chirped and the forest animals calmly continued with their lives. Alas, a large boom interrupted it and sent everything into chaos.

'Orange, don't!' Harry yelled internally. He was, unfortunately, too late. Orange had already surged out from him in anger and the guardian facing him fell down again in a stupor. Harry ran over to his newest drunken guard and kneeled beside him.

"I'm sorry! Colonello, hang in there." Harry grabbed and shook his rain guardian, trying to snap him out of it.

"Ugh, I'm…in heaven," Colonello slurred.

"Agh! Sorry! Come back now," Harry said as he shook his rain again. Colonello gazed at him drunkenly and touched Harry's cheek with a tender smile.

"Hey! Hands off." Lal suddenly kicked Colonello away from Harry, causing Colonello to become a specter in the sky. He fell down out of sight in another loud crash.

"Lal, why did you do that?" Harry frowned at Lal, who snorted, not feeling single shred of guilt.
"This is not working," Fon sighed and walked over to join Harry, an exasperated expression painting his face.

All of his guardians except Verde and Viper were here beside him, in this forest, his supposed training field for a week now. Verde said he needed to supervise the underlings and Viper had become some sort of mushroom. For some reason, he was depressed and lurking in the tent corner. The others didn't seem to pay him mind, but Harry promised himself that he would check on him later this afternoon.

"We can't train you!" they all said simultaneously.

Yes, they were here to train Harry; however, Orange wasn't cooperating. When Harry's guardians mock-attacked, or just even lightly punched Harry in order to train him, Orange attacked them with explosive vigor. Orange thought it was a personal insult that his guardians attacked him. Orange would punish them for doing so, which usually ended with a flame-drunk guardian. Harry begged and threatened Orange to get it to obey, but Orange would just cry pitifully and made all his guardian drunk with sky flames in a fit. Harry was getting tired of it.

'You are so much trouble,' Harry said, half annoyed and half fondly. Orange made happy croon inside him.

Ren was the only one who could stand and work through the effect, but when Harry asked him for training, Ren's face would become a shocking pink and he refused to train him.

'Why would Ren do that?' Harry thought with a pout.

Orange chirped. Harry could almost picture it jumping up and down in his mind-scape, pleased that at least one of them was "behaving".

"Don't worry Harry-sama, you don't need to fight. I'm Skull de Mort! I will protect you," Skull proudly exclaimed.

"Oh, then you need to become strong." Ren smirked suddenly, eyes glinting dangerously.

"Yes, Skull will become strong - stronger than you! And then Harry-sama will love me!" Skull laughed as he made a strange pose. Harry distantly heard triumphant music and saw a sea wave crashing against rock. He rubbed his eyes. Did Viper make an illusion or was he just that tired?

"Oh, so you don't mind getting training from me?" Ren's smirk grew. Harry felt that Ren's smile was a tad bit evil. He was starting to feel bad for his cloud, who was being easily led by the nose.

"Yes, I don't mind…wait, senpai I didn't mean," Skull hurriedly waved his hands and tried to take it back, but everyone could already see that it was too late.

"You should be happy; it's not every day the world's greatest hitman decides to train someone. Expect tort-training from me," Ren said. In the blink of an eye he had dragged Skull away out of sight.

"Were you just about to say torture?! You were, weren't you! Wait! Wait - Harrysama!" Skull desperately screamed.

Harry started to go after him, worried that the hitman might take things too far.

"Don't," Lal said as she stepped in front of him and frowned.
"But Skull–" Harry protested.

"You can't coddle him. He is a grown man who can make his own decisions. He needs to become stronger and learn how to defend himself before he can ever hope to be able to protect you like he wants." Lal said sharply.

"He…" Harry trailed away as Lal glared at him.

"It's just training. Rene's hardly going to kill him – that would be counterproductive." Lal frowned deeper and then looked in the direction Colonello had landed. "I will go get that idiot student of mine."

"I see," Harry said with a sigh. He worriedly looked over to where Ren had dragged Skull away, but didn't move to follow. He would see later what happened and if Ren had stepped out of line… Harry would stop that training and insist that he do it instead. Harry had to go through rigorous physical and mental training to be an auror; being a part of that division required more than just knowing curses and counter-curses.

"Don't worry about Skull. We understand that he's a civilian who just entered the Mafia and will pace him accordingly. It's not something he should skip out on though. Sooner or later he'll need these skills to protect himself. You don't want him to be unprepared," Fon explained, smiling gently. His eyes were calm, his aura serene, and it was making Harry calm down as well.

"I guess not." Harry curiously looked over at Fon and asked, "Are you okay? I'm sorry my flame attacked you. I don't know why did it attacked," Harry apologized sheepishly.

He was a little guilty that he lied to them, but Harry was sure none of them would believe him if he told them his flames were being a brat. Even if they believe him, Harry didn't want to stand out as a freak again! He hated it in the magical world and didn't want to have to deal with it here as well. He wanted to be Just Harry for as long as he could.

"Ah, it's okay. Flames are instinctual, so such reactions are expected from beginners. Now that I think about it, guardians never teach their sky. Maybe this is why famiglie always hire a tutor." Fon made a thoughtful expression, then smiled as he shelved it for later discussion with the others. "Regardless, I think some tea would help us calm down."

"Oh yes, it's tea time," Harry agreed.

It was already their time they usually did so. They would drink tea together, just them, and spend time simply unwinding. For some reason, Fon would always give him a little present during their time together. Fon said that after the garden was finished they would spend their tea time there. That would be wonderful.

But for life of him, Harry couldn't understand why they would have tea at exactly this time or why the others wouldn't join. Everyone had something else to do with him at other times as well. It was like they were on invisible schedule, taking turns spending time with them that the others weren't allowed to interrupt.

"Maybe we can wait and Lal and Colonello and ask them to join us," Harry asked as he looked back to the woods. The suspicion wouldn't leave, but it would be rude not to at least invite them.

"Ah, I'm sure they wouldn't mind being left behind. They don't like tea." Fon smiled awkwardly, glad his sky was looking away. He wasn't nearly as skilled at lying as Rene was.

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Fon guided his sky to their spot. He couldn't just tell Harry that they were on schedule or that it was Fon's turn.

It had been decided in their first Secret Guardian Meeting. The second day since they arrived, they had been constantly at each other's throats when their sky wasn't looking, vying to have his attention for themselves. After getting sick of arguing, Verde offered a plan. They organized a schedule for everyone so they wouldn't either upset their sky or kill each other. According to their set schedule, everyone could spend two hours undisturbed with Harry. The others would spend their time on security. This schedule would continue until Hogwarts was finished being constructed. They would renegotiate then.

After a few minutes of walking, they reached a clear pond. There were already chairs and table set with sweets and tea. Fon had ordered the tea especially from China. It was special tea from the Grand Tea House, which Fon was personally very fond of and wanted to share with his sky. As for sweets, they were ordered from an Italian café.

Harry sat on the chair with a smile and eagerly awaited his tea. Fon smiled wider in return and started to make the tea. His movements were graceful and swift.

"I love your tea making," Harry said happily.

"Oh?" Fon poured the tea without pause. His tea skill was not something that he had been proud of before now. It was skill that cost tears, sweat and more than a little frustration that had ended with broken tea pots. After the lessons ended, he stopped making tea. But now? Fon was glad that Harry was enjoying it, that he was being useful for his sky.

"It's just calming. It almost like art," Harry sighed as he sipped from cup. "I love it."

"I'm glad," Fon said, smiling gently. At last, his heart was calm.

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It was dinner time. They gathered inside the big tent as usual and Verde's workers brought food inside. Harry didn't talk to them much nowadays. It wasn't like he hadn't tried at first. Every time he tried to talk to workers he was stopped by someone. The workers themselves got really scared when he got near them as well. Conversely, they always threw admiring glances when Harry was far away.

He really didn't understand them.

Harry was seated at the head of the table once again. Ren smugly settled into the seat to his immediate right, to the ire of the others; it wasn't really a surprise, as Ren usually "won" the "right" to sit there through some means he wasn't aware of. Harry just knew there was something about Ren's seat, some hidden meaning. It also meant something that Ren had only lost once - to Fon - and that no other had taken it from him since.

Harry didn't want to know. From his perspective, it was just another stupid thing they felt like competing for.

"Let's dig in!" Skull hollered, energetic as always. Harry sighed in relief. He thought Skull would be covered with bruises and scratches, but he seemed to be completely fine, despite the damage to his outfit. Harry smiled at Ren in thanks. Ren looked at him in confusion.

"At last, food!" Verde said as he put his notebook down.
"Ugh, please don't talk loud," Colonello whispered. He was partially lying on the table. Harry winced in sympathy and whispered another "Sorry" to his poor rain.

"It looks good." Fon smiled, ignoring the blonde man.

As for Viper, he was still lurking in the corner. Harry had tried to snap him out of it earlier, but Viper only muttered something about money and continued to sulk. Ren had patted Harry's shoulder and told him, "Let him mourn." He even took off his hat like someone had died!

He sighed and shook his head, deciding to focus on what was in front of him instead.

"Yes, let's eat," Harry said.

Today's dinner was fried lobster. He was really looking forward to this. Just as Harry was about to take a bite, a helicopter's rotors could be heard nearing their tent. Harry glared at the roof of the tent, knowing he wasn't going to be able to finish his food in peace now.

"Stay here," Ren told him as he stood and stalked out, gun in hand. Lal and Colonello ran after him, similarly armed.

Harry stood as well.

"Please stay," Fon said, his expression serious.

Harry shook his head stubbornly. He was not a damsel in distress! He never had been. Besides, this was his home too and Merlin be damned if he wasn't going to protect it. He determinedly walked outside and ignored Skull's pleas to come back.

From the sound of it, the helicopter had landed. As he exited the tent he saw that it was a black helicopter with a somewhat familiar golden symbol that made him scowl.

"I told you to stay!" Ren glared at him briefly before turning to face to possible threat.

"I need to be here!" Harry snapped. "Besides, from looks of it, they wanted to meet me."

Harry looked at the familiar figure as he stepped out of the helicopter. And here Harry had thought that today was going to be an excellent day.

"Hello again, Harry." Mini-Voldemort/Dominico smiled up at him. His crimson eyes shone happily.

'Well, at least one person here is happy.'

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In remote China stood a magnificent palace, gilded with gold and decorated with fine art. Servants were running around, doing their duty to their master. In the inner palace's garden, full of cherry blossoms, a man kneeled before a throne. The throne was gold with clever dragon carvings.

"I, Jian, bow to the Great Sky," the man said, facing the ground in respect.

"Ah, Jian, you are here," a seductive voice noted.

Jian waited for an order, still bowing.

"Bring him," the voice ordered.
"But, Great Sky!" Jian looked up in shock.

"I said, bring him!" the figure in the throne insisted. A blast of the figure's sky flames hit Jian, knocking him back a few feet. He stood up quickly as possible, coughing blood, and returned to his place before the throne.

"Great Sky, please," the old servant said as he bowed to the sky once again.

The Great Sky – the leader of the Triads, named Wang Huang – glared at Jian, his storm guardian. Wang Huang was dressed in the finest silk and adored with fire gems. His silken long black hair was in a single pony tail decorated with a golden hairpin. Huang's silk robe was also gold with golden phoenix pattern. His whole image was transmitting serene golden sky. But his gray eyes were cold as steel.

"Bring Fong to me," Huang ordered again, his tone hard, making everyone tremble with its underlying fury.

"Yes, Great Sky," Jian bowed. His hands clenched when he was out of sight of their leader.

Was the Great Sky seeking to replace him?

And even if he wasn't, how could Jian even hope to retrieve the strongest storm the Triads had ever seen?

It wasn't like there was any blackmail he could use. Fon didn't have friends among the Triads. Fon didn't have any weaknesses that they knew of.

This would take a miracle.

Omake

Secret guardian meeting No2

"Um, Sempai, why I'm doing this?" Skull nervously asked.

"Because I said so, Lackey." His senpai smiled evilly, daring him to disobey.

"Secret Guardian Meeting Two...Start" Skull said as confidently as he could. It was so embarrassing. Why did he have to do this?

"Bravo! Now we have announcer!" Senpai clapped his hands slowly, mocking him. Fon chuckled lightly. Colonello laughed outright. Even Verde and Viper were amused.

"Now, our next topic is about expenses," Ren said.

"What about them?" Verde asked.

Fon was confused. Skull was confused too. He'd paid his part of the bill using the money he made as a travelling stunt man.

"We already paid," Viper said, his tone full of contempt.

"Yes, but I'm concerned." Ren smirked and tilted his hat to shadow his eyes.

"For what? My calculations were exact," Verde stated as he fixed his glasses. They all looked at Ren, waiting for him continue. Skull was starting to get afraid as the man's smirk grew.
"Why we should pay equally when some of us caused so much trouble? It's unfair, in my opinion." Ren pointedly looked at Viper.

"Yare yare, if you think I would get all emotional and guilty then you are dreaming," Viper said, unconcerned with Ren's opinion.

"It should be his punishment. Half of the expenses should be paid for betraying Harry," Ren continued like he didn't hear Viper. "We should be refunded the money you owe as punishment."

"Punishment, yes, we didn't punish him," Fon said, frowning slightly.

"So, agreed?" Ren smiled winningly, causing Skull to shudder as he remembered the other times he'd seen that smile. Skull was sure now that Ren was the devil.

"I agree, kora!" Colonello yelled.

"Ah, I thought you were sleeping!" Skull cried out in surprise.

"What'd you say, maggot?!" Colonello glared at him.

"Agreed?" Ren repeated as he glared at the duo.

"AGREED!"

"Ugh!" Viper almost coughed up blood as he fell from the table in despair. Viper stood up with difficulty then said, "I won't, I will never!"

"Oh, you will. You certainly will," Ren said, his dark smirk firmly in place.

Viper glared at him, his shadow writhing behind him in his rage.

Skull didn't quite understand what followed, but after a brief fight, Viper agreed and paid them back for half of their respective payments.

Mourning the loss of so much of his money, Viper became a miserable mushroom in the corner.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: SO sorry! I was in countryside for job so I couldn't update it. Thank you so much for continued support. I can't thank you enough for reviews and likes. Thank you
Chapter 22-Bonds

Chapter Notes

Betad by le-maru

A/N: Hi, guyz. Thank you for all support. I loved your reviews. They made my day. Yes, I love Skull too. In my opinion he is great character.

And half of chapter got heavily influenced by certain song(Dominico's part). I'm sure most of you know this song.

Thank you:

Chapter 22

"The Great Skull loves you so much!" Skull loudly declared before kissing Harry's cheek. He then attempted to nuzzle Harry, but Harry put a firm hand between them and gently pushed him back.

While Harry was bemused, he wasn't really angry with him. Skull was a funny drunk; he reminded Harry of a previous auror partner of his who he used to drink with after work. He chuckled lightly as Skull declared his love to him again and prepared to dodge another kiss. He didn't have to worry about that so much after Ren darted forward to take the situation in hand.

"Oh, no you don't!" Ren hissed as he dragged Skull away by the collar of his jumpsuit. "Won't you sober up!" He shook Skull sharply, but it didn't seem to be helping as much as he'd like.

"The Great Skull doesn't do sober!" Skull shouted deliriously as he struggled to escape Ren's hold.

"Ren, put him down! He wasn't harming anyone," Harry said, grinning.

Ren threw a glare, then dropped Skull non-too gently. Skull grumbled at first, but soon conked out and proceeded to sleep on the ground. Ren glared at him, then threw a glance at the amused Harry and almost pouted.

Harry shook his head and kneeled down beside the sleeping Skull. He chuckled lightly as Skull grumbled about love and bikes. Ren snorted, but whether it was in humor or disgust Harry wasn't quite sure.

"Goodnight, Skull," Harry said, still amused.

"Leave that thing, Harry. You have to rest," Ren said.

"He is not a thing," Harry said firmly.

"No, he is not a thing," Ren agreed, nodding. Harry smiled, hoping things might work out between them, despite this unfortunate start.

"He's an abomination," Ren concluded.
"You won't change your mind, will you?" Harry asked almost wistfully. With that stubborn tilt and reproachful look, Ren almost reminded him of Teddy. Ren did have a point though – they needed to leave and Harry was exhausted.

"Come on," Ren encouraged as he held a hand down to help Harry up. "The ship is ready to go."

Harry nodded, grabbed the offered hand, and gave a silent wish for Skull to be safe as his sun led him down to the docks.

While Harry was happy they were on their way to the Island - their new home – he wasn't so happy with the additional passenger. He had left Skull in the park with every intention of never dragging him into this, and had thought that was a shared opinion. He only noticed differently a few hours after they left port when he was exploring and found Skull on the ship and, according to Verde, still drunk on flames.

Flashback

"Why he is here?!" Harry demanded accusingly. Out of all of them, only Ren could look him straight in the eye unashamed. Skull was stumbling in the background, and Harry peeked passed the hitman's shoulder to make sure the purple-haired man didn't fall into the sea.

"That thing is needed here. Thing or not, he is your cloud. And you shouldn't leave your guardians behind," Ren replied evenly. The others were nodding along with him, much to Harry's exasperation.

"But he's civilian! He has no idea what's going on and he'll get hurt because of that," Harry protested.

"He is little bit…unprepared," Fon said diplomatically.

"He just needs a little training, kora!" Colonello smiled.

"I wonder if he's used his flames before," Verde said as he grabbed his notebook. "I could think of a few experiments using a cloud's propagation…"

"He's an idiot, but I've trained idiots before," Lal said, eyeing the man in question. She was not looking forward to having to teach him everything from the ground up, especially not with his attitude, but it was something she'd buck up and do.

They all looked at Viper then, as if wanting to hear his opinion too.

Viper opened his mouth few times before he said, "I don't even have words to say."

Ren cleared his throat to regain his sky's attention. "As dangerous as it could be to bring him along, leaving Skull behind would be worse. He's bonded to you as cloud guardian and the only way to change that is to either die or go into discord."

"But the bond is new and he couldn't even use flames like you do, so…" Harry argued. He didn't want to bring Skull, who was an innocent civilian, into this sort of life. At least Harry was an auror and had combat experience before being dropped into this. He doubted Skull even had that much.

"Yes, your bond is new. That's why Skull especially needs to be here."

"Experience with flames or not, the bond it there. That thing will feel the lack, and might even end up driving himself crazy trying to fix it. It'll hurt you too, eventually, and I won't stand for that," Ren
There was a moment of silence as they allowed their sky time to come to terms with what he was hearing. After a few more moments, Harry gave a short nod.

"We'll explain things to him and ask if he wants to stay after he's sober. It will be his choice," Harry insisted. They nodded.

Flashback ended

"Rest Harry," Ren said as he picked him up.

"Whoa! put me down," Harry almost screamed and started to struggle. "What about Skull?"

"Nope, bed for you. He'll will be fine." Ren started to carry him away princess-style, completely unbothered by Harry's efforts to escape. They passed by Viper, who was gambling with the ship's crew, and Fon, who was mediating. They both glanced at them briefly, but otherwise ignored Harry's desperate pleas for help. Harry pouted as they neared his sleeping quarters and muttered "traitors" under his breath. Having given up on escape, he instead glanced at Ren's profile and decided to ask a question that had been bothering him for some time.

"Do you ever regret it?" Harry asked, feeling guilty.

"Regret what?" Ren said as he kicked the door open.

"For meeting me," Harry said, smiling bitterly as Ren put him gently on the bed.

Ren arched brow, as if he couldn't possibly see why.

"It's just… I'm weak compared to all of you, and don't know everything about your world, especially concerning flames, and then this whole harmonization thing," Harry started to babble but, Ren shook his head and put a shushing finger to his lips. Ren he leaned forward until their foreheads touched and looked at him directly, silently demanding Harry's full attention.

"We talked about this, Harry. I didn't have a single shred of regret. If only you knew how much I feel, how much harmonization means for me," Ren murmured. Harry lost his breath for a moment as he looked into those dark eyes, but snapped out of it when Ren pulled away. The hitman smiled and began to walk out of the room "Rest, Harry. Tomorrow is big day!"

Harry slumped against the bed and sighed. "I'm not even tired."

Orange made questioning croon.

"Now you're talking to me," Harry chuckled lightly as his hand started to sparkle with orange flame. It was a warm, gentle flame that licked his hand as it started to cover his whole body with thin flame. "Stop it, Orange. You're tickling me," Harry laughed lightly.

There was a feeling of satisfaction before the tickling tapered off, replaced by a faux aura of innocence. Harry huffed, but decided to ignore it. There were more important things that he now had the time to focus on.

"Let's see what you did to my mind," Harry said as he closed his eyes.

Orange seemed to panic slightly.

"Now I'm more determined to see what you did." Harry frowned and, a moment later, was in his
Ren chuckled as he heard his sky laugh lightly. For some reason, Harry was talking to himself, though Ren couldn't make out the words. He probably should worry more over his sky's possible mental state, but skies always had strange quirks. Ren was just happy to feel his sky's flames, healthy and whole.

"You're guarding his door?" Lal asked as she walked over to him.

"Habits die hard," Ren said, still smiling.

"We're a bunch of idiots. Bestowed idiots, but still." She gestured to Verde who was just around the corner, trying to look as if he was reading paper; to Fon, who decided this was the "perfect spot" to mediate; to Viper, who was shamelessly just standing there; to Colonello, who was perched above them; and then to the new cloud, who was sleep-crawling to Harry. Ren estimated it would take a few hours until he'd actually get to Harry's room, considering his pace.

"And you are different?" Ren looked pointedly at the blanket that Lal was carrying over her shoulder.

"Well, at least I'm honest," Lal said as she folded the blanked on the floor opposite the door. She took her boots off, dropped to the floor, and tucked herself with the blanket.

"I hope from here will be calm," She sighed as she found the position to sleep.

"Calm, with Harry? Nah it will be pure—" Ren paused as Harry laughed.

"Pure?" Lal prodded.

"Chaos. Pure chaos." Ren chuckled as he looked through the window, over the night covered ocean.

Dominico grimaced at the Vindice guards as they swung the door open. They reminded him too much of dementors. While he hadn't been afraid of dementors like other inferior wizards, the concept reminded him too much of his previous life's mistakes.

With that unpleasant thought, he entered the dark room. Dante, ever loyal, followed closely for his protection. The door closed behind them and their guides stood on each side of it, like guardian statues. Dominico put them out of mind and moved to sit on the couch before the dark wooden table. He silently cursed his young form as the large couch almost fully enveloped him. A tension grew in the air the longer he fidgeted, causing him to look up at the form across from him – a form even smaller than his own.

A creepy baby sat across the table, its eyes glaring at him through the bandages that covered every inch of skin.

"Vasaio, I don't have time for your foolishness," The baby said with a subtle, threatening undertone.

Dante stiffened as the shadows grew darker and felt more sinister than before.

"Ah, don't be like that. After all, we're friends." Dominico smiled as he brought his sky flames to surface, causing Dante to relax.
Sadly, Dominico can't fill such a large room with sky flames yet. It was a price for this new life, he supposed. Dominico felt in his heart that he wouldn't be as strong in his flames as he was with magic when he was Voldemort. His sky flame wasn't pure or big enough for that. Still, it was better than being dead. Anything was better than being alone on that platform...

The baby stared at him for a few terrifying heartbeats before it decided to continue. "Just state your business, Vasaio."

"Too cold, I say. But then again, you're always like that, Bermuda von Veckenschtein." Dominico chuckled lightly.

"Get to the point."

Dominico felt Bermuda was tired of him and wanted him to leave, but he knew that he wouldn't be sent away. They owed him. He planned to cash in on that today.

"I want a certain cloud from your lovely prison," Dominico said with a growing smirk.

'He's the only choice now. The only cloud that could be strong enough to attract Harry's flames, considering the failure of all the others. This will work.'

"Who?" Bermuda asked.

"This man," Dominico said as he placed a folder on the table. "I will consider the debt paid if you give jurisdiction to me."

'Harry will be mine'

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Dante followed his sky out of Vindicare, slightly shaken and very unhappy with the contents of the human-sized box being hauled behind them. They had come for that man? Dante felt an oncoming headache. "Now I have to warn others."

"Oh, no need. I'm sending him to Harry. It's my little present for him," Dominico said, smiling warmly.

Dante saw that smile nearly constantly these last three days. Ever since he met that sky, Dominico seemed to be back to his child self. Dante didn't know what to feel about this situation. He understood that Harry looked like Eliza, but there were many people who looked like Eliza. Dominico didn't chase after them, but this one he fixated on. Dante felt that Dominico will get burned by this new sky, that this newfound happiness wouldn't last.

'Eliza, you don't know what mess you left behind,' Dante thought as he remembered how bad it was after Eliza had died.

Flashback

"Sir! Ampelo is rampaging again," one of the Vasaio famiglia's servants reported.

"Tell that to the boss!" Dante growled, furious at both the interruption and the cause. That Ampelo!

"The boss left with his wife on holiday," the servant said hesitantly.

"I can't believe them! Don't they understand the situation?" Dante snapped.
A big boom resounded through the manor. Then the screams sounded. Dante could almost see the repair reports now. This had to stop. If only Black was here…Dante couldn't handle this alone. He walked out from the room where he was doing paperwork. He shouldn't be there. He was the newest guardian to the heir of the Vasaio famiglia! He should be with his sky.

Dante walked through the empty corridors and went into the basement. He opened door to the room and immediately felt the coolness of the chamber. He could also feel the deep sadness in his sky's flames as his sky knelt by the glass coffin. His sky's brilliance was diminished. Instead of mischief, grief swam in those brilliant red eyes and tears were freely falling onto the glass coffin which housed the former heiress.

He closed the distance between them and touched his sky's shoulder gently. Dante pushed his mist flames forward to try to soothe his sky, but sky flames bristled against him. Dante almost collapsed due to crushing grief as the bond sent an echo of his sky's feelings to crash into his heart.

"Get out," Dominico murmured. His voice was hoarse, as if he had screamed until he couldn't anymore.

"My sky, my brilliant sky. My only light," Dante kneeled before him. "Please don't send me away."

"I said get out" Dominico said quietly.

Dante didn't want to disobey his sky, but he couldn't let his sky crumble here with the corpse. "Why would you want to be here? What do you ever see here? Doesn't it make you feel worse?"

Dominico looked away, obviously in pain. He was in pain and Dante just wanted to free him. He started to shape his mist flames and pushed.

"What is the use of these feelings, my sky?"

The the chamber became the warehouse scene that Dante had stumbled onto when sent to check on the ongoing situation. The mist-Ampelo clutched a dead mist-Elisa. Dominico looked over to them and he clenched his hands.

"Why do you employ a subject that destroyed her?" Dante wondered. His mist changed to show Ampelo destroying different rooms. Dominico looked at the mist construction with bored eyes, but Dante still felt the grief in his sky's flames.

"What's the use of him now? A grieving guardian that didn't die as he should," Dante growled. Then he touched his sky's cheek with shaking hands, "Of course, we love her. We wouldn't forget her."

The image behind him changed into Dominico and Elisa's happy days. They were sitting in the garden. Dominico was reading a book as Elisa danced around him, trying to distract Dominico. His sky smiled slightly at these images.

"We are always thinking of her, but now there is nothing we can do. So, what's use of these feelings?" Dante let images shift into Elisa's death scene. He let his sky go and walked over to glass coffin and saw Elisa's dead body inside it. Dominico refused to bury her.

"How can you stand here with all? Drowning in all these regrets, wouldn't rather feel happy? I can use my mist to obstruct your memories, or cut the link between them and grief. Wouldn't that be grand?" Dante said as he lighted his mist flames.

"No," Dominico refused. He lightly touched the coffin, then sighed. "You wouldn't understand. She was my second chance. She was my only link to him."
"Then isn't it better if you forget her? Why would you keep these things?" Dante asked, angry with himself. He wasn't enough!

"Forget? You can't just forget him. And I refuse to forget him!" Dominico laughed loudly, but it was a bitter laugh.

"Of course, you wouldn't need to forget him. You can think of her or him, but this needs to stop," Dante quickly said. He didn't want his sky to close up. Dante couldn't let his sky waste away here.

"Of what use am I now? If I couldn't protect her. If I couldn't keep his legacy," Dominico murmured.

"But she is gone now. Wouldn't it be great if we get rid of all that dragged us back? Let's get rid of all that destroyed her," Dante fervently said as he opened his arms and whirled around. A mist constructed Ampelo and Elisa shattered to pieces. "Don't look back. Move forward."

"Destroy...yes I guess there is one thing that I have to do," Dominico looked at his hands as his tears fell on it. He laughed and said, "I never thought it would hurt this much...yes, it's better to be angry, to destroy her enemies. To keep her, no, his legacy."

And his sky, his brilliant sky stood up on his legs and walked out of the chamber.

End Flashback

The crew screamed and dropped a box as the it shook suddenly.

"Hey! Be careful there," Dante shouted. He didn't like this idea. All of this for Harry, that sky that looked so much like a dead woman and held so much of Dominico's heart in his hands.

"If you walk one step out of line, I will end you, Harry Potter," Dante murmured as he watched his sky, his brilliant sky, walk over to the box and open it.
Chapter 23-Grounded

Chapter Notes

Beta'd by Ie-maru(Thank you so much)

Thank you so much for reading and enjoying my story. I'm so glad xD

Chapter 23

"Skull-sama will protect you, ha-ha!" Skull laughed loudly. He was confident, so confident, so - he was so scared. Skull was fucking scared of these people, especially the fedora guy lurking in the background.

He had woken up on a lovely island, inside the large tent that would be their center of operations until they finished the construction on the house, according to the much nicer Fon. After he had woken up – and promptly panicked – the fedora guy immediately launched into a surreal explanation about the mafia and "flames". Skull, apparently, was a "cloud" and his trait was "propagation". Also, he was in the mafia now. All flame users were.

Skull was scared out of his mind and refused to believe him. Mr. Fedora brought out a gun in response, put it to his head, and said he'd better believe it because his patience was running thin! Skull was half-convinced the man was going to pull the trigger, but then his savior came. The green-eyed angel had shooed the scary guy away and helped Skull into one of many chairs.

The angel had smiled softly at him and gently checked him over for injuries. The angel introduced himself as Harry Potter and said he was bonded to Skull as his sky. Harry then apologized over and over for the accidental bonding and promised a quick return for Skull to wherever he needed if he didn't want to stay.

"Because it's your choice," Harry had stressed. "Don't let the others tell you otherwise. If you want to go, you can go. You don't need to be involved in this. The mafia is very dangerous, so you need to be absolutely sure if you decide to stay."

The fear was retreating to the back of his mind, replaced by a great amount of confusion. Skull was a simple guy – a great, non-violent guy! While he was a thrill seeker and enjoyed the fame from his shows, he'd never touched a weapon, except that one steel bar, and never got into fight outside a few brawls...okay, many brawls, but what do you expect when your life rolls with that kind of crowd? Point was, he was nothing like the other "flame users" and he felt painfully out of place. He wanted to go home.

If Skull thought this through seriously, he should have taken that offer and jumped on the first ship to the mainland; however, for some reason, those kind eyes stopped him. Those green eyes begged for his protection, for Skull to stay, even though Harry himself was offering him a safe way to leave. In that moment, that crucial fork of destiny, Skull felt a strong urge to stay and do anything for Harry. For while Skull could leave, it was very obvious that Harry either wouldn't, or couldn't. He would be leaving Harry behind to this cruel world, surrounded by these dangerous people.

Just the thought of something happening to Harry woke something dark inside of Skull. He thought
about all the possibilities, all the scary things that could happen to Harry if Skull wasn't there to help keep his sky safe. Skull was afraid of this mafia world, but he was more afraid for Harry. His very being sung for his sky.

Skull decided right there, he would go with his gut. It had never led him wrong before!

And that was what had led him to this point.

"Skull-sama will protect you, ha-ha!"

He was immediately rewarded with a hard smack on the back of his head from the ever-scary Mr. Fedora, but it was okay since his angel scolded the guy right after. The guy was named Ren, according to his sky. Ren glared at Skull, right over said tiny angel, promising retribution if Skull ever called him that.

The rest of his new "partners", his fellow "guardians", entered the tent after Mr. Fedora's introduction. Verde was a bored looking, green haired man; Fon was the nice Chinese man with long dark hair; Colonello was an easy-going blond; Viper was the mysterious robed figure with upside down triangle tattoos on his cheeks; and Lal, the only woman here, was the blue haired, no-nonsense type. Skull wasn't as interested in them as he was in his one true love – Harry – but they couldn't be ignored. They were all very dangerous people who he'd be working with.

"But Skull, it's too dangerous. I think it would be better if you took the ship," Harry said, worry clear on his face. That was so adorable!

"Don't worry, Harry-sama. I, the Great Skull-sama, will protect you from all danger!" Skull laughed loudly.

He was afraid that if he didn't laugh, Harry would see right through his act. His legs started to shake. He was afraid, but Harry-sama needed him. Bravery wasn't a lack of fear, he remembered, but action in spite of it. He was afraid, but he would stay. He forced his legs to stop shaking and struck a pose, hoping he looked confident and cool.

"Leave that idiot alone," the scary guy – Ren (I only uttered your name in my mind, eek please don't look this way) said, irritation clear on his face. Ren adjusted his fedora so he could glare at him! Could he read minds?!

'Harry-sama, please help me' Skull prayed.

"What do you mean when you say Harry-sama?" Harry asked him, head tilted adorably. Skull wanted so badly to hug him.

Well, Skull wasn't one to deny himself, so he latched onto his angel and hugged him for all he was worth. And if he maneuvered his body slightly so said angel was between him and Ren, well, that was just him being smart.

"Ah, it's a Japanese idiom for respect," Verde explained.

"Interesting, kora!" Colonello claimed.

"You know Japanese?" Lal asked. While she sounded casual, her eyes were sharply focused on where Skull had latched onto Harry. For some reason, Skull wanted to take his hands away and back up a few meters.

"Then call me senpai from now on. After all, you're the lackey here," Ren said with a growing
smirk. That urge to back up was quickly turning into an urge to leave the tent and get far, far away from Ren's smug face. Skull hadn't forgotten the gun incident.

"Hey, don't call him a lackey!" his angel protested.

"It's a fitting expression, I think. "Senpai" is another Japanese idiom, which a student uses to speak of a mentor or senior. He will be our...student, so it fits," Fon explained with a slight smile. For some reason, Skull thought he saw an edge to that smile. So much for being the nice one!

"Right! He's going to be our student," Ren agreed and smiled at Fon. Fon nodded back.

"In the mafia world, all unexperienced members start as lackeys to their seniors," Verde explained to Harry. His eyes then examined Skull, as if weighing his worth. For some reason, Skull felt like a lab rat.

"Then I'm a lackey too, right?" Harry asked with confusion.

"No. You're our sky, so it's different with you," Viper said, resigned. For some reason, Skull felt that Viper was glaring at him. It was a strange thought, since he couldn't see their face.

"True that! Skull will be our lackey, kora!" Colonello laughed. Skull shivered at the glint in his eyes. His fellow guardians then pointedly looked at Skull's hands where Skull was touching Harry. Skull's heart skipped a beat out of terror and he slowly untangled himself from the hug.

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Harry, as an experienced auror, knew that when a newbie joined, the others started to test the new guy; usually this was done by giving menial tasks, making them carry out either tiring or embarrassing assignments, or just sticking them with duties they didn't want to do themselves. It was all part of the ritual of breaking in someone new. That was fine, Harry could accept that, but...Harry felt that Ren and the others were a lot more bloodthirsty regarding Skull.

Harry swore to himself that he would intervene if they went too far. He was pretty sure Skull would be fine, though. The cloud was made of sterner stuff than most. Harry saw his Will when he was in that inner room of his mind-scape. Skull's bright purple flames showed him how strong the prideful man was at heart.

That reminded him of what else happened while he was down there. Harry had certainly not been happy when he got a look at what had happened while he was locked out.

Flashback

Harry looked around his mind-scape's inner room incredulously. Everywhere he looked was mess. Scorch marks littered the walls and memory marks were jumbled. He suspected he knew the cause.

"Orange! What did you do?" Harry glared at Orange, who made a guilty croon and curled into itself.

"Did you have some sort of flame party in here? It'll take weeks to organize all these memories again!" Harry cut himself off from saying more and took a deep breath.

Considering the damage...were the other flames hurt? The thought had him hurrying to where they circled and looking over them very carefully. They all looked the same as last time, thank Merlin. Well, except for the purple one, now that he looked closer. Where before there had been a defiant
specter of flames, there was now a cheerful bonfire of cloud flames. It must be the new addition to the group. It felt nothing like the other one had.

"So you went and bonded with Skull." Harry sighed and gave the shifting sky flame a very disappointed look. "You couldn't just leave him alone. I told you no more, and you did anyway."

Orange made a sad croon before giving off a feeling of determination. It jumped around each of the other flames, leaving the cloud for last. It stopped beside the new purple flame and made resounding croon, which the cloud flame returned. Orange then circled around all of them once more before stopping in front of Harry.

"So, you wanted a full collection?" Harry asked as understanding came to him.

"Then the last few days...did you just throw temper tantrum!?!" Harry choked, feeling incredulous.

Orange bobbed, somewhat guilty. Said guilt didn't last long until it was bounding about happily.

"I was worried, you brat! I thought something was really wrong!" Harry said, anger burning in his gut.

Orange made the croon equivalent of 'uh-oh'.

"That's right. You are so grounded!" Harry glared at Orange. "You'll be in another room, and no playing outside."

End Flashback

He grounded Orange in one of the castle rooms and spelled the room to lock it in with all the security spells he could think of. Harry didn't believe it would hold Orange for too long, but this wasn't a forever thing. This was to show that he was serious. If Harry said no, he meant it. Orange was a child in a way, and needed to know the boundaries it was allowed.

Now Orange was sulking and ignoring him. Harry was fine with that. He would have to fix all that mess tonight anyway and Orange would probably distract him. It would be a slow process as it was.

"Now that we've all been introduced, let's plan out our base. I brought blueprints for us all to look over." Verde rolled them out on the large table so everyone could see.

Harry walked to the table with Skull, who was hovering near him and throwing the others cautious looks. He ignored it and instead inspected the plans for the house. It looked more like a mansion, actually. How were they going to afford this?!

"Hm, not bad. I want a wing for myself, though. The Sun Wing, doesn't it sound nice?" Ren touched part of the plan and added a whole wing with a pencil he pulled out of nowhere.

Really? A whole passage for Ren? Harry looked at the others for signs of protest, but they were all frowning thoughtfully instead.

"It would be nice if there was a Storm Wing to match it, if we're going that route." Fon smiled and grabbed the pencil from Ren to add another passage for himself.

"Me too, kora!" Colonello added another one.

"For privacy," Viper stated as he drew.

"I won't stay with Colonello." Lal drew another.
"Skull-sama needs space too!" Skull left Harry's side to draw. Harry thought they would refuse, but Skull successfully drew a whole passage without complaint. Maybe it was so the others wouldn't have to share rooms with him.

"Hmm, I need one as well." Verde started to draw, but was interrupted by Colonello.

"What! You have a lab kora!" Colonello shouted.

"I wouldn't be sleeping in it," Verde stated as he continued his drawing.

"Then I want a survival course, kora!" Colonello stole Verde's pencil to draw an exercise field beside mansion. "We're going to need it to teach the lackey anyway!"

"A library," Viper proposed.

"A tea garden would be nice," Fon said.

"A shooting range is essential," Lal added.

"A pool is really good for exercising multiple muscles at once," Ren pointed out. "Also, relaxation."

"We're living on an island," Harry replied, exasperated.

"Well, yes, but an indoor pool makes swimming at different times much safer," Ren said as he cheerfully drew it out. It was, in Harry's unbiased opinion, much too large.

"A biking course is good for exercise too!" Skull said enthusiastically.

Then they started to argue about what really necessary or not. They crowded around the table and pencils began to fly. It was like a mini tornado was occurring and Harry was honestly surprised the paper hadn't torn yet. A moment passed before Harry realized they finally finished. Harry looked at new plan, hoping they'd at least censored each other and kept it from getting too ridiculous.

But when did things ever go as he hoped? It was enormous. They colored each wing with their respective color. Sun, storm, lighting, mist, rain, cloud…it was too much.

Well, except for one thing that actually seemed to be missing.

"Where is my room?" Harry asked.

The others went still for a moment, but just a moment.

"You live with me in the Sun Wing," Ren said as he hugged Harry to his side.

"No way, kora! He'll room with me!" Colonello protested.

"He'd enjoy the garden in the Storm Wing," Fon claimed as he stole Harry from Ren.

"I need to run some tests on him," Verde tugged Harry away from Fon. "We need to know if he's fully recovered, don't we?"

"As a sun-flame user, I can monitor him better than you can." Ren glared at Verde. "The machinery for it isn't even put together yet."

"I will be happy to host Harry-sama!" Skull said cheerfully.
What followed was yet another argument that he really wished he could tune out. Harry looked at the plan with a sigh. He took the pencil laying nearby and drew a single room in the middle, where each wing met. It would be just off of the common room.

"I'm not rooming with anyone. I will take this room and that's final." Harry titled his chin stubbornly. That stopped the argument temporarily.

"No, that won't do. It's too small! Here, at least make it a little bigger and put it closer to my rooms," Ren said. "That way, you can get me if you don't feel well or need some company."

"You just want to keep him to yourself, kora!" Colonello seethed.

Another argument began as they shifted Harry's room from wing to wing, making up reasons why being closer to their rooms in specific would be best. After nearly half an hour of this, Harry finally lost his patience and put his foot down. He would be in the center so he could be close to everyone's wings and if they wanted to be closer, they would just have to adjust where in the wing they would be putting their bedrooms. After a bit of grumbling, the plan was finally finished.

Harry's original room, which he had been more than happy with, was now a wing in and of itself, but circular in shape. It was back to its place where each wing met, which made it look like a big orange sun with different colored rays shooting off of it. Each guardian's bedroom was as close to his circular wing as possible, to settled their ruffled feathers.

"Yes, this is the best plan," Verde agreed. "Now only we need to name our castle."

"Castle?" Harry repeated with dread.

"With all the additions and defenses, it's more like a castle than a mansion." Ren smiled.

Harry looked at others. They looked bashful, but also very satisfied.

"Let's name it the Stronghold, kora!" Colonello said.

"It's really a castle..." Harry touched the plan and felt a little light-headed.

"Yes. With how things have been, a castle will be safer than a mansion." Verde fixed his glasses.

"Protection, huh?" Harry thought about another castle and smiled. His only true home... "Let's name it Hogwarts," Harry suggested wistfully.

"Hog warts? Why would we name it that?" Skull laughed. Ren and others just looked at him, confused.

"It might be a silly name, but Hogwarts was a special place to me when I was younger. It was my only true home. It gave me protection and warmth, even when the people in it brought me many troubles. I want this castle to be more than a base; I want it to be our home too. I want this to be a place we can relax and have warmth in our lives. There will be troubles in our future, that's inevitable, and so I want this place to give us the protection and feeling of home that the other Hogwarts did for me." Harry traced the plan with a finger and smiled wider.

"Hogwarts, it's then," Ren stated. He tilted his fedora to hide his expression, but Harry had seen the touched look on his face before it was shadowed by the hat.

"Harry-sama..." Skull started to tear up and hugged Harry's arm.
"That sounds agreeable," Viper said with a small smile.

Lal, Verde and Fon smiled at Harry and nodded.

"I'm still thinking about pig warts. Am I only one?" Colonello said aloud. Lal slapped him over the head, but the man laughed it off and then agreed to the name.

Hogwarts it was, and the construction began.
Dominico impatiently gazed at the cloud from his position behind his office desk. They had arrived at the manor, but the current situation was not in Dominico's original calculations.

"Pretty sky, pretty sky!" the dirty gray-haired man lunged at him, but was stopped by a swift kick from Dante. Dominico didn't even bat an eyelash as the crazy cloud groaned in pain. The cloud looked up at Dominico with a crazed gleam and Dante growled at him in response.

The man on the floor was dressed in prison rags, but his crumbled, thin figure couldn't hide the cloud's dangerous potential. The dirty cloud's muscles were tense like a tightly stretched bow cord, ready to attack in moment of weakness. The flames burning under the man's skin were honed, ready for action. While this danger was something that Dominico could appreciate, the cloud's rudeness wasn't.

"John, stand up! That's an order." Dominico gazed down at John, one of his men. He was one of his top men at that, but sadly couldn't take rejection. John had started to imagine that Dominico was his and, as clouds tend to do, had gotten territorial. He'd been causing more through than he was worth. Inwardly seething at the loss, Dominico threw John's special cards before him - cards that could cut steel and blow up on contact. They were valuable weapons that Dominico had awarded the man with and which the man used very, very well.

John blankly gazed at the valuable, fallen cards, as if he had forgotten about his favorite weapon.

"Pretty skyâ€¦," John murmured, his face somewhat lecherous as he turned his gaze to his newfound obsession.

"You peace of shit! My sky finally graced you with his presence, but you dare show that face!" Dante punched John hard enough that the man flew a few meters back.

"Pretty skyâ€¦." John groaned as he stood up shakily.

Dominico didn't want this cloud to be near Harry. He was disappointed by this turn of events. He had thought to use this cloud to shake Harry up a little. If John had bonded with Harry, then Dominico would've just needed to separate them little bit; the new bond would demand closeness and it would give time for Dominico to get close to Harry as he helped the "search".

If the cloud was destroyed, then Dominico could just play the hero to save the day or be the concerned friend and let Harry's guardians do their jobs. Either way, it would give more time to Dominico to work.

But John, as he was now, was more dangerous to his plans than Dominico could allow. Sending John off and letting him re-fixate on Harry wouldn't do any good. It would be just like throwing a starving wolf to hunt an innocent lamb. Well, if you didn't consider the guardians Harry already had.
It would take a great deal of effort for John to get past them, but it was a chance he wasn't willing to risk.

Still, Dominico wasn't completely ready to write the man off. He had been very useful before this whole issue arose.

"Dante, bring John to the healing wing. Maybe they can do something for him. At least make him more useful, lessâ€¦I don't know, just order the doctors to do their best." Dominico rubbed his forehead as Dante dragged John out of his sight. The doctors would have to think of something else, something even great Voldemort couldn't think of. He'd really rather not have to write the man off as a complete loss.

"What else do I need to do today?" Dominico wondered aloud.

BANG!

Dominico looked back after his office door was kicked open. He frowned as the old man responsible entered. Dominico frowned and wondered what happened to the Vasaio security. The old man, who wore a tattered robe held a strange cane, shouldn't have been able to simply walk in here without an appointment or even some last-minute warning.

"Ah, young Vasaio, just the person I need!" The old man exclaimed, like they had met at a busy street instead of in his office, which should have been secure.

"You are?" Dominico said, calmly. Dominico wasn't really worried for himself - he was sure that he could take care of this old man â€“ but then againâ€¦you never know in the mafia world. He wouldn't make the same mistake as he did in his last life by judging a book by its cover. So, Dominico nudged one of his guardian bonds sharply, insinuating distress and emergency. With this, Dante would probably run back to him and he would at least have some form of back-up.

"My name's Talbot. I'm here to tell you, play the messenger for you." Talbot scratched his head thoughtfully, but as to what he was thinking, Dominico was clueless.

"Talbot? What kind of message could you have for me? You're Vongola's blacksmith, are you not?" Dominico frowned. He'd heard that Talbot worked exclusively with Vongola, unless you were willing to pay a heavy amount. Something a little much to pay to pass a message.

"Ah, then you heard of me," Talbot said as he sat opposite from Dominico.

"Of course! After all, a good weapon is essential for us mafioso." Dominico chuckled lightly. He brought out his sky flame to surface and smiled. 'Sky charisma, oh how I love this flame!' Dominico thought as his flame started to make him more approachable and make his target to more likely loosen his tongue. 'Sky flame, the flame that governs all other flames, the flame for leaders.'

Talbot frowned and suddenly swung his cane down like a hammer. "You are a hundred years early for that, brat."

"I see." Dominico sighed. "You can't blame me for trying, though."

"Of course not, but your famiglia has an excellent blacksmith already." Talbot pointedly eyed his pen on the table. "Such a suitable weapon for the boss of a negotiation famiglia."

Dominico held his pen in his hand. He'd received this weapon when he ascended to his position as boss. Dominico heard a long time ago that the weapon a person wields reveals a lot of their personality and he had to say that he agreed. He thought the pen was a firm statement of his new life
in this world. A weapon that, while not as strong as others, can still defend him as a last resort.

'I'm no longer the front-line fighter that Voldemort was, but am the negotiator Dominico Vasaio. Talbot put it very well.'

"My sky!" Dante shouted as he entered the office. He paused upon noticing the intruder and was beside Dominico in the blink of an eye, prepared to attack at the slightest notice. His glare communicated quite clearly what he would do should the man make the wrong move.

"Dante, stand down," Dominico said as he patted Dante's hand.

"Understood, master." Dante settled into a less confrontational pose beside him, but still kept a very close eye on the man across from him.

"You said you were here as a messenger," Dominico prompted, curious.

"Ah, I remember!" Talbot started to pat his robe slowly, causing Dante to glare at him impatiently. Dominico was amused at Talbot's passive aggressiveness and was more than willing to wait him out.

"Found it! A stranger asked me to deliver this to a certain person. For some strange reason, I couldn't find him. Then I heard you were close to him and hoped you'd be willing to help." Talbot said as he put a ring on the table.

"A ring?" Dominico picked it up lazily, rather unimpressed. When he looked at it closer, his eyes widened in shock. He knew this ring! The ring was gold with a cracked black stone.

'Salazar Slytherin's ring. My ring!'

"To whom were you sent to deliver this?" Dominico asked warily. What he really wanted to ask was who gave it to Talbot, but from Talbot's expression, Dominico knew he wouldn't tell.

"To Harry Potter," Talbot said. His lips curled up in a satisfied smile at Dominico's reaction.

The morning sun shone through the forest branches. Birds chirped and the forest animals calmly continued with their lives. Alas, a large boom interrupted it and sent everything into chaos.

'Orange, don't!' Harry yelled internally. He was, unfortunately, too late. Orange had already surged out from him in anger and the guardian facing him fell down again in a stupor. Harry ran over to his newest drunken guard and kneeled beside him.

"I'm sorry! Colonello, hang in there." Harry grabbed and shook his rain guardian, trying to snap him out of it.

"Ugh, I'm in heaven," Colonello slurred.

"Agh! Sorry! Come back now." Harry said as he shook his rain again. Colonello gazed at him drunkenly and touched Harry's cheek with a tender smile.

"Hey! Hands off." Lal suddenly kicked Colonello away from Harry, causing Colonello to become a specter in the sky. He fell down out of sight in another loud crash.

"Lal, why did you do that?" Harry frowned at Lal, who snorted, not feeling single shred of guilt.

"This is not working," Fon sighed and walked over to join Harry, an exasperated expression painting
his face.

All of his guardians except Verde and Viper were here beside him, in this forest, his supposed training field for a week now. Verde said he needed to supervise the underlings and Viper had become some sort of mushroom. For some reason, he was depressed and lurking in the tent corner. The others didn't seem to pay him mind, but Harry promised himself that he would check on him later this afternoon.

"We can't train you!" they all said simultaneously.

Yes, they were here to train Harry; however, Orange wasn't cooperating. When Harry's guardians mock-attacked, or just even lightly punched Harry in order to train him, Orange attacked them with explosive vigor. Orange thought it was a personal insult that his guardians attacked him. Orange would punish them for doing so, which usually ended with a flame-drunk guardian. Harry begged and threatened Orange to get it to obey, but Orange would just cry pitifully and made all his guardian drunk with sky flames in a fit. Harry was getting tired of it.

'You are so much trouble,' Harry said, half annoyed and half fondly. Orange made happy croon inside him.

Ren was the only one who could stand and work through the effect, but when Harry asked him for training, Ren's face would become a shocking pink and he refused to train him.

'Why would Ren do that?' Harry thought with a pout.

Orange chirped. Harry could almost picture it jumping up and down in his mind-scape, pleased that at least one of them was "behaving".

"Don't worry Harry-sama, you don't need to fight. I'm Skull de Mort! I will protect you," Skull proudly exclaimed.

"Oh, then you need to become strong." Ren smirked suddenly, eyes glinting dangerously.

"Yes, Skull will become strong - stronger than you! And then Harry-sama will love me!" Skull laughed as he made a strange pose. Harry distantly heard triumphant music and saw a sea wave crashing against rock. He rubbed his eyes. Did Viper make an illusion or was he just that tired?

"Oh, so you don't mind getting training from me?" Ren's smirk grew. Harry felt that Ren's smile was a tad bit evil. He was starting to feel bad for his cloud, who was being easily led by the nose.

"Yes, I don't mindâ€¦wait, senpai I didn't mean," Skull hurriedly waved his hands and tried to take it back, but everyone could already see that it was too late.

"You should be happy; it's not every day the world's greatest hitman decides to train someone. Expect tort-training from me," Ren said. In the blink of an eye he had dragged Skull away out of sight.

"Were you just about to say torture?! You were, weren't you! Wait! Wait - Harrysama!" Skull desperately screamed.

Harry started to go after him, worried that the hitman might take things too far.

"Don't," Lal said as she stepped in front of him and frowned.

"But Skullâ€”" Harry protested.
"You can't coddle him. He is a grown man who can make his own decisions. He needs to become stronger and learn how to defend himself before he can ever hope to be able to protect you like he wants." Lal said sharply.

"Heâ€™s just training. Rene's hardly going to kill him â€“ that would be counterproductive." Lal frowned deeper and then looked in the direction Colonello had landed. "I will go get that idiot student of mine."

"I see," Harry said with a sigh. He worriedly looked over to where Ren had dragged Skull away, but didn't move to follow. He would see later what happened and if Ren had stepped out of line...Harry would stop that training and insist that he do it instead. Harry had to go through rigorous physical and mental training to be an auror; being a part of that division required more than just knowing curses and counter-curses.

"Don't worry about Skull. We understand that he's a civilian who just entered the Mafia and will pace him accordingly. It's not something he should skip out on though. Sooner or later he'll need these skills to protect himself. You don't want him to be unprepared," Fon explained, smiling gently. His eyes were calm, his aura serene, and it was making Harry calm down as well.

"I guess not." Harry curiously looked over at Fon and asked, "Are you okay? I'm sorry my flame attacked you. I don't know why did it attacked," Harry apologized sheepishly.

He was a little guilty that he lied to them, but Harry was sure none of them would believe him if he told them his flames were being a brat. Even if they believe him, Harry didn't want to stand out as a freak again! He hated it in the magical world and didn't want to have to deal with it here as well. He wanted to be Just Harry for as long as he could.

"Ah, it's okay. Flames are instinctual, so such reactions are expected from beginners. Now that I think about it, guardians never teach their sky. Maybe this is why famiglie always hire a tutor." Fon made a thoughtful expression, then smiled as he shelved it for later discussion with the others.

"Regardless, I think some tea would help us calm down."

"Oh yes, it's tea time," Harry agreed.

It was already their time they usually did so. They would drink tea together, just them, and spend time simply unwinding. For some reason, Fon would always give him a little present during their time together. Fon said that after the garden was finished they would spend their tea time there. That would be wonderful.

But for life of him, Harry couldn't understand why they would have tea at exactly this time or why the others wouldn't join. Everyone had something else to do with him at other times as well. It was like they were on invisible schedule, taking turns spending time with them that the others weren't allowed to interrupt.

"Maybe we can wait and Lal and Colonello and ask them to join us," Harry asked as he looked back to the woods. The suspicion wouldn't leave, but it would be rude not to at least invite them.

"Ah, I'm sure they wouldn't mind being left behind. They don't like tea." Fon smiled awkwardly, glad his sky was looking away. He wasn't nearly as skilled at lying as Rene was.

Fon guided his sky to their spot. He couldn't just tell Harry that they were on schedule or that it was
Fon's turn.

It had been decided in their first Secret Guardian Meeting. The second day since they arrived, they had been constantly at each other's throats when their sky wasn't looking, vying to have his attention for themselves. After getting sick of arguing, Verde offered a plan. They organized a schedule for everyone so they wouldn't either upset their sky or kill each other. According to their set schedule, everyone could spend two hours undisturbed with Harry. The others would spend their time on security. This schedule would continue until Hogwarts was finished being constructed. They would renegotiate then.

After a few minutes of walking, they reached a clear pond. There were already chairs and table set with sweets and tea. Fon had ordered the tea especially from China. It was special tea from the Grand Tea House, which Fon was personally very fond of and wanted to share with his sky. As for sweets, they were ordered from an Italian café.

Harry sat on the chair with a smile and eagerly awaited his tea. Fon smiled wider in return and started to make the tea. His movements were graceful and swift.

"I love your tea making," Harry said happily.

"Oh?" Fon poured the tea without pause. His tea skill was not something that he had been proud of before now. It was skill that cost tears, sweat and more than a little frustration that had ended with broken tea pots. After the lessons ended, he stopped making tea. But now? Fon was glad that Harry was enjoying it, that he was being useful for his sky.

"It's just calming. It almost like art," Harry sighed as he sipped from cup. "I love it."

"I'm glad," Fon said, smiling gently. At last, his heart was calm.

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

It was dinner time. They gathered inside the big tent as usual and Verde's workers brought food inside. Harry didn't talk to them much nowadays. It wasn't like he hadn't tried at first. Every time he tried to talk to workers he was stopped by someone. The workers themselves got really scared when he got near them as well. Conversely, they always threw admiring glances when Harry was far away.

He really didn't understand them.

Harry was seated at the head of the table once again. Ren smugly settled into the seat to his immediate right, to the ire of the others; it wasn't really a surprise, as Ren usually "won" the "right" to sit there through some means he wasn't aware of. Harry just knew there was something about Ren's seat, some hidden meaning. It also meant something that Ren had only lost once - to Fon - and that no other had taken it from him since.

Harry didn't want to know. From his perspective, it was just another stupid thing they felt like competing for.

"Let's dig in!" Skull hollered, energetic as always. Harry sighed in relief. He thought Skull would be covered with bruises and scratches, but he seemed to be completely fine, despite the damage to his outfit. Harry smiled at Ren in thanks. Ren looked at him in confusion.

"At last, food!" Verde said as he put his notebook down.

"Ugh, please don't talk loud," Colonello whispered. He was partially lying on the table. Harry
winced in sympathy and whispered another "Sorry" to his poor rain.

"It looks good." Fon smiled, ignoring the blonde man.

As for Viper, he was still lurking in the corner. Harry had tried to snap him out of it earlier, but Viper only muttered something about money and continued to sulk. Ren had patted Harry's shoulder and told him, "Let him mourn." He even took off his hat like someone had died!

He sighed and shook his head, deciding to focus on what was in front of him instead.

"Yes, let's eat," Harry said.

Today's dinner was fried lobster. He was really looking forward to this. Just as Harry was about to take a bite, a helicopter's rotors could be heard nearing their tent. Harry glared at the roof of the tent, knowing he wasn't going to be able to finish his food in peace now.

"Stay here," Ren told him as he stood and stalked out, gun in hand. Lal and Colonello ran after him, similarly armed.

Harry stood as well.

"Please stay," Fon said, his expression serious.

Harry shook his head stubbornly. He was not a damsel in distress! He never had been. Besides, this was his home too and Merlin be damned if he wasn't going to protect it. He determinedly walked outside and ignored Skull's pleas to come back.

From the sound of it, the helicopter had landed. As he exited the tent he saw that it was a black helicopter with a somewhat familiar golden symbol that made him scowl.

"I told you to stay!" Ren glared at him briefly before turning to face to possible threat.

"I need to be here!" Harry snapped. "Besides, from looks of it, they wanted to meet me."

Harry looked at the familiar figure as he stepped out of the helicopter. And here Harry had thought that today was going to be an excellent day.

"Hello again, Harry." Mini-Voldemort/Dominico smiled up at him. His crimson eyes shone happily.

'Well, at least one person here is happy.'

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

In remote China stood a magnificent palace, glided with gold and decorated with fine art. Servants were running around, doing their duty to their master. In the inner palace's garden, full of cherry blossoms, a man kneeled before a throne. The throne was gold with clever dragon carvings.

"I, Jian, bow to the Great Sky," the man said, facing the ground in respect.

"Ah, Jian, you are here," a seductive voice noted.

Jian waited for an order, still bowing.

"Bring him," the voice ordered.

"But, Great Sky!" Jian looked up in shock.
"I said, bring him!" the figure in the throne insisted. A blast of the figure's sky flames hit Jian, knocking him back a few feet. He stood up quickly as possible, coughing blood, and returned to his place before the throne.

"Great Sky, please," the old servant said as he bowed to the sky once again.

The Great Sky – the leader of the Triads, named Wang Huang – glared at Jian, his storm guardian. Wang Huang was dressed in the finest silk and adored with fire gems. His silken long black hair was in a single pony tail decorated with a golden hairpin. Huang's silk robe was also gold with golden phoenix pattern. His whole image was transmitting serene golden sky. But his gray eyes were cold as steel.

"Bring Fong to me," Huang ordered again, his tone hard, making everyone tremble with its underlying fury.

"Yes, Great Sky," Jian bowed. His hands clenched when he was out of sight of their leader.

Was the Great Sky seeking to replace him?

And even if he wasn't, how could Jian even hope to retrieve the strongest storm the Triads had ever seen?

It wasn't like there was any blackmail he could use. Fon didn't have friends among the Triads. Fon didn't have any weaknesses that they knew of.

This would take a miracle.

Omake

Secret guardian meeting No2

"Um, Sempai, why I'm doing this?" Skull nervously asked.

"Because I said so, Lackey." His senpai smiled evilly, daring him to disobey.

"Secret Guardian Meeting Two...Start" Skull said as confidently as he could. It was so embarrassing. Why did he have to do this?

"Bravo! Now we have announcer!" Senpai clapped his hands slowly, mocking him. Fon chuckled lightly. Colonello laughed outright. Even Verde and Viper were amused.

"Now, our next topic is about expenses," Ren said.

"What about them?" Verde asked.

Fon was confused. Skull was confused too. He'd paid his part of the bill using the money he made as a travelling stunt man.

"We already paid," Viper said, his tone full of contempt.

"Yes, but I'm concerned." Ren smirked and tilted his hat to shadow his eyes.

"For what? My calculations were exact," Verde stated as he fixed his glasses. They all looked at Ren, waiting for him continue. Skull was starting to get afraid as the man's smirk grew.

"Why we should pay equally when some of us caused so much trouble? It's unfair, in my opinion."
Ren pointedly looked at Viper.

"Yare yare, if you think I would get all emotional and guilty then you are dreaming," Viper said, unconcerned with Ren's opinion.

"It should be his punishment. Half of the expenses should be paid for betraying Harry," Ren continued like he didn't hear Viper. "We should be refunded the money you owe as punishment."

"Punishment, yes, we didn't punish him," Fon said, frowning slightly.

"So, agreed?" Ren smiled winningly, causing Skull to shudder as he remembered the other times he'd seen that smile. Skull was sure now that Ren was the devil.

"I agree, kora!" Colonello yelled.

"Ah, I thought you were sleeping!" Skull cried out in surprise.

"What'd you say, maggot?!" Colonello glared at him.

"Agreed?" Ren repeated as he glared at the duo.

"AGREED!"

"Ugh!" Viper almost coughed up blood as he fell from the table in despair. Viper stood up with difficulty then said, "I won't, I will never!"

"Oh, you will. You certainly will," Ren said, his dark smirk firmly in place.

Viper glared at him, his shadow writhing behind him in his rage.

Skull didn't quite understand what followed, but after a brief fight, Viper agreed and paid them back for half of their respective payments.

Mourning the loss of so much of his money, Viper became a miserable mushroom in the corner.
"So, what do you want?" Harry asked, tired with all the drama that he brought. He could still feel Ren's burning gaze. Ren didn't like that Harry was isolated with Dominico again and Harry couldn't blame him. Harry didn't like it either.

"Here I am bringing news to you and not even a warm welcome for me!" Dominico smiled, his pleasure evident in his tone despite his words. Voldemort's smile still creeped the hell out of him. He was sure that Dominico knew this and made sure to smile more just for him.

Harry looked around the tent with a sigh, not wanting to look at the smiling bastard anymore. Since they were sitting in the main tent, the food was still there, but Harry didn't have an appetite now. Harry's eyes lifted and met Ren's angry gaze.

'If looks could kill.' Harry tried to smile, but he was sure it looked more like a grimace. He was slightly glad that he was behind Dominic's sky barrier.

"Someone visited me yesterday." Dominico's teasing smile evened out as he brought out a black box from his pocket. "It was the most interesting meeting that I've had the pleasure to have." Dominico pushed the box across the table to him and Harry reluctantly picked it up.

"What I do with this?" Harry asked, hesitant to open it.

"I don't know, open it? It's not like I cursed it. Why so hesitant when you opened every cursed object that you could find in the wizarding world?" Dominic said sarcastically. He frowned as if he was thinking something unpleasant.

Harry gulped and shakily opened the box. The black box opened easily with a soft click. Inside was –

"Ah! I want nothing to do with this!" Harry threw the box away and shuddered. The Resurrection stone shone innocently at him from where the ring had toppled on the floor. As if such a thing could be innocent!

"I knew it! You do know this ring," Dominic said with satisfaction. He stood up and retrieved the box. Then he turned back to him and asked, "Why do you know this ring â€” my old family heirloom?"

"Just keep that thing away from me!" Harry backed away from Dominic in panic.

"Oh come on, it's just an old ring. Well, it had a curse back then, but that curse already gone." Dominic frowned as Harry seemed very visibly scared. It didn't make sense, whyâ€

THUD!

Dominico and Harry looked over at their audience. Ren had just kicked the shield and looked angry.
as all hell. Dante and Colonello were arguing. Verde was writing something with a gleeful “almost manic” look.

Harry waved at them half-heartily before turning back to Dominico again. "Just get that ring away for me!" Harry hissed through his forced smile.

"Tell me why you are afraid of this!" Dominico said, his red eyes narrowed as his sole attention focused on Harry.

"That ring has always brought me misery!" Harry slumped in his chair and ran his hand through his hair. The memories, he didn't want them, didn't want to remember. That ring, it was all its fault. Everything is its fault. He would have destroyed it if he could. He couldn't, though, so he would have it away from him before it brought more tragedy, more misery!

"Alright, if you don't want it." Dominico shrugged and nonchalantly pocketed the ring.

"It's all yours," Harry said, relief rattling in his chest. "If it's all," Harry was about to end this meeting when something small smacked him in the face, causing him to startle and jerk backwards and almost fall out of his chair. Harry grabbed at his stinging cheek as he tried to regain his balance. When he was sure that his chair wouldn't fall over, Harry looked at the thing in his hand.

Harry looked up, his eyes nearly glowing in fury as he growled. "I told you to get this bloody thing away from me, not throw it in my face!"

But Dominico only looked puzzled and said, "I didn't throw that."

"Go away," Harry spat as he threw the ring again. Like magic, the ring made a U-turn and flew straight towards him.

"Impossible! It's magic!" Dominico gleefully looked between the floating ring and Harry as Harry tried to throw the ring away again. Again, and again, the ring flew back to Harry, like a puppy trailing its master.

Harry growled. Orange made questioning chirp in his mind and prodded him.

'I see you broke free,' Harry thought at it. Orange made a happy chirp in response. A wave of curiosity followed. 'You want something to do? Help me get rid of this ring?' An eagerness emanated from the orange flame inside of him and Harry felt a gentle heat flow through him.

"Let's see if you come back after this!" Harry laughed loudly as he gathered his flames in his hands. The sky flames gathered and surged until Harry's whole body was bathed in them. Orange laughed along with Harry in his mind as they worked together to meet their shared goal. Their desire was one - destroy what brought misery!

"Harry! Wait you can'tâ€”" Dominico tried to stop Harry, but Harry was too far gone in his quest to be rid of the blasted ring once and for all. Sky flames rolled around in waves and a strong wind surged up in response. Dominico clutched his chest as Harry's flames met his own shield when they pushed against his shield. "Fool!Â Campo CieloÂ will crush you! The backlash could kill you!"

But Harry's flame became brighter and stronger and Dominico knew he'd run out of time.

Dominico gave a cry as the shield cracked. Then the world became white asÂ Campo Cielo'sÂ counter program began to activate. He saw Harry staring around the with a blank expression. He saw their guardians beyond the barrier, unable to help. When the light began to
flicker, Dominico pushed Harry away and shielded him from the blast.

Verde sighed as another minion dropped something. It was a tiring week after the shield imploded. The young Vasaio heir got hurt and his sky was blaming himself for it. Vasaio was out for three days, the sky backlash being too much on the young boy; however, the boy managed to pull through with only a broken arm and some singed clothes. Campo Cielo at least recognized its maker, and had let up on the intensity in those last, crucial moments. Verde shivered as a though flashed. What would happened if it was Harry that had been hurt? He could have died.

Harry didn't leave the side of Vasaio's bed until he'd woken, much to the displeasure of Dante, the boy's mist guardian. You had to give it to the boy for how quickly he'd put everything together so soon after waking up. The Vasaio heir managed to wrangle a promise and right to train Harry in both his position as a sky and in the use of his sky flames.

Normally, this would be a good thing for Harry to have as it wasn't something Verde or his fellow guardians could provide. But this was Vasaio. If there was anything Verde could agree with the others on, it was a strong dislike for them. It didn't matter that the boy possibly saved Harry's life, not when Harry wouldn't have been in the danger to start with if it hadn't been for the little brat's insistence to begin with.

"Silver tongued brat," Verde grumbled as he sipped his coffee. Even the warmth of his favored blend wasn't enough to chase away his displeasure of this situation.

"Again, Harry," the Vasaio boy ordered.

His sky obediently took a battle stance. Dante then proceeded to attack him. It took all of Verde's willpower to not attack Dante or the Vasaio heir in return. Verde remained firmly in his seat, though the grip on his cup tightened ever so slightly. It was this fortitude that was the reason for Verde, and not the other guardians, to be the one supervising these sessions. The others would have been driven into a protective fury by now. The sand would run red.

"Ch," Verde tsked and frowned as his sky smiled at the boy after a call for a break. The other boy gave approving nod and smiled his ever-creepy smile.

"And now they became friends!" Verde sighed again. "You forgive too easy Harry, too easy." His sharp mind started to make hundreds of simulations on just how badly this could – and likely would - end. It was just too easy to trick his sky. Butâ€”

"I won't let you get hurt. I'll just have to do the thinking for you," Verde whispered. A dark corner in his mind chided him for becoming too soft, but he ignored it.

"Good job, Harry," Dominico praised as they finished their morning training.

"Thank you." Harry looked over at Dominico as he stretched. Dominico was standing before him in a blue shirt and baggy grey pants â€” so different from his usual outfit; however, none of that could distract Harry from the fact that Dominico's arm was still in a sling. Orange made a sad croon in his mind-scape.

'Yea, I feel guilty too,' Harry thought to Orange. They had lost control. It had felt too fantastic when their minds, wills and purpose joined. The power that flowed through his body had not helped him keep it together at all. Harry had felt like he was drunk or suffering some sort of magic high and he hadn't even cared.

Dominico had explained later that Harry had been in Dying Will Mode. It enabled a human to push
past the external limiters of the body and, in so doing, become much more powerful than they usually were. It came with severe drawbacks, though. Not only did his body feel like it'd been torn apart after he woke up, but he'd become so hyper-focused on his goal that he'd forgotten everything else including the fact that what he was doing within the Vasaio barrier would cause it to collapse on him.

There was one saving grace, however, and it was called Hyper Dying Will mode. He would still be powerful as he pushed past his limits, but he wouldn't fall into the same tunnel-vision. Unfortunately, it was only something he would be able to use with pills until he'd trained himself enough in Dying Will Mode first. Those pills also happened to be very, very expensive.

Dominic then gleefully informed him that the sudden flame output of regular Dying Will Mode tended to burn most of the user's clothes off.

Harry almost groaned at the thought of becoming half naked in front of so many people, especially when you considered who those people were. He wouldn't be able to look any of them in the eye if that happened. He'd just have to train hard and hopefully hit Hyper Dying Will mode before he died of embarrassment.

"Don't make that face," Dominic said as they got ready to walk back for lunch. "You need the practice."

Harry huffed. "Yes, I know. Doesn't mean I have to like it."

Dominic hummed and looked at him in obvious amusement before he waved the others over. "It's about time for lunch, I think. Let's go."

Dante nodded sharply and followed behind them at a respectful distance as they made their way back. Verde reluctantly put his pen away before he followed after them too. Harry flashed a small smile at green haired scientist, glad that Verde had come. He hoped that the training hadn't been too boring for the scientist. Verde, able to read Harry's concern, waved and gave a small smile.

Reassured, Harry turned to look at Dominic. Guilt still weighed on his mind for what had happened to the reincarnated man who'd protected him.

"I'm sorry for," Harry started to apologize, but was interrupted by Dominic's snort.

"Do stop with that Gryffindor act. I told you that I forgive you." Dominic frowned and then pointed at Harry's finger. "What will you do with that?"

Harry grimaced. When he'd sobered up, he found that all of his effort had done nothing more to the ring than destroy the box it had been delivered in. The ring itself was now decorating his finger and Harry was unable to pull it off. He'd almost resorted to cutting his finger off, but his guardians had quickly stopped him and brought him back to his senses. Considering the fact that the ring would likely just fly onto a different finger, he was quite grateful to them for doing it. He could have done without the scolding though, even if it was somewhat deserved.

Harry glared at the ring again as he remembered that, but the ring did nothing but shine innocently at him. It didn't get in his way and its weight felt comfortable to him. There was no feeling of dark magic or ill will coming from it. Harry knew better than to take it at face value. He wanted it off.

'Maybe sort of oil would help?' Harry wondered.

He was brought out of his plotting when he heard Colonello hailing him from beside the tent.
"Hey Harry!" Colonello waved with a wide grin. The other arm was behind him, pulling something large hidden behind him.

"Hello to you too, Colonello!" Harry grinned back, feeling as if the cheer radiating from the man was contagious.

"I got you a present while you were gone!" Colonello's grin became even wider as he gestured to the tied object that was becoming clearer and clearer the closer Harry came to it.

Harry's grin dimmed and he had to consciously keep himself from grimacing. It wasn't that he disliked presents, but Colonello's presents had the tendency to be dead. He also really loved giving Harry presents, so Harry was often presented with said dead things.

"I caught this guy in the forest. Doesn't he just look tasty!" Colonello stepped to the side to show it off. It was a large, and very dead, wild boar. Poor piggy.

'Why do all of his presents have to be dead animals? It's like he's a cat.'

Harry's smile was somewhat strained as he said, "It looks great! Why don't you give it to one of the others? I-I'm not exactly sure how to cook it."

He could hear the quiet chuckle from behind him and forced himself not to turn around and glare. Colonello might not give the sort of presents he would prefer, but the man was trying.

"Oh, boar! Skull-sama would love to eat that," Skull claimed as he suddenly appeared on the boulder above them. He jumped down, but fell flat on his face due to his clumsiness, ruining the dramatic entrance he'd tried to make.

Harry rushed over and hovered over the stuntman's fallen form. "Are you okay, Skull?"

"Skull-sama is okay! Don't worry, Harry-sama." Skull laughed loudly as he jumped up and stood in what he thought to be a cool, proud stance.

"Ah, if you're sure." Harry gave a concerned look at the red bump on Skull's forehead. Skull had started to not wear his helmet on the island. He'd said something about how his angel couldn't see his eyes. Personally, Harry thought it was probably better for the man's health if he kept the helmet on.

"It's good to have you back, Harry," Fon said as he walked out of the tent. His dark gray eyes searched for any injuries or signs of discomfort from him.

Harry flushed a little as Fon finished up his close investigation. He still wasn't quite used to Fon's check-overs. After the Incident, Fon's scrutiny had only become more intense. It felt a little too intimate to him and Harry was relieved when it was done. Still, he didn't make eye-contact until he'd settled into one of the chairs and had lunch placed before him.

"Has Ren come back yet?" Harry asked mid-way into the meal.

"No, but I'm sure he will back either tonight or tomorrow," Fon estimated.

Ren had gone to the mainland in search of a weapon smith for Harry. He thought that Ren would've become clingier after what had happened, but Ren had strangely become more distant instead. Ren didn't even see Harry after the doctor had given the all-clear. He'd just ordered them to keep a close watch over Harry while he left to search for a weapon.

It wasn't that Ren didn't want to see him. According to Viper, it was because they'd realized that they
didn't know much about sky flames and thus didn't know how to train Harry in their use. However, while they couldn't teach their sky how to use his flames, they could teach him to defend himself in other ways. To teach him what they knew of weapons essential to any mafioso, Ren had to search for a proper smith to fashion Harry his own to practice and eventually use.

"He could've at least said goodbye." Harry sighed, feeling little put out that Ren hadn't even waited until Harry was awake before leaving on his self-appointed quest.

"Harry, if we're going to continue your training, you need to finish eating," Dominico dryly reminded him.

Harry just realized he'd stopped with the sandwich half-way to his mouth and blushed before taking a bite.

"I was just thinking," Harry explained after he finished.

When Dominico teasingly asked as to what, Harry just shook his head. There was no need to think about annoying, uncultured, impatient men. He still had training to do.

The Black Dog of the Vasaio famiglia looked up as the study room door was kicked open by their enthusiastic sun flame user. Lucio's golden hair shimmered in the sun light streaming in from behind him. With his white uniform, Lucio looked like an angel who descended to Earth.

"Nee, did you hear from our master?" Lucio jumped on the study table with a bright smile, blue eyes shining with mischief.

"No. That's why I'm searching for clues," Black frowned, trying to read another file. "It's unlike him to go AWOL."

"Tell me about it. Chesie almost made me her chew toy. And Lucio doesn't like to be made into a chew toy," Lucio pouted when Black didn't look up from the reports and give him the attention he craved.

Black was much too busy looking for someone he hated. He didn't start his investigation for his sky's health. No, he had started this search for his own peace of mind. Chesie, Lucio, and even some of the famiglia's lower lackies had started to ask about Voldy and it was making him crazy. He was not suited for all of this management shit. Voldy might be a bastard, but at least with him around Sirius could do things he was actually suited for while avoiding him.

As a former Gryffindor, concern for Voldemort was the furthest thing from his mind. Sirius didn't like Voldy one bit, reborn or not. If he had known about Dominico's past identity, Sirius would have drowned the brat when he was in his nappy and wouldn't have regretted it one bit. Then he wouldn't be stuck in this mess.

In this world Sirius had been born into a great family. His father was a kind man skilled with guns and his mother was his stay-at-home wife. The Vasaio famiglia kindly took their family under its protection at some point, so his family and he had become closely connected to mafia. When he had realized what was happening, he had been angry, sad and bitter, but soon anger faded and bitterness turned into curiosity about flames. It was like magic, but it wasn't.

Flames had brought him closest to the magic of his previous life and he had devoted himself to their study. He had become an active storm in his teen years and the Vasaio famiglia welcomed him with open arms afterwards. There he met his best friend - this world's version of James Potter. It was unfortunate that his friend didn't remember anything. It was daunting when his old friend hadn't
recognized him, but Sirius didn't let it stop from becoming fast friends with Jacques Vasaio, despite the fact that the man was 30 years older than him.

The boss of the Vasaio famiglia, Jacques, was a fair man and, much like his own James Potter, was prone to pranks. Sirius had been truly happy to have his reborn friend in his life again, and even more so when he learned Jacques' wife was giving birth to a boy. He thought that Jacques' son would be his godson reborn as well, but was disappointed when he realized it wasn't the case.

His confusion didn't stop Sirius from continuing his duty, despite his sudden lack of enthusiasm. His friend Jacques hoped that Sirius would bond with his son, but Sirius didn't have the heart to do so when it felt like it would be a betrayal of his godson. Then his friend had died. Sirius was devastated. Jacques had been the one bright thing in his life after his parents in this life died and he hadn't even been able to seek revenge. His friend's death was ruled as being of natural cause. Sirius made his peace as best he could and held his promise to his friend to protect the rest of his bloodline.

He had found a little joy when Jacques' son announced a child on the way and was even happier to realize that Harry had indeed been reborn, but as a girl. Sirius didn't even bat an eyelash â€“ he was just so happy to have his godson back in his life, even if it meant he was a different gender. He continued being the promised guard and carefully made sure that his new goddaughter had the happiness and safety she hadn't had before. It wasn't easy, considering she was the heiress to a mafia famiglia, but he liked to think he eased the burden in her life.

A few years later, Harry had a little brother. Unlike his sister, Dominico didn't have a specified caretaker, so Sirius volunteered to fill the position. He fed and changed Dominico. He had even harmonized with him while doing so. It had been the greatest moment in his life, though he was nearly ashamed to admit it. James and Harry should've had Dominico beat, but he figured they would've forgiven him due to the harmonization's effects.

Then Harry's reincarnation had died and depression had started pulling him down. His god son was dead! On the coat tails of his grief, Dominico then revealed his true identity. Sirius's whole world fell apart. He couldn't think or do anything for quite some time and only his blasted bond let him survive it. He'd hated it then.

Dominico started a purge after Sirius recovered enough to feed himself. He punished everyone responsible for Harry's death, which was at least something they agreed on. Ten- year-old Voldy took control of the famiglia. Sirius followed him only because it healed his raw wounds a little; he was so tired of pain. With this single act, Voldy had secured enough of Sirius' loyalty to have him stay.

He should have paid more attention to Harry â€“ Eliza â€“ but he didn't and she was dead. Dominico was all he had left.

"Commander Juin, John escaped!" a lackey shouted as he ran into the study.

"Oh my!" Lucio exclaimed, unable to think of anything else to say in the face of this new catastrophe.

"Damn it! Tell me how that feral, sickly cloud escaped our security? Emphasis on the sick," Sirius said, his tone dark.

"Um...I don't know sir." The lackey gulped, but didn't dare take a step back.

"Then I will tell you one thing: you will go back and find out how he escaped!" Sirius yelled. Then he thought more about it before saying, "And give the results to Lucio here. He'll improve the
security, since you lot are obviously slacking off."

"Aw, don't be mean to Lucio," Lucio groaned.

"Yes, sir!" The lackey saluted and quickly made himself scare.

"This is such a terrible situation. Why did master bring that cur out anyway? John's focus is only on him," Lucio complained. "He's useless!"

Sirius sighed before a thought flashed through his mind.

"No, he's not useless. He'll be a good tracker for Dominico. John is like a human radar for the brat." Sirius grinned and hurried out of the study. He need to prepare to hunt the trail of a cloud.

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It was on a boat off the coast of an Italian city's harbor that a black clothed man kneeled before another. He was not the only one, for a group of similar men dressed like ninja were also kneeling behind them. Each had a sword sheathed on their backs.

"Jian, sir, we found Fon's location!" The leading prostrated man reported.

"Good. I have to give my greetings to my dage." Jian grinned, his bloodlust rising as he thought about what Fon's expression would be when they met. His men shivered at his heavy aura. Some even inched away from him.

'Just you wait. I will be the one to bring happiness to the Great Sky!' Jian thought.

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"Sky? Pretty sky?" A lone figure walked in the street, leaving a trail of blood behind him.

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